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DISCOURSES

TO

YOUNG MEN;

ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS

HIGHLY INTERESTING ANECDOTES.

BY WILLIAM DODD, L.L.D.

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY GEORGE THE THIRD.

Wherewithal shall a YOUNG MAN cleanse his way?—By taking heed thereto according to thy word.—Ps. xix. 9.

4 d 31.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

HALIFAX:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY WILL[illegible]

CHEAPSIDE.

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TO

PHILIP STANHOPE,

AND

CHARLES ERNST, Esqrs.

At length, my dear young friends, my promise is fulfilled, and I pay my respects to you in Dedication; not with any purpose to flatter or to court you: you know me too well to suspect the former, and I am too thoroughly satisfied of your esteem and affection, to need the latter. But from the time that I determined to publish these Sermons, you, who were so frequently in my view and in my heart, when I composed them; you, who were the pleasing witnesses to my writing and preaching the greater part of them; you were chosen, you may remember, the patrons and protectors of them: or rather, they were destined to become your constant and silent monitors, when no longer in a situation to hear the friendly counsels and remonstrances of him, who loves you. As such I deliver them into your hands, with my most hearty prayers, that they may prove effectual to remind you of the first and greatest of all duties; to stimulate you to every worthy and laudable action; and to be a kind of pledge from me to society, of that future usefulness and honour, I have so often augured from your early virtues and improvements.

And allow me, my dear young friends, to say, that those virtues and improvements are no

more than the reasonable expectation, the just demand of that care and culture, which you have so fortunately enjoyed. Happy, peculiarly happy, as in a variety of other instances, so in Lord Chesterfield's especial attention; which, though immediately directed to the good of one, hath proved of mutual benefit to both.

Anxious to form the heir of his house and hopes to every virtue, you know, my dear Mr. Stanhope, that great and good man, with more than parental tenderness, hath supplied you with every means of literary and moral improvement. While from his own incomparable pen you have received inestimable instructions in that art, which no man better understands, or is more capable to teach,—"The art of pleasing." An art, next to the higher and essential duties, of prime consequence in life; and that, in which I hope you will excell no less than your illustrious predecessor. His written lessons are before you: you will preserve them as lasting monuments of his regard: but I trust, they will be preserved still more faithfully on the tables of your heart, and be thence transcribed into a life and manners, ornamented to that distinguished title which you are one day to bear.

However, neither this, or any other "art" will avail to give true dignity to the character, or solid peace to the mind, without an attention to the laws of Religion. It has been my care to press this interesting topic in the volume now before you. I cannot deny, that the thought of this publication was suggested by the SERMONS TO YOUNG WOMEN; whose ingenious

Author certainly deserves great praise from the public, for his well-judged and well executed design. I have not attempted to imitate his manner, for you know my opinion on the subject of Imitation. Every man certainly should be left to his own mode. That of the author of the SERMONS TO YOUNG WOMEN, is peculiarly his own; and they would hazard much, in my mind, who should attempt to copy it. Besides, there is a wide difference between sermons composed for the press, and for the pulpit. Mine were written principally for the latter; many of them long before the publication of the SERMONS to YOUNG WOMEN; for I always thought a peculiar attention due to the younger part of my congregation. But on reading those sermons, it occurred to me, that a set of plain practical DISCOURSES TO YOUNG MEN, might be useful and acceptable. I collected therefore, and revised what I had before written; and supplying what was necessary to complete my plan, here, my young friends, I commit them to the world, under your protection and patronage. Conscious of the rectitude of my purpose, and my sincere wishes to promote the cause of virtue and piety, I feel no solicitude respecting their reception; but, with CICERO, shall always think I act a proper part by applying my little abilities to the instruction and improvement of our youth, in duties of the greatest moment to themselves and others.

Every virtuous youth formed for the public is a blessing to it; the more valuable, as the sphere of his action is more elevated and extensive. Let me flatter myself then, my dear young

friends, that, whatever may be the fruits of my written labours, society will have cause to applaud those labours with respect to you; that, fraught with every noble sentiment, you will, the one in an exalted, the other in an inferior, but it may be, not less useful station, endeavour to excel and shine forth, as friends to mankind! Friends to each other, I persuade myself, you will continue through life: and how pleasing and advantageous such a friendship is, you have in part experienced: my sermon on the subject, I hope, will be but a comment on your future lives.

Should Heaven extend my little span to see those lives happy and honourable, excelling in virtue, abounding in reputation; to see you great in the public, and blest in the private station; to see you what all your friends so ardently wish, and what all their care so justly claims: I could then, with as much sincerity and satisfaction as the famous believer of old, beg a dismission from this world, and close my eyes in peace and thankfulness. Nor shall I, nor shall those who love you, be disappointed of this hope; for you have ingenuous hearts, and will never throw away or abuse the singular and distinguished advantages, which Providence so amply provides for you.

I am,
My dear young friends and pupils,
with unalterable regard and affection,
your ever faithful,
and most sincere friend,
WILLIAM DODD.

Pall Mall, March 22, 1771.

SERMON I.

(INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE)

THE ADVANTAGES OF EARLY PIETY.

I love them that love me: and those who seek me early shall find me.—PROVERBS viii. 17.

THAT the religion of Christ is, beyond all others, calculated to produce private and public felicity, no man, acquainted with that religion, can doubt: and that, consequently, it is the interest, as well as the duty of every individual, to recommend the practice of this divine religion. Possibly it was never more necessary to do so than at present; when, from causes too many, and perhaps too invidious to enumerate, Christian Piety grows out of fashion, while infidelity, enthusiasm, and immorality, triumphantly raise themselves upon its well-nigh subverted foundations. These are in the same degree destructive to a state, as true and rational religion is advantageous to it; and therefore are to be discountenanced in the same proportion as the latter is to be cherished, encouraged, and honoured.

One of the best and most infallible methods to obtain this great end is, a solicitous attention to the right and early instruction of young minds; from the neglect of which almost all public and private evil proceeds. Though it is pleasing to reflect, that we have some illustrious examples of the high advantages arising from early good impressions: yet it is a truth too notorious to be denied, and too im-

portant to be despised, that an almost general neglect of early religious cultivation prevails: and if the fountain be polluted, how shall pure streams flow from it?

In this view of things we may, with concern, observe the business of that writer but too much done for him, who, with the most subtle hostility against the religion of Christ, and, we may add with confidence, against the felicity of states, exhorts to a total neglect of religious impressions; and, paradoxically enough, would leave the young untutored mind to the blind guidance of corrupted nature!*—A finishing stroke, reserved for this champion of infidelity! for, was the advice pursued, it requires no sagacity to discern whither it would lead: men would soon be reduced to that wild unsocial state, so much admired by this sprightly but chimerical writer.

It should be remarked, however, that these sentiments are diametrically opposite to those of the wise, in all ages and countries of the world. The importance of a right education hath abundantly proved itself by the solicitude of all prudent parents, and well regulated states, to give such education to their children and members. Indeed this hath commonly been made a criterion of their wisdom and policy; and the excellence of commonwealths hath been frequently estimated by their care or neglect of their youth.

And as the sentiments of this writer thus oppose the general opinion of mankind, so are they in direst contradiction to those recommended in scripture. Moses, in the strongest manner, commands fathers to instruct their children from their earliest years; and in Eli we have a fearful example of parental negligence. The wise man recommends that children should be accustomed to the yoke from their

* See Rousseau's EMILIUS.

infancy; and St. Paul frequently exhorts parents to teach and admonish their children:—a practice unquestionably right upon every idea of the human mind. For were that mind, what some would suppose, a mere *tabula rasa* upon its first coming into the world, a pure and perfect blank, without one single impression; who can deny that it would be right, that it would be humane and wise, to make, in the earliest moments, those impressions upon it, which long and careful experience hath proved to be just in themselves, and advantageous in their consequences?

But when we are taught from divine revelation that this idea of the soul is groundless; when we are assured from thence, that the human mind is corrupt and prone to evil,—a truth to which we ourselves must daily bear ample testimony; it becomes, in this view, a duty of the highest importance, nay, I will add, of the tenderest humanity, early to supply the infant mind with such maxims, as may prove a sufficient bias to the corruption of its nature, and enable it, through divine grace, to continue stedfast in the practice of virtue.

But, more fully to set forth the importance of religious and early culture, and as an Introduction to some discourses more especially designed, my YOUNG FRIENDS, to promote your establishment and progress in piety and virtue, I propose to show, that those who enjoy the singular benefit of a pious education, have the greatest probability of success and perseverance in their course; that they are assured of the divine protection and assistance; and that many striking advantages, with many solid and durable comforts, are the certain consequences of such an education.

I. "That there is the greatest probability of success in *their* course, who are early dedicated to the

service of religion," is the first point to be shown. Now, it admits of no doubt, that of two travellers, who have the same journey to go, he is much more likely to accomplish it, who, rising betimes in the morning, sets our in all the liveliness and vigour of his strength, than he, who drowsily sleeps till noon, and in the heat and toil of the day can scarce drag his feeble feet along. It admits of no doubt but that he, who from a child hath known those scriptures, whose character, superlatively excellent beyond that of all other books, is, that " they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ;"—that he who, from a child, hath been taught to read and to reverence, to think and to act by, those scriptures: it admits of no doubt, but that such a one will be infinitely more likely to persevere in the path of right, than he who, unacquainted with the wisdom of God, is left to the random pursuits of an unsettled mind, and the strong bias of corrupted passions.

Good principles and habits, early imbibed and formed, are of such power, that they will scarcely permit a wide deviation from right; and their checks are so forcible and prevalent, that they can never be brought to a satisfactory acquiescence in wrong. Good principles, it is true, may be for some time suppressed; but, like elastic bodies, although they may be kept down a while by superior pressure, yet will they be continually upon the struggle, till their exertion has surmounted every weight.

II. But not merely from this natural tendency of early and right principles, is a probability of perseverance in virtue reasonable: " As Christians we have higher grounds whereon to build hopes of success." For as no good either is or can be perfected in the human mind, without almighty grace, so we have the most solid assurance of that divine assist-

ance, when, in our early days, we carefully cherish the influences of God's holy spirit: and thus, from the morning to the noon of life, are diligent to seek for that celestial guest, who, by the most sacred promise, hath declared, "I love them that love me; and those who seek me early find me."

Nor is this only a promise; it is the most condescending call from the Lord of Wisdom; inviting us to his love, by proposing to us that love, invaluable beyond conception, in return for the narrow and unequal tribute of our love to Him: "I love them that love me." We well know how persuasive this motive of affection is in human nature. Love usually begets love; and we cannot fail to value and esteem those who, by all means in their power, testify their value and esteem for us: and the great Lord of the universe, that Lord who is love itself, is pleased to declare himself thus affected towards us. Our love to Him shall be repaid, and, oh how abundantly repaid!—repaid by *His* love to us! We cannot, therefore, doubt, but that when from the first dawnings of reason, from the first openings of the thinking mind, we offer up all the firstfruits of our young affections to Him; we cannot doubt, but that *His* tender love will be displayed towards us, in an especial degree; that the dew of his kindly favour will foster, and will fully expand in the fairest glow, the fine flower, which in its bud was presented as an humble sacrifice to Him.

And as this promise of God's love to us is a strong argument for our perseverance in the right path, so is it the best and most awakening encouragement of our love to Him. For only reflect a moment, my young friends, what an inexpressible blessing, what an invaluable privilege, what an unspeakable comfort it is, to be loved by the Lord of men and angels; by the eternal King of heaven and earth,

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by the Father of mercies, and the Author of all good; by the Lord God Almighty, "who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou!" To be loved by Him, whose wondrous power created, whose unfathomable mercy redeemed, whose infinite grace guides, sanctifies, preserves us!—to be loved by Him who is essential love, beauty, goodness, power! in whose presence is life; from whose right hand are poured inexhaustible treasures of felicity and glory! What can *they* want, what need *they* fear, what may not *they* hope, who are loved by such a God, and such a Father!

Thus, from the natural tendency of early and right principles, and from the certain assurance of the divine assistance and protection, there is the greatest probability of their success and perseverance, who set out early in a virtuous and religious course.

III. But I am to show further, that "hence arise many striking advantages." One of these, and the only one which I shall mention at present, is, that thus the first tincture is given to the mind, the first bias to the affections: that hereby right habits and right principles get the first possession, and preserve the inclination and practice from those warping and destructive customs and opinions, which it is difficult to bend again, and reduce to their original and necessary straitness. The young twig, which, in its first planting, received an improper bent, must be carefully tended while capable of inflection or the tree will grow up ill-shaped and crooked, as the twig was first inclined. We all know how strong are the prepossessions and prejudices of education,—ill prepossessions and unhappy prejudices; and we may be perfectly satisfied, that good prepossessions and prejudices are equally prevalent and powerful.

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It is well said by one of the ancients, "The cask long retains the smell of the liquor with which it was first seasoned*." Indeed, an early knowledge of virtue and religion, and impressions of a proper sort made upon the mind, when the mind is most susceptible of impression, will scarce ever be erased; but rather will continue to strengthen and improve, as the mind improves and strengthens, and to produce all those happy consequences, which are the fruit of pure and undefiled religion.

The mind of man is so active, and unhappily, through the corruption of our nature, so prone to evil, that, there is no doubt, evil propensities, like tares, will plentifully spring up, and evil practices necessarily follow, where virtuous and religious culture is neglected. For the mind of man, in some degree, resembles that earth, which, after his fall, he was destined with labour to cultivate; and which must be carefully attended to, diligently cleansed from weeds, properly planted and sown, if we desire a rich and plentiful produce: but if neglected, noxious weeds will spring up, choke the ground, and render it at once unpleasant and unprofitable. So, neglect the culture of the human mind, and it will assuredly produce a plentiful crop of vices, unpleasant and unprofitable: and how hard a task will it be; nay, if to divine grace all things were not possible, we might say, how *impossible* a task! to root out and subdue this overspreading harvest of evil!

How difficult it is to gain the superiority over habits and customs, even in the most trifling matters, no man is ignorant: but to subdue habits which have long lived with us, and gained our approbation; habits of vice, to which sensual affections have annexed pleasure in the gratification; totally to alter

* Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu.— HORACE.

our conduct; to pluck out the right eye of a darling lust, to cut off the right hand of a profitable sin, oh, how arduous, how painful!—Yet, if we would be the servants of Christ, and gain the kingdom of heaven, this is our indispensable duty, where such criminal habits and vices have got the sway. Here, then, we discern the unspeakable advantage of early good habits and principles; which, preserving us in the road of duty, secure us from this most difficult, if not, in some cases, impossible task, of correcting vicious habits, and amending corrupted customs and notions, which, through long possession, become intimate to men almost as themselves. Early Piety, therefore, is of the highest profit, in this single view; as it tends to keep us stedfast in the duty we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves; to make our salvation probable and easy, which evil habits render in many cases desperate, in every case difficult.

But not less comfortable than advantageous will the early dedication of ourselves to God be found. To be perfectly satisfied of this, let us take a brief view, my young friends, of the miseries arising from the practice of vice, of the pleasures resulting from the practice of virtue. All vice is, and ever must be, accompanied with uneasiness, pain, and sorrow, for this plain reason; because it is in immediate contradiction to the nature and end of man. Vice was, originally, no way connected with the human nature: man was created perfect: through envy of the Tempter came death, its forerunner sin, and its attendant sorrow. Sorrow, sin, and death, have from thenceforth been inseparable companions; and men may as well hope to find satisfaction, and to secure happiness to themselves, by walking in the midst of a fiery furnace, as by walking in the pestilent and contagious haunts of vice. If we reflect only a little further, that man was created for God, and that

God is a being of infinite and unsullied purity, and therefore perfectly happy, we must be convinced that vice, as being at the utmost distance from Him who is holiness and happiness, can be only productive of misery. This too is equally plain from the immediate contrariety of vice to the health and the peace of human nature: diseases, terrible in sort, and countless in number, crowd the monster's train: disquietude and inward dismay, quarrels, outward offences, and contentions, are her never-failing attendants. But, above all, if we consider not only that vice is contrary to our own nature, to the nature of our God, to health, and to peace, but,—so virulent in its nature, so offensive and deep in its guilt,—that it caused the only begotten Son of God to be put to shame, and to die upon the cross for a world of sinners; it will appear abundantly evident, that an early dedication of ourselves to God, cannot fail to be comfortable, as preserving us from that misery, which is the inevitable consequence of sin.

But when, on the other hand, you take a view of the blessings and pleasures resulting from the practice of virtue and religion, you will never be enticed from the fair and blessed path, by any allurements of vice, by any seductions of evil.

For, early initiated into the delightful road to heaven, you will find that road, the further you advance upon it, the more pleasant and blissful. The sense of God's favour and love will diffuse an unspeakable serenity over your souls. The consciousness that you are acting that part for which the All-wise formed and designed you, that you are travelling, short-lived pilgrims, through a wilderness of trial, to an happy Canaan of consummate rest: this will fill your souls with constant thanksgiving and cheerfulness; and enable you, with a right lowly and grateful heart, to pass the time of your sojourn-

here below. Your beneficent and becoming conduct, will, in a great measure, endear you to your fellow-creatures, or at least to such as you would most wish to be dear to, the virtuous and the good; and every circumstance in life, will thus be rendered easy. Is Adversity your lot; doth the hand of Heaven lie hard upon you, to prove your faith, and enhance your future reward? Your principles and due regard to religion, will render adversity itself the school of virtue, and enable you to say, with all the humility of child-like resignation; "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." On the other side, should Prosperity, from the God of all events, crown and attend you; should greatness and riches accompany you; the sweets of domestic felicity surround you, and the heads of men bow down to you in honour and respect; the same religious principles will still prevail to guard you as well from this dangerous sun-shine, as from the former chilling blasts. They will teach you wisely to use your prosperity; to consider yourselves as stewards of that God, from whom you have received all things, and to whom you must one day render up an account: they will protect you as well from elation, presumption, and pride, in this state, as from dejection, murmuring, and complaint in the former.

In short, an early knowledge of, and a persevering attention to, the great truths of the gospel of Christ, will teach you content in every station; will enable you to sail through life with as much ease and serenity, as the unavoidable difficulties of this transitory state will admit; will give to your mind the purest pleasures, and most satisfactory enjoyments; will make you a comfort to yourselves, a blessing to your friends, and above all, a blessing and an ornament to society.

Such are some of the comforts, the advantages of

Early Piety; many more might easily be enumerated. I must not however pass over one comfort, one advantage, to which I am persuaded no generous or feeling heart can be insensible. The comfort, I mean, my young friends, of crowning the kind care of your parents; the advantage of blessing their tender and heart-felt solicitude for your sakes. Could you be sensible of the anxious thoughts, the sleepless nights, the watchful days, which they have passed for you; could you be sensible of the bleeding fears, the affectionate hopes, and all the unutterable concern which throbs in the parental breast: a sympathetic gratitude would fill your souls, and you would think it your highest happiness, as, be sure, it is your indispensible duty, by every possible means to make them some amends; and to sooth the decline of their days, by all the lenient assuasives of filial piety and love. And oh! how exquisitely comfortable, how divinely pleasing, "to rock the cradle of declining age;" to return the unspeakable obligations of parental care: to tend the bed of the languishing and affectionate parent; and to draw from their trembling lips, a blessing on the day which made them parents, which gave them children to afford such consolation, in the hour of greatest need!

Let the tender parent look to that hour;—to the hour when age and infirmities shall oppress him; to the years when life begins to grow dark and cold: and let him consult his own heart, whether then, he would be slighted, disregarded, dishonoured; would have his aged bosom torn with the vices and follies of his children; or would then be reverenced, esteemed, consulted, attended, and have a perpetual pleasure in their wise and regular conduct.—And as he finds that heart reply, so let him "for the sake of his own hapiness," from the minds of his children to virtue and religion.

Let him further look to those children, either, on the one hand, as filling up their stations in society with honour to themselves, and emolument to mankind; or, as disgracing their birth by useless, shameless, and immoral lives; a reproach to their family, and a nuisance to the commonwealth: and "for the sake of his country," let him carefully improve the young mind, by implanting those principles which are the only foundation of moral obedience.

But let the tender parent look further still to his children, as members of an eternally happy, or eternally miserable state: let him contemplate them, either as reproaching him,—amidst the fearful torments of that doleful mansion, where peace, and rest, and hope which comes to all, shall never come; reproaching the wretched author of their birth, as the cause of their unutterable distress, through his fatal neglect of their pious and early instruction: or, on the other hand, let him behold the children which God hath given him on earth joyfully approaching with himself the throne of glory; while with humble confidence, he can thankfully present them, and say, "Behold, Lord, of those whom thou hast given me, I have lost none: carefully and early instructed in the duty which they owed to thee, and to their fellow-creatures, they persevered faithful unto the end; and now thou wilt bestow upon them the rewards of everlasting life." Let the parent contemplate this contrast; let him consider himself as the father of immortals, whose eternal fate depends upon his diligence and early culture, and can HE want motives to exert every probable effort to save from perdition, to bless with complete salvation, the children which God hath given him?

Every motive stimulates to this duty: our own happiness, and what is dearer often to affectionate parents, the happiness of their beloved offspring!

And not only these, but the happiness also of society, which immediately depends upon the right education of youth, especially of those in the more exalted spheres of life. Their superior stations, call them to the most important duties for their country: and from their example and authority, if virtuous, the highest blessings; if vicious, the most destructive evils must follow. But how should the example of those deserve imitation, who themselves in early life, have had no good examples before them, nor been instructed in those sentiments, which give uniformity to conduct, and to authority respect? For they who are not accustomed to bear the yoke in their youth; who are then undisciplined in the principles of piety and religion; who are uninstructed in the relations which they bear to God, and their fellow-creatures; uninstructed in the true state of their own souls, the frailty and weakness of their nature in general; the justice, humanity, and benevolence they owe to all mankind; the certainity of that death, which levels all distinctions; and of that judgment, from which no earthly distinction can procure a discharge: such, however their understandings may be improved, if their hearts be thus neglected, and left to stagnate on the lees of depraved affections, will certainly, not only be found a burden to society, but a misery to themselves, and a curse to their parents. And it will be fruitless to expect elevation of thought, and greatness of action from those who neither fear God, reverence themselves, or love their fellow-creatures.

As, therefore, the importance of early and right culture is so great, may God inspire every order of men amongst us with an anxious solicitude to bless mankind, themselves, and their children, by affording those children such an education! and may his grace and assistance, crown the patriotic endeavours

of all, who thus, eminently consult for the piety and happiness of the succeeding generation! may that generation rise up to honour and serve him; may they prove a comfort to their parents, a blessing to themselves, an ornament to the community: good children, good subjects, good Christians, through Jesus Christ, &c.

*** This sermon, having been preached at many places, and on different occasions, the Author is glad of the present opportunity to gratify the request of those who have frequently called for it: but, as they who heard it at some places, may possibly remember "the Rules of Advice," with which it was occasionally concluded; and may be disappointed, if they find them not here; it is thought proper to subjoin them instead of *Anecdotes* (which will be affixed to the following *Discourses*), in order to impress the subject of them more forcibly.

Rules of Advice to Parents*.

"In care, reproof, correction, and encouragement, husband and wife should act in perfect concert. Teach your children submission to yourselves, or you will be able to teach them nothing beside. Remove all bad examples, far as possible from their sight. Understand yourselves, what you would have your children understand: be yourselves, what you would have your children be: do yourselves, what you would have your children practise: parents are the original models, after which children form their tempers and behaviour. Gradually infuse into the empty mind the clearest and most affecting notions of God, his omnipresence, almighty power, his goodness, and overruling providence, his regard to pious men, his hearing and answering prayer. Impress

* See "Advice to a Daughter," and the "Reflections on Death."

these things upon the tender spirit, and fix them by scripture instances; as of Noah, Abraham, Josiah, the Israelites passage through the Red Sea, their being fed with manna; the deliverance of Daniel, the three children, and the like. Let them frequently hear serious discourse upon religious and heavenly subjects; they will listen and catch the same spirit. Show them the vanity of the world, the frailty of the body, the fall and corruption of our nature, the dignity and infinite worth of the soul. Show them what hath been done for that soul, and make them acquainted with the deep riches of redeeming grace. Often inculate, that they are made not to live here below, but in the glorious and eternal world above: and that they are here, only to have their virtue tried and exercised, that they may be fit to live for ever in Heaven. Habituate them to sanctify the sabbath; to esteem highly the word of God, to reverence his ordinances, and to respect his ministers. And be careful, that, with all religious instruction, they imbibe a spirit of universal candour, goodness, and charity; as far from the wildness of enthusiasm, as from the narrowness of superstition and bigotry. Address their understandings, encourage their inquiries, and use them betimes to think, and to reason. Represent Vice, in its true, that is, in the most odious; Virtue, in its true, that is, the most amiable colours. Especially, give them a deep sense of truth and integrity; and an abhorrence of all manner of falsehood, fraud, craft, subterfuge, and dissimulation, as base and dishonourable, and highly displeasing to God. You cannot cherish veracity too much. Never be severe for any fault they ingenuously acknowledge; but, while you are convincing them of the wrong they have done, honour and commend them for the truth they have spoken. Give them a low opinion of

splendour and show, and deceive them not into wrong thoughts of themselves, by gaudy, external ornaments. Teach them to reverence the human nature, even in the poorest of the species; suffer them not to treat any with contempt; but cherish a spirit of benevolence and compassion, gentleness and modesty. Check a pert, bold, forward behaviour; it may grow up into an unruly, dissolute insolence. Suffer them not to be men and women, but as years and understanding allow; children are by no means fit to govern themselves, or to direct others. Inure them to diligence and close application (properly intermixed with diversions and play) when they are strong enough to apply to learning; and let them want no advantage of increasing in knowledge and wisdom, which you can procure, and they can improve; for this will be a benefit to them, superior, perhaps, to any other you may have to bestow. Great care is to be taken, if they are placed out for education, in the choice of an instructor; and, indeed, great is the difficulty attending such a choice. Your study, however, should be to find one, who regards the morals of the children under his care, not less than the profit accruing from them; who considers the education of children, not merely as a trade, whereby to get bread, but as an important trust, whereof he must one day give a solemn account; and therefore will be conscientiously diligent to teach them those maxims of virtue and religion, which will always make a man a good citizen, and a good Christian; which are better characters (if they are to be separated) than a good scholar, or a wise worldling."

If you proceed thus, you may rest persuaded, that your sincere and pious endeavours will not be in vain. The nature of things, and the promise of God, insure success.

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SERMON II.

THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTHFUL DEVIATIONS AND EXCESS.

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.—LUKE xv. 13.

THE parable of the prodigal is no less beautiful and pathetic, than it is instructive and consolatory. It sets before us, in the most striking view, the progress and fatal consequence of vice, on one hand; and on the other, the paternal readiness of our Almighty Father to receive the returning penitent to pardon and mercy. It is peculiarly instructive to youth; and would become very instrumental to preserve them from the pernicious allurements of sin and folly, if they would seriously reflect upon it; if they would contemplate, in the example of the prodigal before them, the nature and the effects of those vices, which brought him to extreme distress, and which will ever bring to distress all those who indulge them.

We have seen, in the foregoing sermon, the many and great advantages, which will follow from an early attachment to the paths of piety and virtue. It may therefore be proper, before we enter upon a delineation of particular duties, to contemplate the opposite scene; to review, by way of contrast, the fatal consequences, which naturally spring from

youthful deviations and excess; to mark the progress of the thoughtless and vicious young man's ruin, as emphatically described in the parable.—That those of you, my beloved young friends, who have not yet launched out into the world, and have been thus far happily secured from the dire contagion of iniquity, may persevere, admonished by the example, in the happy paths of sobriety and religion: that those of you, who have made any false steps, and have turned aside at all from these happy paths, may, at least, check your progress; may stand still, and consider what the issue of a further advance will be; and may return, warned by the unavoidable danger, to the ways of virtue and truth: ways, which never youth repented that he had early and diligently trod; though thousands have sad cause to repent that they ever forsook them, in ruined health, ruined fortune, ruined reputation, ruined peace and hope! God Almighty forbid that this should be the case of any amongst you! Oh! may his grace preserve and protect you! And let me entreat,—as no motive but an earnest wish for your real welfare could induce me to lay these truths before you, let me entreat that you will give them a serious hearing now, and an impartial consideration afterwards. And if what is offered doth not approve itself to be conducive to your best present and future happiness, reject and despise it: but if reason, experience, and religion, all unite to attest the truth; resist not these, but make me happy,—rather, make your beloved parents and friends happy, by choosing that better part; which we with to recommend to your choice, for this single reason only, because it will infallibly produce your felicity.

The younger son in the parable thought not so: the experience and advice of his father were by no means sufficient for him: he thought himself much

wiser, no doubt, than the preaching old man; and heard, as is often the case with youth, his good father's counsels with a weary and painful attention; supposing, that he wished to withhold him from happiness. Vain and unthinking! as if a tender parent would ever grudge his child any true and proper satisfaction. The young man was determined, however, to judge for himself; and to be wise by his own experience. Pride had got footing in his heart; and now, impatient of parental dominion, and anxious for independence, he requests his father to give him that independence. The good man, wearied perhaps by his importunities, grants him his wish, and permits him to make the hazardous trial.

No sooner is he in possession of the portion allotted him, than he hastes away with it, far from the presence of that indulgent parent, who possibly, by much fatigue and much anxiety, had procured this fortune for his son: and now all his parental love and care is repaid by a base desertion of him, by an ungrateful removal from his presence; which indeed could not fail to be irksome to a young man, determined upon a course of gaiety,—as, no doubt, he would call a life of disobedience to his father,—destruction to himself, and contempt of his God: for such was the life he led.

He fell into a course of riot and prodigality, indulging all those youthful lusts, which, in the heat of blood, are fancied the sole enjoyments, are called the only pleasures! Prodigality and riotous living, necessarily infer idleness, foppery, and bad company of every sort; and who is there proof against these? What health, or what fortune are sufficient to support them? None ever was, or ever will be; and therefore no wonder they brought our young adven-

turer to destruction. "He wasted all his substance in riotous living; he devoured his estate with harlots!" we are told: and the sad consequence to him was neglect, contempt, and beggary. He was now despised by all, whom he had fed and supported in his day of riot and extravagance: contemned even by those who had shared his bounty, and hastened his ruin! wretches who have no bowels of feeling, no generosity or honour; and who never have but one motive for their regard, the motive of their own immediate interest. Cast out, and scorned by all, he was reduced to the utmost extremity; ready to perish with hunger; and in this sad case, once more bethought him of the affectionate parent whom he had so ungratefully used; and to whom, in a miserable plight, all humble and submissive, he at length returns! while, to witness the amiable force of parental affection, the tender father, we are informed, melted to behold his suffering child, relented, forgave, and received him to his bosom and his love!

Now let us observe, in this fine picture, the steps by which the prodigal advanced to his ruin.

1. Impatience of parental controul, and a desire of independency, was the first bad temper which showed itself in his mind, and which led on to every future evil. A temper, too apt to rise in the minds of youth, and springing from that pride, which is alas! but too deeply rooted in our corrupt nature, and which cannot be subdued and keep under too much by early culture. For, when once this fond desire of acting without all restraint, and indulging its own inclination, gets possession of a youthful heart, the gentle authority even of the most kind and prudent parents too commonly becomes a burden: all their tender remonstrances are overlooked or disregarded; or, at least, considered only as in-

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tended to fix and continue that restraint, which the eager youth so much wishes to overleap.*

2. It is no wonder, when this impatience of parental controul strongly operates on the mind, that the presence and observation of a parent is of all things most displeasing, and consequently of all things most to be avoided: this was the second bad disposition, which the prodigal discovered. Soon as he had gained his allotted portion, "he took his journey into a far country;" he retreated far as possible from the eye and notice of his father, whose advice and remonstrances, as he was determined not to regard, he was determined not to hear, or be molested by them. And thus it is with those who tread in steps like his. If they cannot remove to a distance from their parents, they will, at least, secrete their actions from them to the utmost of their power. A certain bad sign, and ever to be dreaded in all youthful hearts!

For why should you wish, my young friends, to secrete anything from those, who love you with the most tender affection, and who are more interested in your welfare, than they are even in their own? What you keep secret from them must either be a matter of advantage, or the contrary: if it be the former, you act most unkindly by them; as the knowledge of it would give them the greatest satisfaction: but if, as is generally the case, what you keep private is vicious and detrimental, think how simple a part you act, in harbouring thoughts, or doing deeds, which you dare not discover to them, who love you better than themselves; and who certainly, not only by their love, but by their knowledge, are best fitted to advise what is most for your good; and consequently, should never be kept in ignorance of any of your designs or connections.

* See the next Sermon, "on Filial Piety."

3. Determined, however, to gratify his passions, the youth is deaf to every argument of affection and utility; till, like the prodigal, he commences "Riotous Liver:" this is the certain consequence of youthful independence, and a disregard of parents. This riotous living includes, not only an indulgence of lust and criminal passions; but a waste of present substance, by all the destructive ways of prodigality, idleness, dissipation with bad company,* the wretched foppery of dress, and all the abuse of language by lying, swearing, and obscenity.

Now let the youth, in the coolness of reflection, seriously review a life spent amidst vices like these, and consider, whether it is possible to attain, by such a life, the end at which he aims. All reasonable creatures act to some end: and the end which young people propose to themselves, is the obtaining of pleasure, or at least, of higher pleasure than that which parental restraint allows. But how shall they judge, who yet have seen or known little of mankind and the world, in what consists their best and truest pleasure? If they are actuated only by self opinion and conceit; if they judge themselves superior in wisdom to all with whom they are connected; it is reasonable, either that they should give some proof of such superior wisdom, or, at least, be taught, that high self-opinion is always an indication of a want of Wisdom, which ever dwells with Humility. If then they are not so opinionated as to deem themselves wiser than others, they may reasonably be expected to listen to the information of those who have lived longer, and known more of the world, than themselves. And the joint voice of all such will be, "that the indulgence of youthful lusts necessarily leads to ruin and to misery; that bad com-

* See the following Sermons, on "Bad Company," and "Pleasure."

pany, whether of the male or female kind, but the latter more especially, is the surest bane, and the most poisonous corrupter of all good principles and all good manners: that idleness is the root of all evil, introductory of almost every vice: that foppery, and an absurd affectation of dress, ever tend to make ridiculous, and raise only the smiles and contempt of the judicious; who have long been agreed, that neatness, decency, and propriety, are, in this respect, the true ornaments;—that lying is the most mean and abject vice, rendering youth as dangerous as despicable, and sowing the seeds of a very worthless and contemptible character in future life: that swearing or obscenity in discourse are utterly inexcusable; as having no plea of pleasure or utility to urge in their defence; as being the greatest affront to the Majesty of Heaven, and the surest indication of a very depraved, as well as of a very weak mind: that prodigality will certainly end in the ruin of all temporal substance, and never procures a friend; for all men, even the most abandoned, however they may help to drain him, always despise the thoughtless prodigal. It is by true generosity and benevolence, whose foundation is laid in prudent economy, that the friendship and love of mankind are secured.

Now if youth would only be so wise, as to listen to these truths, they could not fail to have an effect upon them; especially if they would consider, that these truths are so well known and approved, that all men are agreed in them. They are not matters of any doubtful speculation; they are as certain and determinate, as the existence of the sun himself in the heavens: and as there can be no question, that the indulgence of the vices here specified tends to misery, sorrow and ruin, more or less conformable to that of the young man's in the parable; so can

there, on the other hand, be no doubt, but the avoiding of these vices, and the cultivation of the contrary virtues, will, by the grace of God, produce present peace and future happiness.

Suffer me, therefore, my young friends, earnestly to exhort you to grow wise from this example of the prodigal; and to learn from thence what you should choose, and what you should shun, to make you, what I am sure you all wish to be, a blessing to yourselves, a comfort to your parents, and an ornament to our holy religion.

To this end, seriously reflect on the steps by which his ruin was perfected; and inquire, whether it is not in the very nature of those vices which he indulged, always, and in every instance, to produce the effects which he experienced. Search, and know whether ever any man procured true happiness, or confessed that he enjoyed solid comfort, from the unlimited gratification of his passions, from his neglect of duty and of God: search and know, whether thousands have not most severely felt the sad effects of such gratifications, and deplored, in extreme distress, their fatal consequences; whether thousands, disregardful in youth of counsel and restraint, have not brought themselves into the most calamitous circumstances of fortune, of body, and of soul. On the other hand, search and inquire diligently, whether any man was ever yet found upon the earth, who regretted at the close of life, that he had too cautiously avoided the snares and evils of youthful lusts; that he had too soon entered upon the paths of virtue and religion;* that he had served his God, and obeyed the holy rules of his divine Saviour too much or too exactly. An instance of this sort was never yet heard of; and surely no stronger argument can be urged in behalf of virtue, and of that

* See the foregoing Sermon.

preference, which you ought to give it in your choice.

Let it too be a consideration of no small weight with you, that the more carefully you walk in the paths of sobriety during your early days, the more diligently you guard against the entrance of every vice, and prevent it from becoming in any degree habitual; the more easy you will find it to persevere. Whereas, if once vice gains an entrance, much more if it becomes habitual, you will find the retreat difficult and embarrassed;* and, perhaps, from the strong power of habit, may be led on in the gratification of what your better judgment disapproves, and consequently must perpetually condemn.

Beware, therefore, of Beginnings! be cautious of your first steps! preserve yourselves pure!† and let temptations to independence and impatience of parental controul especially, be checked in their first rise. The better to effect which, arm yourselves with every proper consideration; particularly remember, that whatever wishes you may have for a freedom from restraint, your parents must certainly be the best judges of your fitness for such freedom. If therefore they restrain your inclinations, never receive their controul with impatience; but always reason thus: "my parents have, doubtless, the tenderest affection for me; I have had innumerable proofs of their love; and I can never suppose, that the good father, who has taken such kind care of me hitherto; that the beloved mother, who so tenderly supported me at her own breast, and has always shown the most solicitous attention to my welfare; I can never suppose that they would restrain me

* See the foregoing Sermon.

† *Flee youthful lusts*, was St. Paul's advice, even to Timothy; and consequently cannot be unworthy the best attention of every young person.

from anything, which would made me truly happy; that they would ever advise me to anything, but what will lead to my good. They have lived longer, seen and known more, and are wiser than myself. I am determined, therefore, to subdue my own inclinations, and contentedly to acquiesce in all their counsels and directions."

Fixed in such a determination;—and which of you can deny that such a determination is most wise and reasonable?—and joining to it a constant attention to duty, and a care to approve yourselves in the eyes of your divine Redeemer; you will need but few directions more, to guard you from evil. This wise resolution, invariably pursued, you will find your best preservative.

Conducted by it, you will have no need to fly, like the prodigal, from the presence and observation of your parents; you will have no need to secrete yourself or your actions from them. On the contrary, the company and presence of your parents will be most delightful to you; an ingenuous frankness and openness will prevail between you; you will find an unspeakable serenity and satisfaction in administering to the best comforts of those, to whom you owe the highest obligations; and, in the endeavour to return which, in some degree at least, there is, be sure, the highest pleasure. As it is impossible to conceive either an object more hateful, or a pain more afflicting, than that of a child, by a life of disobedience and immorality, racking the good heart of an affectionate and endearing parent!

Oh! my young friends, I am persuaded you have too much ingenuity, generosity and tenderness of soul, ever to act so ungrateful a part, ever to occasion so deep a sorrow: at least, if you expect happiness here or hereafter, if you expect favour either from God or man, avoid so base an evil; and by

lives of duty and religion, by a conscientious denial and subdual of all youthful lusts; by avoiding all bad company and connections, by diligently employing yourselves, and by keeping your tongues from all indecency and offence, endear yourselves more and more to your parents: give them cause to bless God perpetually for you; give them cause to rejoice, that amidst all the temptations of vice, amidst all the perils which so abundantly surround unwary youth in our days, and in the metropolis especially where every step should be taken with the utmost caution; give them cause to rejoice, that God's goodness hath preserved you unpolluted, and that you live a blessing to them, and the child of a better, even an everlasting father! What consolation must arise in the breast of a parent on that thought; when beholding his child, he beholds a child also of virtue and of God: and when, in the hour of death, his affectionate eyes are closed by that dear child, whom he doubts not to meet again, ere long, in everlasting bliss!

Give then, oh! give this exquisite felicity to your parents. To which end, begin early, contend resolutely, and maintain your ground perseveringly. Think, on one hand, what a divine pleasure must transfuse itself through that mind, which can enjoy the satisfaction above-mentioned; and on the other hand, take a brief view of the anguish, which must afflict the souls both of that parent and that child, in the circumstances of those represented in the parable.

Make the case your own: you are now blest with fond and indulgent parents: suppose yourself uneasy under their restraint, and, at length, become independent of them, and following your own inclinations. And suppose—what too surely would be found the case, if you were to be so unhappy as to fall into such a method of life; which God for-

bid!—yet, suppose, that indulging those inclinations to the full, surrounded with bad company, prodigal, wasteful, riotous, and idle; lulled on the lap of harlots, and reclined on the bed of sensuality; forgetful of every thing virtuous and praise-worthy; your mind drunk and intoxicated as it were with lust and vice: suppose, that the unavoidable consequences of such a life have befallen you; and that now, like the prodigal, your substance all wasted; your friends, mere summer friends! all flown; your health, perhaps, greatly injured, your reputation ruined, and yourself in extreme pain and penury: suppose, in this sad case, you see yourself returning to the once-loved house of your affectionate parents. Oh! with what anxious horror would you then enter those gates, and cross that threshold, as a stranger and an outcast, which you now enter, you now cross with so much delight and freedom. With what inexpressible anguish would you meet those parents, whom now you see with such pleasing satisfaction! Imagine that you behold the mother you love, bathed in tears of anguish and distress, running to embrace her ruined child. Imagine that you see your beloved father, grown old in cares and sorrows upon your account, turning his weeping face away from you, and unable to sustain the shock of your wretched appearance! Imagine the inexpressible torture which must arise in your own heart, on seeing the grief you occasion, on feeling that your ill-conduct has been the cause of it all. And as you would wish to avoid such anguish yourself, much more as you wish to save your beloved parents from such anguish; carefully avoid every thing which may in the least degree, tend to the introduction of so sad a catastrophe. Carefully avoid every thing which may give rise to the least probability of so complicated a distress. To which end, bear the contrast in mind,

which I have here pictured out; the contrast of the virtuous and dutiful child closing the eyes of a beloved and blessing parent; and that of a disobedient and worthless one, returning home to his parents in ruin, poverty, and distress.

And as the contrast cannot fail to influence your minds, by God's grace, so be assured, that if not in exactly the same degree and manner, yet the certain consequence of obedience and virtue, is peace and life;—of disobedience, and indulgence in forbidden and unallowed gratifications, is misery, is ruin, is present and eternal sorrow. From which may God, &c.

ANECDOTES, *respecting youthful Deviations and Excess.*

1. A lewd young fellow seeing an aged Hermit go by him barefoot, "Father, said he, you are in a very miserable condition, if there is not another world." "True, Son, replied the Hermit, but what is thy condition, if there is?" On this striking and singular occasion, the celebrated *Spectator* very naturally urges the following reflections. "Man, says he, is a creature designed for two different states of being, or rather, for two different lives. His first life is short and transient; his second, permanent and lasting. The question we are all concerned in, is this, 'In which of these two lives it is our chief interest to make ourselves happy?' Or, in other words, 'Whether should we endeavour to secure to ourselves the pleasures and gratifications of a life, which is uncertain and precarious, and at its utmost length of a very inconsiderable duration; or to secure to ourselves the pleasures of a life which is fixed and settled, and will never end?'——Every man, upon the first hearing of the question, knows very well which side of it he ought to close with.

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But however right we are in theory, it is plain that in practice we adhere to the wrong side of the question. We make provision for this life, as though it was never to have an end; and for the other life, as though it were never to have a beginning. The inconsistency of such a conduct is glaring, even at the worst; even supposing (what seldom happens) that a course of virtue makes us miserable in this life: but if we suppose, as it generally happens, that virtue would make us more happy, even in this life, than a contrary course of vice; how can we sufficiently deplore the stupidity or madness of those persons, who are capable of making so absurd a choice? Every wise man therefore will consider this life only as it may conduce to the happiness of the other; and cheerfully sacrifice the pleasures of a few years, to those of an eternity."

2. Cresippus the son of Chabrias, a noble Athenian, was so profusely expensive, that after he had lavishly consumed all his goods and other estate, he put to sale even the very stones of his father's tomb, in the building whereof the Athenians had disbursed a thousand drachmas.

3. In the year 1470, the tenth of Edward IV. George Neville, brother to the great Earl of Warwick, at his installment into the Archbishoprick of York, made a prodigious feast to all the nobility, most of the principal clergy, and many of the great commoners; the catalogue of which alone, as given by different writers, is sufficient to excite satiety and disgust. The Earl of Warwick was steward on the occasion, the Earl of Bedford treasurer, and the Lord Hastings comptroller, with many other officers; to which we may add one thousand servitors, sixty-two cooks, and five hundred and fifteen menial apparitors in the kitchen.—But, seven years after, fortune shifted the scenes; for the king seizing on

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all his estate, sent him over prisoner to Calais, where *vinctus jacuit in summâ inopiâ*, he was kept bound in extreme poverty: justice thus punishing his former prodigality.

4. There is a single passage in Herodotus, which might supply the place of many examples. When Cyrus had received an account that the Lydians had revolted from him, he told Crœsus, with a good deal of emotion, that he had almost determined to make them all slaves. Crœsus intreated him to pardon them; "but, added he, that they may no more rebel, or be troublesome to you, command them to lay aside their arms, and to wear long vests and buskins; (that is, to vie with each other in the indolent elegance and richness of their dress.) Order them to sing and play upon the harp; let them drink and debauch with impunity; and you will soon see their spirits broken, and themselves changed from men to women, so that they will no more rebel, or give you any uneasiness. The hint had too much sanction from experience not to appear plausible; and the event effectually answered the advice.

5. In the winter season, says Æsop, a commonwealth of Ants were busily employed in the management and preservation of their stock of corn; which they carefully exposed to the air in heaps, round the avenues of their little rural habitation. A Grasshopper, who had chanced to outlive the summer and autumn, and was ready to starve with cold and hunger, approached with great humility and dejection, and begged they would relieve his necessity, if it were but with one grain of wheat or rye. One of the ants asked him how he had disposed of his time and talents in summer, and why he had not taken pains to lay in a stock, as they had done. "Alas! said he, I passed away the hours in mirth and festivity; drinking, dance, and song, occupied my

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thoughts; and I never once dreamed of a succeeding winter." "O improvident creature! replied the ant, with emotion, if that be the case, I can only in justice say, that those who drink, sing, and dance in summer, must expect, ere long, to smart under the rigours and penury of winter."

6. The Poet's advice is as unquestionably true as the voice of an oracle;

Principiis obsta: Serò medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.

The practice which at first was indifferent, will very probably, in a short time, acquire the inflexibility of habit. "The memory of a well spent youth (says a celebrated writer) gives a peaceable, unmixed and elegant pleasure to the mind: and such who are so unfortunate as not to look back on youth with satisfaction, may give themselves no little consolation, that they are under no temptation to repeat their follies, and that they at present despise them. It was prettily said, he that would be long an old man, must begin early to be one.' It is too late to resign a thing, after a man is robbed of it; and therefore it becomes necessary, that before the arrival of age, we bid adieu to the pursuits of youth: otherwise sensual habits will live in our imaginations, when our limbs can no longer be subservient to them."

7. How wretched is the condition of Asotus! A little garret, with bare walls, is his whole apartment and of this, a flock bed covered with rags, takes up two thirds. Cold, nakedness, and shame, compel him to lie on that bed, till the day is far spent. At night, a lamp suited to the placè, a true sepulchral lamp, rather adds horror, than diffuses light. By the feeble glimmering of this languid flame, he eats a dry crust of brown bread, his whole repast! Yet, poor as it is, he is not sure that he shall be able to

renew it to-morrow: for he cannot dig, and to beg he is ashamed! What now is become of his countless treasure, his immense revenues, which appeared sufficient to maintain a province?—It may as well be asked, what becomes of the water poured into the sieve, or of wax thrown into a furnace. Luxurious entertainments, gaming, women, usurers, and his steward, are the bottomless gulphs which have swallowed up his opulence. But is there not one, among all his friends, who knows him in his adversity, and stretches out the hand of bounty for his relief? Is there not one, among all his friends?—Alas! had he ever a friend? If he had, he would have him still; for, whatever may have been said, "Adversity never banished a friend:" it only disperses those, who unjustly arrogate the name; and if adversity is productive of any good, (which cannot be denied) this is one of its principal advantages; for the loss of a false friend, is a real gain. If Asotus has any cause of complaint, it is only for want of wisdom, and of never having had a friend that was sincere.

8. The above fancy-portrait, is by no means destitute of originals in real life. We have a remarkable instance in George Villiers, created by James I. Earl, Marquis, and afterwards Duke of Buckingham, and invested with many high and lucrative offices. He is described to have a gay capricious nobleman, of some wit, and great vivacity; the minister of riot, and counsellor of infamous practices; the slave of intemperance; a pretended Atheist, without honour or principle, economy or discretion; and who, after various mal-proceedings and vicissitudes of fortune, after a justly merited disgrace from the very court which fostered him, and an imprisonment in the Tower for some time; at last, in the reign of Charles II. deserted by all his friends, and despised by all the world, died in the

greatest want and obscurity. Mr. Pope has so beautifully painted these circumstances in his epistle "On the Use of Riches," that we flatter ourselves they will not be thought ill applied, in furtherance of our general plan.

"In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung;
On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
With tape-tyed curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed;
Where taudry yellow strove with dirty red;
Great *Villiers* lies:—alas! how changed from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!
Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
The Bower of wanton Shrewsbury and Love;
Or, just as gay at council, in a ring
Of mimick statesmen, and their merry king.
No wit to flatter, left of all his store!
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more!
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this Lord of useless thousands ends!"

9. Henry the fifth, King of England, while he was Prince of Wales, by his loose and dissolute conduct was daily giving his father great cause of pain and anxiety. His court was the common receptacle of libertines, debauchees buffoons, parasites, and all those species of vermin, which are at once the disgrace and ruin of young Princes. The wild and riotous exploits of the Prince and his companions were the general topics of conversation, and furnished equal matter of astonishment and detestation. This sad degeneracy in the heir of his crown, was not more disagreeable to the King himself, who loved him with the most tender affection, than it was alarming to the nation in general; who trembled at the prospect of being one day governed by a Prince of his flagitious character. But their fears, to the universal admiration of all, were happily removed; for, no sooner had the young King assumed the reins of government, than he showed himself to

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be extremely worthy of the high station to which he was advanced. He called together the dissolute companions of his youth; acquainted them with his intended reformation; advised them to imitate his good example; and, after having forbidden them to appear in his presence again, if they continued in their former courses, he dismissed them with liberal presents. He next chose a new council, composed of the wisest and the best men in the kingdom; he reformed the courts of law, by discarding ignorant and corrupt judges, and supplying their places with persons of courage, knowledge, and integrity. Even the chief justice Gascoigne,* who had committed young Henry to prison for a former misdemeanor, and who on that account trembled to approach the royal presence, was received with the utmost cordiality and friendship; and, instead of being reproved for his past conduct, was warmly exhorted to persevere in the same strict and impartial execution of the laws. In a word, he seemed determined to become a new man, to bury all his juvenile excesses in utter oblivion, and to prove himself the common father and benefactor of all his subjects. And even before his royal predecessor's death, he appears to have been sensible of the folly and impropriety of his conduct, and resolutely bent to reform: for his father being naturally of a jealous and suspicious disposition, listened at times to the suggestions of some of his courtiers, who meanly insinuated, that his son had some evil design upon his crown and authority. These insinuations filled him with the most anxious fears and apprehensions, and he might perhaps have had recourse to very disagreeable expedients, to prevent the imaginary danger, had not his suspicions been timely removed by the prudent and exemplary conduct of the young

* See the following Sermon "on Duty to Parents."

Prince; for, no sooner was he informed of his father's jealousy, than he repaired to court, and throwing himself with all humility and much emotion on his knees, accosted the King in these memorable terms. "I understand, my liege, that you suspect me of entertaining designs against your crown and person: I own I have been guilty of many excesses, which have justly exposed me to your displeasure; but, I take heaven to witness, that I never harboured a single thought, inconsistent with that duty and veneration which I owe to your Majesty. Those who charge me with such criminal intentions, only want to disturb the tranquillity of your reign, and basely to alienate your affections from your son and successor. I have therefore taken the liberty to come into your presence; and humbly beg you will cause my conduct to be examined with as much rigour and strictness, as that of the meanest of your subjects; and if I be found guilty, I will cheerfully submit to any punishment you shall think fit to inflict." The King was so highly satisfied with this prudent and ingenuous address, that he embraced him with great tenderness; acknowledging, that his suspicions were entirely removed; and that, for the future, he would never entertain a thought to the prejudice of his loyalty and honour. See *The Second Part of Shakspere's Henry the Fourth.*

10. Polemo, an Athenian youth, was of so wretched and depraved a cast, that he not only delighted in vice, but gloried in the infamy of it. Returning from a debauch one morning after sun-rise, and seeing the gates of Xenocrates the philosopher open; filled with wine as he was, besmeared with ointments, a garland on his head, and clad in a loose and transparent robe, he enters the school, which at that early hour, was thronged with a number of grave and learned men; and, not content with so indecent an

entrance, he sat down among them, on purpose to affront their eloquence and sobriety, and oppose their prudent precepts by his drunken follies. His coming had occasioned all who were present to be angry, only Xenocrates himself was unmoved; and retaining the same gravity of countenance, and dismissing his present theme of discourse, he began a disquisition on modesty and temperance, which he represented in so lively colours before the young libertine, that Polemo, being much affected, first laid aside the crown from his head, then soon after drew his arm within his cloak; changed the festival merriment that appeared in his face to seriousness and anxiety; and at last, through the whole course of his life; cast off all his luxury and intemperance. Thus, by a single judicious and well adapted oration, the young man received so great a cure, that, from being one of the most licentious of his time, he became one of the greatest philosophers and best men in Athens.

*** The reader will meet with great entertainment and instruction, if he refers to Dr. Johnson's sentiments on this subject, in the 65th Number of his *Rambler*.

SERMON III.

ON FILIAL LOVE.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy Son." Then saith he unto the disciple, "Behold thy mother;" and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.—JOHN xix. 26, 27.

IT is the happiness and the perfection of a Christian, to follow his Redeemer's example; an example consummate in every respect, and fraught with instruction to persons of all stations and degrees of life. Children, amongst the rest, may gather from it "Lessons of allegiance and submission to their parents:" and after having shown in a general view, the "Advantages of Early Piety;" "the Miseries and Fatal Consequences of Early Vice;" I now proceed to dwell upon this first and most important of social offices; proposing to hold forth to you, my young friends, the admirable instance of tenderness and love presented in the text;* that you may thence be encouraged to honour and requite your parents, and to fulfil a duty which God hath enjoined

* I have rather chosen this method of treating the subject, than that of an immediate and didactic form; as so many incomparable writers have considered it in that way, from whose excellent compositions all necessary information may be derived. My intentions are principally to arouse and animate to the performance of this amiable duty.

with peculiar energy, and which rarely, if ever, passes unrewarded even in this world.

Tell me then, doth it not strike you with the most sensible delight to observe the Blessed Saviour of Mankind, when exposed to such infamy, and distressed with such torture; when objects of anguish and of terror only were around him; when, surely, it might well have been excused, if, attentive solely to his own sorrows, he had forgotten all solicitude for the sorrows of others;—doth it not affect you strongly to behold his tender anxiety for his Blessed Mother, who, in the bitterness of distress, stood weeping at the foot of his cross? One disciple only, one *whom he loved*, and whose perseverance showed him worthy of that love, continued stedfast to him in his last trials, and forsook him not in the hour of extremity! To him, to the favoured John, he bequeathed, as his last legacy, the mother, through whose soul the sword of sorrow now pierced!* "Woman, said he, best beloved and most honoured of women, in that disciple of mine, *Behold thy Son!* he will supply the place of him, whose work is finished, and who no longer shall remain on earth to comfort and support thee." "And oh thou, whom my soul loveth, faithful friend, and follower of thy master, *Behold thy mother!* Henceforth receive her, esteem and treat her as thy parent; and let thy love to me manifest itself by thy affectionate regard to her!" Pleased with the charge, and happy to execute his divine master's command, this disci-

* "Who can describe" says Mr. Formey, in his discourse on this subject "what then passed in the heart of Mary, and the struggles which she felt within her between faith and nature, justly moved by such a tragic scene? The expedient of that ancient painter, who veiled the visage of *Agamemnon*, when he assisted at the sacrifice of his daughter *Iphigenia*, is the only one which can be proper here"—See his *Philosophe Chretien*, Tom. ii. p. 170.

ple, we are told, from that hour took her unto his own home.*

Thus we see, the pains which our Redeemer sustained, the generous concern which he felt for the world, could not swallow up all his regards of a more private nature. As a man, he felt the sensibility of a Son, and the soft and tender workings of nature within him: as a great and good man, he restrained them within proper bounds, nor suffered them, at that solemn crisis, to break out into any inordinate agitations of grief. He showed us, that those affections which nature has implanted, may be innocently cherished, till we are about to pay the last debt of nature; and even then, exert themselves, provided they do not wound the peace of the mind, and shock the soul in her last moments; when she should be as much as possible rid of all the incumbrances of this world, to take her journey with more ease and freedom to another.† Jesus, perfect master of himself, showed the utmost sensibility, united with the most manly firmness, in providing for his mother on the cross: from which circumstance, it is probable, and generally believed, that Joseph was

* Antiquity furnishes us with an example of the same kind. A Greek dying in poverty, made two of his friends his heirs; leaving to one the care of his widow; to the other, that of providing a dowry for his daughter. These two friends esteemed their legacies as more precious than a considerable sum, and made a point of fulfilling exactly the will of the deceased. If Pagan friendship has produced such an example of generosity, what ought one not to expect from Christian friendship? See *Formey*, as above; where also, from our Saviour's perfect resignation on the cross, from his entire command of his spirit, from his delivering up his Mother into the hands of his disciple St. John, and that disciple's receiving her so readily, he draws a strong argument in behalf of the Christian religion and plainly proves that neither Jesus nor John could be impostors.

† See Seed's Sermons, Vol. i. p. 38.

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dead at the time: the Blessed Virgin therefore, as being a widow, stood the more in need of this affectionate care from her Son.

What a pleasing and striking example is this of Filial Love! Doubtless, it was recorded for the instruction of all children; and may we not reasonably believe, that Our Saviour, in his wisdom, thus acted, with a settled design to hold forth the important admonition to all his disciples? For, unquestionably, he who had so tender a regard for his mother, could never have forgotten her, might easily have devolved this care upon St. John, before the time of his crucifixion, which, as we know, he long foresaw: Or, as being himself invested with all power in heaven and earth, he could without any difficulty, have ministered to all her necessities, and preserved her from every danger. But, willing to set an example of filial tenderness to all mankind, as well as to show us, that human means are always to be used, even where we have the utmost reason to depend upon the divine providence; to exemplify these great truths, he forgot not, in the hour of anguish, the concerns of his parent, but provided for her with the most affecting tenderness.

And lives there a child, who does not feel the force of this great example, or would not act in imitation of it, upon similar circumstances?—I would hope not. For, if such there be, let them consider in how hateful a light they must appear before their God and Saviour, and in the eyes of all mankind, who agree to hold in the utmost abhorrence such as are insensible to the obligations of parental care, and ungrateful to those whom God and nature have made their best benefactors! Of all pleasures, that of returning benefits, and repaying debts of gratitude, is certainly the most exquisite to an ingenuous mind and what benefits, what debts can be equal to those

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which we owe to good parents, for all their kind concern and heart-felt anxiety on our accounts! If there is a satisfaction more peculiarly divine upon earth, it must be that which we share, when enabled to rejoice the parent's heart, and to show ourselves sensible of the love we have received, and of the tribute we owe for the inumerable kindnesses which they have conferred

Indeed, as the foundation of almost all religious, as well as social virtue, is laid in parental and filial love, we therefore find that God hath provided by every method to encourage and keep up this laudable affection, For, not only a strong instinct in the soul, naturally leads to a due performance of this duty; on either side, an instinct, strong both in parent and child, though for wise and good reasons, more prevalent perhaps in the former: not only hath God so ordered it, that the human race come into the world more helpless, and continue longer so, than the offspring of any other creatures; by which means the affection is wonderfully cemented on both sides;—the parent's heart being won by the thousand little pleasing endearments of the child, and the child's heart being engaged by the constant recurrence of parental care and love: not, only, I say, hath the great God of nature thus provided for this virtue, by the original constitution of man; but in his sacred revelation, He hath bound upon us this duty by promises the most engaging, and by threats the most formidable.

The first commandment, nay, the only commandment to which he hath annexed any promise, is that which inculcates honour to parents: what stronger proof can we have of the importance and of the advantage of this duty? And on the other side, what stronger proof can we have of the danger of neglecting it, and of the high detestation of God towards

those who neglect it, than the remembrance, that in his law God hath denounced a punishment upon this crime, equal to that of blasphemy against himself? "He that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death!" In agreement wherewith, the wise man remarks, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it!"

In perfect conformity with these passages of scripture, we find that all nations have agreed to honour and esteem those, who honour and esteem their parents; and to hold in abhorrence such as are deficient in this first of all moral duties. The ancient Romans, as well as some other people, carried this matter to a great length: they gave parents the absolute right of life and death over their children: And the Chinese at present, are remarkable for the reverence they exact from children to their parents. Their punishment of parricide, if such a thing ever happens, is the most exemplary and severe. The criminal, in this case, is cut into ten thousand pieces, which are afterwards burned; his houses and lands are destroyed; and even the houses that stood near him; "to remain as monuments of so detested a crime, or rather, that all remembrance of so abominable a villainy may be effaced from the earth!"*

And as such general horror and disapprobation attends the neglect of this duty, so as general a complacence follows upon the due performance. Tell us that a person excells in filial affection; that he is careful and anxious to oblige, bless and assist his parents; and we scarcely ask for any further recommendation. We receive such a one to our immediate esteem: for we scarcely imagine that there can

* See Du Halde's *History of China*; and the *Modern Universal History*, Vol. viii. 8vo.

be a bad heart, where this good affection so happily rules. It is the same with historical persons; how much are we pleased with those characters, who have distinguished themselves for this virtue! Who beholds not Joseph, for instance, with an eye of greater regard and veneration, when falling down on his knees before his old and afflicted parent, than when he sees him riding in the first chariot of the kingdom, and all the people bending their knees before him. Joseph the Son, is far more respectable even than Joseph the Deliverer of Egypt! Nor is Solomon the wise, and the glorious, even more glorious and wise, than when he rises up from his throne to meet his mother, bowing himself unto her, and causing her to sit down on his right hand. When Kings set such examples of filial reverence (and we know there are Kings who set such examples), let us hope the imitation may become general, to the exquisite comfort and happines of parents: And surely the voice of ever-dissatisfied censure and malevolence, will not dare to condemn an example, which every virtuous heart must approve and admire.

Very many pleasing instances of filial affection, might easily be produced from sacred and prophane history, to show the general approbation of this virtue. The Roman daughter, in particular, lives in every one's memory and esteem, who hazarded her life continually to visit her poor aged father in prison; and who, cruelly prevented from bringing that wretched parent food, long supported him, by the milk of her own breast. Happy, happy daughter! thus witnessing her tender affection, and winning to herself an immortal memory in the hearts of all succeeding generations!

From the whole then, you see that Duty to Parents is of the first consequence; and would you, my young friends, recommend yourselves to the fa-

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vour of your God and father, would you imitate the example of your adorable Redeemer, and be made an inheritor of his precious promises; would you enjoy the peace and comforts of this life, and the good esteem of your fellow-creatures;—Reverence your parents;—and be it your constant endeavour, as it will be your greatest satisfaction, to witness your high sense of, and to make some returns for the obligations you owe to them, by every act of filial obedience and love.

Let their commands be ever sacred in your ears, and implicitly obeyed, where they do not contradict the commands of God: pretend not to be wiser than they, who have had so much more experience than yourselves; and despise them not, if haply you should be so blest, as to have gained a degree of knowledge or of fortune superior to them. Let your carriage towards them be always respectful, reverent and submissive; let your words be always affectionate and humble, and especially beware of pert, and ill seeming replies; of angry, discontented, and peevish looks. Never imagine, if they thwart your wills, or oppose your inclinations, that this ariseth from anything but love to you: solicitous as they have ever been for your welfare, always consider the same tender solicitude as exerting itself, even in cases most opposite to your desires; and let the remembrance of what they have done and suffered for you, ever preserve you from acts of disobedience, and from paining those good hearts, which have already felt so much for you, their children.

Doubtless, you have all too much ingenuity of temper, to think of repaying the fears and bleeding anxieties they have experienced for your welfare, by deeds of unkindness, which will pierce them to the soul; which perhaps will break the strings of a heart,

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of which you, and you only, have long had the sole possession!—No, my young friends, so far from this, you will think it the greatest happiness of your lives, to follow your blessed Saviour's example, and to show the most tender concern for your parents; particularly if, like his, your's should happen to be a widowed parents; a mother deprived of her chief happiness and stay, by the loss of a husband, for which nothing can compensate but the dutiful and affectionate behaviour of her children: who are bound in that case to manifest double kindness, and to alleviate, by all the tenderness and affection imaginable, the many difficulties and sorrows of widowhood. Those amongst you in such circumstances, will, I persuade myself, think it your greatest delight to excel in every office of Filial Love; you will rejoice to testify by all means in your power that love to them, to whom, under God, you owe all blessings, and to whom, as the givers of your being, and of your well-being, of your education, religion, subsistence, you owe more than can ever be paid. * Happy you, who can make some return! happiest they, who can make the greatest! for the pleasure of doing so, is the most divine and exquisite which this world can give, or to be equalled only by that which the joyful parent shares, in the pleasing reception of so acceptable a tribute!

And let parents never forget, that much, very much of this happiness is in their own power; that it depends upon themselves, and their early cultivation of their children's minds: an important truth, which can never be too much enforced. If parents, actuated only by the strong impulse of natural love, use not those endeavours to cultivate the young mind,

* "Parentes carissimos habere debemus, quod ab iis nobis vita, matrimonium, libertas, civitas tradita est." Cic. post Red. in Sen. N. 2.

which are absolutely necessary; if blind fondness, ever fatal, prevents them from plucking up those evil weeds which easily show themselves in the human heart, and which, suffered to grow up, will choke the seed of every better plant; they must not wonder if their children afterwards prove headstrong, self-willed, disobedient, and tear their hapless hearts with anguish, instead of soothing them with all the comforts of filial love. Wise are those parents, who early inure their children to discipline, early tincture their young minds with the knowledge of religion, and the love of virtue, and early lead their young feet into that blessed peaceful path, which once trod, and well known, they will find too delightful ever to forsake.

And great cause there is to do so, on every account; not only for their own, not only for their children's happiness in this world, but more especially for their happiness in the next; to which they perhaps may be called much earlier than expected; —may be cut down, lovely flowers, even in their bloom! And then how unpleasing a reflection, that they have been taught little of God, and of their Saviour, while every attention has been given to instruct them in the discipline of this world! Let that thought dwell upon your minds, and induce you (my young friends) to seek the Lord in your youth; that, if he should give you an early summons to his kingdom, you may be found ready and ripe for it; or if not, may, by the advantages of an early piety, advance to greater perfection, and enjoy life with superior comfort.

Too apt, alas! are we all, in the full vigour of life, to forget that we may be cut down as the grass, and wither as a green herb! But melancholy instances are sometimes presented before our view, to teach us this knowledge, and to show us that impartial death

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pays no respect to youth or bloom, but levels these with as much unconcern as he levels age and infirmities!—How affecting the case which hath led me to these reflections!—A young man, amiable in his person, engaging in his manners, conscientious and exact in his duties, just blooming into life, the only son of his afflicted parents, in a moment, cut down and corrupting in the dust!—Who but must feel for those parents, encompassed with severest distress? who but must feel the self-convicting thought, that no age is secure or exempt from the stroke of death; that stroke, which from this world conveys us to the presence of Almighty God, and where our faithful discharge of duty below will, through Christ, undoubtedly admit us to the fulness of bliss: a thought which must awaken in every parent's heart an anxious concern for the spiritual instruction of their children, and in the heart of every child, a steady resolution to honour and obey their parents, that so God may finally approve and bless them with length of days, even an eternity of days, in the land of rest and peace. Which, &c.

ANECDOTES, *recommending Filial Love.*

1. As some Christian captives at Algiers, who had been ransomed, were going to be discharged, the cruizers brought in a Swedish vessel, among the crew of which was the father of one of those ransomed captive. The son soon made himself known to the old man, but their unhappiness to meet in such a place, as may well be conceived, was grievous to both. The young man, however, considering that the slavery his father was about to undergo, would inevitably put an end to his life, requested that he might be released, and himself detained in his room; which was immediately granted. But when the story was told to the governor, he was so

affected with it, that he caused the son likewise to be discharged, as the reward of his filial and exemplary tenderness.

2. One of the favourites of King Henry the Fifth when Prince of Wales, having been indicted for some misdemeanour, was condemned, notwithstanding all the interest the Prince could make in his favour; insomuch, that he was so incensed at the issue of the trial, as to strike the judge on the bench. This magistrate, whose name was Sir William Gascoigne, acted with a spirit becoming his character. He instantly ordered the Prince to be committed to prison; and young Henry, by this time sensible of the insult he had offered to the laws of his country, suffered himself to be quietly conducted to goal, by the officers of justice. The King (Henry the fourth) who was an excellent judge of mankind, was no sooner informed of this transaction, than he cried out in a transport of joy, "Happy is the King, who has a Magistrate possessed of courage to execute the laws; and still more happy, in having a Son who will submit to such chastisement!" See p. 42.

3. Boleslaus the fourth, King of Poland, had a picture of his father, which he carried about his neck, set in a plate of gold; and when he was going to speak, or do any thing of importance, he took this pleasing monitor in his hand, and kissing it, used to say, "My dear father, may I do nothing remissly, or unworthy of thy name!"

4. Among the incredible number of persons who were proscribed under the second triumvirate of Rome, were the celebrated orator Cicero, and his brother Quintus. When the news of this proscription was brought to them, they endeavoured to make their escape to Brutus, in Macedon. They travelled together for some time, mutually condoling their bad fortune: but as their departure had been very

precipitate, and they were not furnished with money and other necessaries for the voyage, it was agreed that Cicero should make what haste he could to the sea-side to secure their passage; and that Quintus should return home to make more ample provision. But, as in most houses there were as many informers as domestics, his return was immediately known, and the house in consequence filled with soldiers and assassins. Quintus concealed himself so effectually, that the soldiers could not find him. Enraged at at their disappointment, they put his son to the torture, in order to make him discover the place of his father's concealment; but filial affection was proof in this young Roman against the most exquisite torments. An involuntary sigh, and sometimes a deep groan, was all that could be extorted from the generous youth. His agonies were increased; but, with amazing fortitude, he still persisted in his resolution not to betray his father. Quintus was not far off; and it may better be imagined, than can be expressed, how the heart of a father must have been affected with the sighs and groans of a son expiring in torture, to save *his* life. He could bear it no longer; but quitting the place of his concealment, presented himself to the assassins, beseeching them with a flood of tears to put *him* to death, and dismiss the innocent child; whose generous behaviour the triumvirs themselves, if informed of the fact, would judge worthy of the highest approbation and reward. But the inhuman monsters, without being in the least touched by the tears either of the father or the son, answered, that they both must die; the father, because he was proscribed; and the son, because he had concealed his father. Upon this, a new contest of tenderness arose, who should die the first; which however, the assassins soon decided, by beheading them both at the same time.

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5. Solon, the Spartan legislator, never would establish any law against parricides, or parent-killers, saying, "The Gods forbid that a monster should ever come into our commonwealth!" and it is certain that upwards of two centuries elapsed, from the first building of Rome, before so much as the name of parricide was known amongst them. The first who killed his own father, and stained his hands in the blood of him who gave him life, was Lucius Ostius, a person afterwards detested throughout all ages; and P. Malleolus, as Livy informs us, was the first among the Romans who was known to have killed his mother; and who underwent that punishment, which the ancients instituted in so atrocious a circumstance. For they ordained, that the parricide should be first scourged in the severest manner; then sewed up in a sack, together with a cock, a viper, a dog and an ape, and so thrown headlong into the sea.

6. The Emperor of China on certain days of the year pays a visit to his mother, who is seated on a throne to receive him; and four times on his feet, and as often on his knees, he makes her a grofound obeisance, bowing his head even to the ground. The same custom is also observed through the greatest part of the empire; and if it appears that any one is negligent or deficient in his duty to his parents, he is liable to a complaint before the magistrates, who punish such offenders with much severity. This however is seldom the case; no people, in general, expressing more filial respect and duty than they. See *Modern Universal History*, Vol. 8.

7. Sir Thomas More seems to have emulated this beautiful example; for, being Lord Chancellor of England, at the same time that his father was a Judge of the King,s Bench. he would always, on his entering Westminster Hall, go first to the King's

Bench, and ask his father's blessing, before he went to sit in the Court of Chancery; as if to secure success in the great decisions of his high and important office.

8. During an eruption of mount Ætna may years since, the danger it occasioned to the inhabitants of the adjacent country became very imminent, and the flames flying about, they were obliged to retire to a greater distance. Amidst the hurry and confusion of such a scene (every one flying and carrying away whatever they deemed most precious), two sons, the one named Anapias, the other Amphinomus, in the height of their solicitude for the preservation of their wealth and goods, recollected their father and mother, who, being both very old, were unable to save themselves by flight. Filial tenderness set aside every other consideration; and, "Where, cried the generous youths, shall we find a more precious treasure, than those who begat and gave us being?" This said, the one took up his father on his shoulders, the other his mother, and so made their way through the surrounding smoke and flames. The fact struck all beholders with the highest admiration; and they and their posterity ever after called the path they took in their retreat, "The field of the Pious," in memory of this pleasing accident.

9. A woman of distinction in Rome had been condemned to a capital punishment: the prætor accordingly delivered her up to the triumvir, who caused her to be carried to prison, in order to be put to death. The gaoler, who had orders to execute her, was moved with compassion, and could not resolve to kill her: He determined therefore to let her die of hunger; besides which, he suffered her daughter to see her in prison, taking care however to have her diligently examined, lest she might bring her sustenance. As this continued many days, he

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was surprised that the prisoner lived so long without eating; and, suspecting the daughter, upon watching her, he discovered that (like the famous Xantippe, daughter of Cimon) she nourished her parent with the milk of her own breasts. Amazed at so pious, and at the same time so ingenious a procedure, he ventured to tell the fact to the triumvir, and the triumvir to the prætor; who thought the circumstance worthy of being related in the assembly of the people. The criminal was pardoned: a decree passed, that the mother and daughter should be subsisted for the residue of their lives, at the expense of the public; and to crown the whole, that a temple, "Sacred to Piety," should be erected near the prison.

10. Epaminondas the Theban general, being asked "what was the most pleasing event that had happened to him in his whole life;" cheerfully answered, "It was this, that he had obtained that glorious victory over the Leuctrians, at a time when his father and mother were both living to enjoy the news."

11. While Octavius was at Samos, after the famous battle of Actium, which made him master of the universe, he held a council, in order to examine the prisoners who had been engaged in Anthony's party. Among the rest, there was brought before him Metellus, an old man, oppressed with years and infirmities, disfigured by along beard and dishevelled hair, but especially by his clothes, which, through his ill fortune, were become very ragged. The son of this Metellus, sat as one of the Judges, and at first could not easily discriminate his father, through his deplorable appearance. At length, however, after viewing him narrowly, having recollected his features, instead of being ashamed to own him, he ran to embrace the old man, and cried bitterly. Then, returning toward the tribunal, "Cæsar, said he, my father has been your enemy, I your

officer: he deserves to be punished, and I to be rewarded. The favour I desire of you is, either to save him on my account, or to order me to be put to death with him." All the judges were touched with commiseration at this affecting scene; and Octavius himself relenting, granted to old Metellus his life and liberty.

12. Darius invaded Scythia with all the forces of his empire: the Scythians retired by little and little, till they came at length to the uttermost desarts of Asia. Here Darius sent his ambassador to them, to demand where it was they proposed to conclude their retreat, and when they intended to begin fighting. They returned him for answer, with the spirit so peculiar to that nation, "That they had no cities, nor cultivated fields, for the defence of which they should give him battle; but when once he was come to the place of their fathers' monuments, he should then understand in what manner the Scythians used to fight:" so great a reverence had even that barbarous nation for the ashes of their ancestors!

13. The Emperor Decimus, intending and desiring to place the crown on the head of Decius his son' the young Prince refused it in the most strenuous manner; saying, "I am afraid, lest, being made an Emperor, I should forget that I am a Son. I had rather be no Emperor, and a dutiful son, than an Emperor, and such a son as hath forsaken his due obedience. Let then my father bear the rule; and let this only be MY empire,—to obey with all humility, and to fulfil whatsoever he shall command me." Thus the solemnity was waved, and the young man was not crowned; unless mankind shall say, that this signal piety towards an indulgent parent, was a more glorious diadem to the son, than that which consisted merely of gold and jewels.

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SERMON IV.

ON FRATERNAL LOVE.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.—JOHN xi. 5.

IT has been always allowed, that the cultivation of young minds is of the utmost importance; not only because the happiness of states greatly depends on the virtue and abilities of the rising generation; but because men's felicity in future life, is immediately connected with the improvements and advantages they receive in youth. It therefore greatly concerns not only parents, but all those who are entrusted with the instruction of youth, to be more than ordinarily solicitous, so to form and embellish their minds, as to give them a probable hope of enjoying themselves, as weil as of becoming useful members in society, when called forth to fill up their places on the stage of life.

Strongly impressed with this idea, and very fully convinced of its weight and truth, I have often, during the course of my preaching, addressed myself occasionally, my younger hearers, to you; wishing to gain your hearts, and to engage them early in a service, whose rewards are sure, and inexpressibly great. But, desirous still further to promote this good end, and demonstrate my sincere solicitude for your best welfare, I resolved, by God's assistance, to lay before you a series of discourses, calculated more especially for the instruction of those of my own sex. Having therefore enlarged, with this view, on the

striking advantages of Early Piety, on the deplorable Consequences of vicious and bad Habits in Youth, and also on that first and indispensable duty of Love and Reverence to Parents; I now proceed to recommend, as next in order and importance, the Duty of Fraternal Love; a duty not less enforced by nature, than by religion, and by every consideration of present advantage and comfort.

1. Next to filial love, it is certainly one of the most natural propensities of the human heart. The great and wise Creator, who established the present mode of being, has certainly implanted and interwoven in the very texture of the soul, all those tender and amiable charities, which are so pleasing in themselves, while they are indispensably necessary to the being and good order of society. And he has so directed the mode of living, at our entrance upon existence, that everything is calculated to improve and strengthen these natural tendencies. Born of the same parents, brothers and sisters hang at the same fond breast, and drink the same milk; fed beneath the same roof, they share the same united and tender cares, the same ideas are impressed, and they are taught to regard each other as cemented by ties of the most endearing and indissoluble sort. No wonder hence, that a mutual and increasing prepossession for each other gains upon the heart; while custom unites with nature, and both are strengthened by parental wisdom and solicitude. Where that wisdom and solicitude are properly exerted, Fraternal Love is seldom wanting: its deficiency, for the most part, must be attributed either to the parent's carelessness and neglect to cultivate it; or to an evil which all wise parents will most carefully avoid; a partial fondness shown to one, in neglect of other children.

'Tis undoubted, that some children from nature inherit qualities, which render them more amiable

and engaging than others, and there are circumstances in life which naturally lead to prejudices in favour of peculiar children. But, whatever the parental heart may feel, it will always exert the most cautious endeavours to conceal any such partialities; well assured that they are not only blameable in themselves, but very frequently the cause of breaking that golden cord of parental affection, which should always be kept most sacredly united, and which no jealousies should be allowed to dissolve or disturb. Without these, nature rightly encouraged, and parents duly improving the affection, fraternal love, for the most part, will reign amongst children; for it is agreeable to nature, and all the right tendencies of nature will undoubtedly operate as they are designed, if not disturbed in their regular course, if properly directed and aided by the wise hand of prudence and experience.

2. And such prudence and experience will always apply to religion more especially, for this aid and direction: *for the religion of Jesus Christ, amongst a thousand characteristics of its excellence, has this peculiar recommendation, that it coincides with, and beautifully enforces all the finest feelings of nature. Indeed, its highest and most distinguishing doctrine, —that, I mean, of universal love, is founded upon that fraternal relation, in which all men stand to each other. Children of the great Father of the universe, we are called "to love as brethren." Brotherly affection therefore is not only expected in the professors of this religion, but is the best foundation for the attainment of its perfection, and consequently, most acceptable in the sight of God.

* "Though there are numberless other motives (says a worthy father, writing to his son) to incite *Fraternal Love*, that natural tendency of a good heart; yet, were there no other, its being pleasing to the Almighty, is a sufficient inducement for its cultivation in every worthy breast."

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We have a pleasing proof how estimable it was in the sight of our adorable Redeemer, from the friendship wherewith he honoured Lazarus and his sisters. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus:" no doubt, because this happy family excelled in fraternal and sisterly affection, and, truly loving each other, were worthy of the love of Jesus. That they excelled in this affection, is sufficiently evident from that anxiety which the sisters showed, when their worthy and much valued brother lay dangerously sick; and they sent that importunate and affecting message to their friend; "Lord! behold he whom thou lovest is sick." Happy Lazarus, blessed with such sisters! Happy sisters, blessed with a brother so worthy your tenderest esteem! Happy family, whose united affection was crowned with such friendship as that of the Saviour of the world! Oh, my young friends! feel you not in your hearts a laudable envy of this favoured family? an earnest emulation to be loved like them? Believe me, that emulation need not be in vain. 'Tis with yourselves to be blest and to be favoured no less than Lazarus and his sisters: love one another as they loved; be as cordially solicitous for each other's best welfare; and rest confidently assured, that Jesus will love you, as he did Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

3. That fraternal love is agreeable to nature, and well-pleasing to God, should certainly be its sufficient recommendation; but, besides this, it is productive of many advantages, and attended with many comforts. "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" That family can scarcely fail of fortune and felicity, who, brought up together in love, are early taught to consider each other's interests as one, and continue through life mutually to serve and assist each other.

Hence it is, that we frequently find those parents most singularly blest in their families, who, having had the largest number of children, have made it their first and latest care to unite those children in the bonds of brotherly love. Human policy, every consideration, incites to this care. For, as brothers are to each other the best and most faithful of friends; * so are they, when disunited, too often the most bitter and prejudical of enemies: and that house can scarcely expect much worldly success or advancement, where jarring interests and jarring sentiments separate those who ought to be chief friends.

The ancients, my young friends, conveyed much of their instruction in fables. And there is one, which perhaps you may know, but which well deserves to be repeated, as it is not only applicable to our present subject, but very instructive in itself. A tender father, on his death-bed, called his children around him, and presenting them with a small bundle of twigs, ordered them to try, one after another, with all their force if they could break it. They tried, but could not; "Unbind it now, said he, and take every twig of it separately, and see what you can do by that means." They did so, and with great ease, one by one, they broke it all to pieces. "Behold, said he, my dear children, the true emblem of your condition. Keep together, and you will be safe, unhurt, and prosperous. Divide, and you are certainly undone."

4. But the advantages of fraternal love, however great, are not comparable to the comforts and honours which it brings. For all the advantages in the world, could they be attained, become but splendid miseries, when the mind is harrassed and dis-

* Quis amicior, quam frater fratri? aut quem alienum fidum invenies, si tuis hostis fueris? &c. See the speech of Micipsa to Jugartha, in Sallust. Jugurth. Bell. p. 247 Edit. Wasse.

tressed, and the bosom torn with the chagrin of uneasy passions. And what chagrin, what uneasiness can be more painful, than that which arises from domestic quarrels and divisions; when brother is set against brother, and the house, divided against itself, totters to its fall!

The abuse of the best things is always the worst. It is eminently the case with fraternal affection: Fraternal hatred is even proverbial for the bitterest hatred; and who knows not how devoid of comforts that heart must be, where such hatred rankles and boils!

On the contrary, what inexpressible delight, when brothers and sisters of one family live together in all the harmony of friendship. and good esteem! mutually delighted and charmed with each other's presence and society!—Peace dwells in their bosom, and transport beats at their heart. They know how to alleviate each other's troubles and difficulties; they know how to impart and double each other's felicity and pleasure. And if, perchance, their aged parents live, who have formed them thus to love; whose early care provided for them this high feast of the most delicate sensations; what increasing raptures do they feel, from blessing those parents with this fruit of their care! O ye happy parents, if I could could envy any beings upon earth, it were you; who see your youth renewed in good and worthy children flourishing around you; who see those children amply crowning your days and nights of past solicitude, not only with the most reverential respect to yourselves, but, with what you wish still more, if possible, with the firmest and most respectful love to each other! Who see those children, with all the kindness of that love you sought to inspire, like olive branches verdant around you; blessed in you, blessed, in each other, blessed in themselves; the providence of God

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smiling upon them; success and honour attending their steps. Happy parents! yours is a chosen lot. Happy parents! who from the moment they become such, exert their utmost efforts to attain that lot, and to strengthen by the bonds of religion and instruction, what nature so kindly implants, and will aid so much in the rearing.

5. I said that success and honour accompany those who excel in Fraternal Love: they will not only feel the most pleasing comfort which the human heart can enjoy; they will not only have the greatest probability of worldly success; but they will certainly find that, which is indeed one great means of worldly advancement; they will find real honour attending them: they will obtain all the advantages which accompany good reputation.

I dare appeal to the sentiments of any man living upon this occasion. You involuntarily and immediately conceive a good opinion of that young person, who distinguishes himself for his Fraternal and Filial Love. I join both, because I conceive they can never be separated. He who loves his brethren and sisters, will unquestionably love his parents; as he who loves his Christian brother, will assuredly love his Father in heaven. Let a person be recommended to you as excelling in this affection; as remarkable for his tenderness and attachment to his family; your heart will instantly bear testimony to him; you will esteem and honour him. Contemplate a whole family, eminent for their union and affection to each other: see the brothers dutiful to their parents; kind and respectful to their sisters; solicitous for, and serving each other;—you cannot help admiring them; you are sure there is virtue and goodness amongst them; you think, you speak of them with pleasure, and would, certainly, in worldly matters, prefer, where possible, connections with them. This

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is the language of nature, of feeling; it is universal, and therefore just.

But say, my young friends! can an argument more forcible be urged for your cultivation of brotherly love; which will thus gain you the involuntary, and consequently the best homage of your fellow-creatures; which will be at all times a patron to recommend, and an advocate to plead your cause in every honest breast? Great and many are the advantages of a good reputation, that jewel of inestimable price, as perhaps may hereafter be shown: nor can you be too anxious to gain it, or too chary of it when gained. But take it from me, as an undoubted truth, nothing will tend so much to secure it, as a regard to that virtue we are enforcing; as a tender and unwearied love of your brothers, a love founded in the heart, and exerting itself in every friendly and fraternal action; as a solicitous endeavour to guard the honour, to defend the rights, to promote the happiness of those sisters, who have a greater, a more affecting claim upon your love, as being by providence ordained more defenceless, to bless you with the exquisite honour and happiness of protecting them.

Tenderer as they are by nature, and perhaps more susceptible of the gentle affections, it is their frequent praise to excel greatly in this laudable attachment: and we see in the case of Lazarus before us, what good sisters can do for their brother:—they can call in Jesus to his aid. By their piety and their prayers they can often obtain the best blessings from heaven, and by the purity and engaging mildness of their behaviour, may win a brother, and raise him from the death of sin to the life of righteousness and virtue. This, at least, should be the endeavour of those, who see their brothers deviating from the paths of truth and virtue. For such as happily and unitedly walk together in those paths; for such as

are anxious to communicate good to each other; spiritual good, more especially; (like Andrew, no sooner finding the Messiah themselves, than hastening to inform their own brother Simon,* and zealous to impart all the happiness they themselves receive;) For such, I can find no words strong enough to felicitate their choice!—You are acting agreeably to the best dictates of nature, conformably to the will and highest approbation of your God and Redeemer: your conduct is formed upon the best principles of wisdom; like Godliness, "it is not only profitable for the world to come, but for this world also;" it is the surest road to success; the likeliest means to procure you all the advantages of this life: Peace of mind, and the highest delights which the soul can relish, will be your internal comfort: and you may be infallibly assured of the good esteem and respect of all those, who are worthy your esteem; the virtuous and the good, will admire and applaud you.

Need I, my young friends, offer any other arguments towards the cultivation of this virtuous affection? Which would you rather be?—ask your own hearts,—a Cain, stigmatized by the hand of God himself for fraternal hatred; driven from society, an outcast and a vagabond, unnatural, irreligious, uncomfortable, despised, hated; or a Joseph, melting with Fraternal Love; forgiving every injury; blessing with prosperity all his house; weeping over the necks of recovered brethren; bowing the affectionate knee to an ancient and venerable parent; virtuous, fearing God, abounding in plenty, in comfort, in glory? Oh! where is the heart that feels not the contrast? Yes, my young friends, while you shrink with horror from the fratricide of a Cain, you envy the life and salvation restored by the affection of a Joseph.

Be it your's, like him, to cultivate in your hearts

* John i. 40.

that fear of God, which so remarkably sustained him amidst all his trials and temptations; which preserved him from defiling his master's bed, which preserved him from avenging himself on cruel and unworthy brethren (for even a Joseph had cruel and unworthy brethren), which, far from vengeance, inspired him with the most amiable disposition to forgive; and not to forgive only, but to succour and to save! and thus to melt them to his love, by heaping coals of kindness upon their heads.

Yes, it is the fear of God only which can give stability to this, as to every other virtue. Let parents then, whose heart's nearest wish it is, to see their children dwell together in unity, let them early cultivate in their children that divine religion, whose blessed precepts so nobly enforce the duty of Fraternal Love. Wise are those parents, and happy will they find themselves, who, void of all simple prejudices, who, never indulging any ill-grounded partialities, labour to the utmost of their power to inculcate, from the earliest moment, the knowledge and the love of God on their children's hearts; who teach them that they have all one Father, even God, and are bound, if they would please him, to love as brethren (a duty so sweet, so beneficial and comfortable, that one would wonder there should ever have been need to command it, had we not a much more striking cause of wonder, in observing how little it is fulfilled); who teach their children, by every mild and gentle method, to unite in reciprocal offices of love; pointing out to them the advantages, causing them to feel the comforts, to share the honours, and by every possible method impressing upon them the necessity of this close and dear union, to all their best interests both here and hereafter. Proceed with courage, ye worthy and affectionate parents, in this method; early and late implore the blessing of heaven on your

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best endeavours; and rest assured, that your children will rise up to bless you, and prove a crown of glory to your hoary heads. Which, &c.

ANECDOTES, *enforcing Fraternal Love.*

1. Scylurus the Scythian, having fourscore sons, desired nothing so much as to bring them up in the love of each other: and, to show them how invincible such a concord would render them, as he lay on his death-bed, he called them around him, and giving to each of them a bundle of javelins, bade them try if they could break the bundles. The young men, having attempted, and declaring it impracticable, Scylurus untied the bundles in their presence, broke the javelins one by one, with the greatest ease, and from thence took occasion thus to address his children,—"Behold, my sons, your strength, whilst linked together in the bonds of amity; on the contrary, how weak, and what an easy prey you must be, when separated in you interests by discords and sedition." See page 67.

2. As one of the water-bearers, at the fountain of the Fauxbourgs St. Germain in Paris, was at his usual labours in August 1766, he was taken away by a gentleman in a splendid coach, who proved to be his own brother, and who, at the age of three years, had been carried to India, where he made a considerable fortune. On his return to France he had made inquiry respecting his family; and hearing that he had only one brother alive, and he in this humble condition of a water-bearer, he sought him out, embraced him with great affection, and brought him to his house; where he gave him bills for upwards of a thousand crowns per annum.

3. The learned and pious Bishop Hall tells us, in his "Specialities," that instead of being sent to the university when a boy, he was very near being placed

for education under a private tutor at Leicester: but his eldest brother having occasion to go to Cambridge about this time, and waiting upon a Fellow of Emmanuel College, the latter, on hearing of the diversion of old Mr. Hall's former purposes from the university, importunately dissuaded him from that new course, professing to pity the loss of such good hopes. The elder brother, moved with these words, on his return home, fell upon his knees to his father, and besought him to alter so prejudicial a resolution, and not suffer the young man's hopes to be drowned in a shallow country channel, but revive his first intentions for Cambridge; adding, in the zeal of his affection, that if the chargeableness of that course were the hindrance, he should be rather pleased to sell part of that land, which, in the order of nature, he was to inherit, than to abridge his brother of so happy a mean to perfect his education. This very uncommon and amiable instance of generosity had its due effect; and the world sufficiently knows the success and blessing which attended it, through the excellent labours of this eloquent and devout prelate.

4. The father of that eminent lawyer Mr. Serjeant Glanvill had a good estate, which he intended to settle on his elder son; but he proving a vicious young man, and there being no hopes of his recovery, he devolved it upon the Serjeant, who was his second son. Upon the father's death, the eldest, finding that what he had before considered as the mere threatenings of an angry old man, were now but too certain, became melancholy, which by degrees wrought in him so great a change, that what his father could not prevail in while he lived, was now effected by the severity of his last will. His brother observing this, called him with many of his friends together to a feast; where, after other dishes

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had been served up, he ordered one, which was covered, to be set before his brother, and desired him to uncover it; upon his doing which, the company, no less than himself, were surprised to find it full of writings, and still more, when the Serjeant told them "that he was now doing what he was sure his father would have done, had he lived to see that happy change which they now all saw in his brother; and therefore he freely restored to him the whole estate."

5. In the year 1585, the Portuguese Carracks sailed from Lisbon to Goa, a very rich and flourishing colony of that nation in the East Indies. On board of one of these vessels, these were no less than 1200 souls, mariners, passengers, priests, and friars: the beginning of their voyage was prosperous, but not many days after, through the perverseness of the pilot, the ship struck on a rock, and instant death began to stare them in the face. In this distress, the captain ordered the pinnace to be launched, into which having tossed a small quantity of biscuit, and some boxes of marmalade, he jumped in himself with nineteen others, who with their swords prevented the coming of any more, lest the boat should sink. Thus scantily equipped, they put off into the great Indian ocean, without a compass to steer by, or any fresh water, but what might happen to fall from the heavens, whose mercy alone could deliver them. At the end of four or five days, the captain died with sickness, and they were obliged, to prevent confusion, to elect one of their company to command them. This person proposed to them to draw lots, and cast every fourth man over-board, their small stock of provision being now so far spent, as not to be able, at very short allowance, to sustain life above three days longer. To this they agreed, so that there were four to die out of their unhappy number, the captain, a

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friar, and a carpenter being exempted by general consent. The lots being cast, three of the first submitted to their fate, after they had confessed and received absolution. The fourth victim was a Portuguese gentleman, that had a younger brother in the boat; who, seeing him about to be thrown overboard, most tenderly embraced him, and with tears besought him to let him die in his room; enforcing his arguments by telling him, "that he was a married man, and had a wife and children at Goa, besides the care of three sisters, who absolutely depended upon him for support; whereas himself was single, and his life of no great importance:" he therefore conjured him to suffer him to supply his place; assuring him that he had rather die for him, than live without him. The elder brother, astonished, and melting with his generosity, replied, "that since the divine providence had appointed him to suffer, it would be wicked and unjust to permit any other to die for him, but especially a brother to whom he was so infinitely obliged." The younger, however, persisting in his refusal, would take no denial; but throwing himself on his knees, held his brother so fast, that the company could not disengage him. Thus they disputed a while; the elder bidding him be a father to his children, and recommending his wife and sisters to his protection; but all he could say could not make the younger desist. This was a scene of tenderness that must fill every humane breast with pity: at last the constancy of the elder brother yielded to the piety of the other, and suffered the gallant youth to supply his stead; who being cast into the sea, and a good swimmer, soon got to the stern of the pinnace, and laid hold of the rudder with his right hand. This being perceived by one of the sailors, he cut off the hand with his sword; then dropping into the sea he presently regained

his hold with his left hand, which received the same fate by a second blow. Thus dismembered of both hands, he made a shift notwithstanding to keep himself above water with his feet and two stumps, which he held bleeding upwards. This moving spectacle so stung the pity of the whole company, that they cried out, "he is but one man; let us endeavour to save him!" Accordingly, he was taken into the boat, where he had his hands, bound up as well as the place and circumstances would admit. They then continued rowing all night; and the next morning, when the sun arose (as if heaven would reward the gallantry and piety of this young man) they descried land; which proved to be the mountains of Mozambique, in Africa, not far from a Portuguese colony: thither they all safe arrived, where they remained till the next ship from Lisbon passed by, and carried them to Goa. At that city, Linschoten, a writer of good credit, assures us he himself saw them land, supped with the two brothers that very night, beheld the younger with his stumps, and had the story from their own mouths. See *his Voyages.*

6. Titus, the Roman Emperor, who was called for his virtues "the delight of mankind," bore such a brotherly affection toward Domitian, that though he knew he had spoken irreverently of him, and had solicited the army to rebellion, yet he never treated him with less love or respect, even on that account, nor would suffer others to do so; but called him his partner and successor in the empire, and sometimes, when they were alone together, he besought him not only with earnest entreaties, but with tears, that he would bear the same brotherly love towards Him, as he always had, and should ever find from him.

7. During the heavy war with Antiochus, the province of Asia fell to the lot of Lucius the brother of

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Scipio Africanus; but the Senate, not thinking his abilities adequate to the charge, seemed inclinable rather to commit the conduct of the war to Caius Lælius his colleague, with whom his brother Africanus was in the most intimate friendship. But no sooner had the latter heard of their deliberation, than he earnestly besought the senate not to transfer the province, though it were to Lælius himself, which had fallen by lot to his brother; promising at the same time that he would accompany Lucius into Asia, and serve with him in quality of his legate. Thus the elder brother fostered and supported the younger; the valiant defended the weak; and so aided him with his counsel, that at length Lucius returned to his country triumphant, and was crowned with the glorious surname of Scipio Asiaticus.

8. Henry, King of Arragon and Sicily, left at his death his only son John, a child of two and twenty months old, whom he entrusted to the care and fidelity of his brother Ferdinand. This prince was a man of great virtue and merit, and therefore the eyes of the nobles and people were fixed upon him; and not only in private discourses, but in the public assemblies, he had the general voice and consent to be chosen King of Arragon. With unshaken magnanimity however he remained deaf to these offers; alledged and asserted the right of his infant nephew, and the custom of the country, together with his dying brother's last will, "which, said he, you are bound the rather to maintain, by how much the more incapable the young prince is to do it." His words, notwithstanding, had not the effect he wished, and the assembly adjourned for that day: soon after they met again, in hopes that having had time to consider of it, he would now accept their suffrages. Ferdinand, apprized of their purpose, prepared himself for their reception, caused the little child to be

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clothed in royal robes, and having hid him under his garments, went and took his seat in the assembly: Upon which the master of the horse, by order of the States, coming up and asking him, "Whom, O Ferdinand, is it your pleasure to have declared our King?" The generous Prince, with a sharp look and solemn tone, replied, "Whom but John, the son of our brother?"—Having said this, he immediately took the infant from under his robe, and lifting him upon his shoulders, with a loud voice cried, "God save King John!" Then setting down the child, and commanding the royal banners to be displayed, he cast himself first to the ground before him; and all the rest, moved by his illustrious example, did the like.

9. Timoleon the Corinthan is a noble pattern of Fraternal Love; for being in a battle with the Argives, and seeing his brother fall down dead with the wounds he had received, he instantly leaped over his dead body, and with his shield protected it from insult and plunder; and though sorely wounded in this generous enterprize, he would not by any means retreat to a place of safety, till such time as he had seen the corpse carried off the field by his friends.—How happy for Christians, would they imitate this Heathen, and as tenderly screen from abuse and calumny the wounded Reputation or dying Honour, of an absent or defenceless brother!

10. During the whole third general persecution of the Christians, under the Emperor Trajan, in the year of Christ one hundred, the holy Evangelist St. John felt none of the storm at Ephesus, where he resided; but pursued his duty in peace, though extremely weak and declining, being then near an hundred years of age. He continually, in his preaching, urged his auditors to the great duties of love and tenderness for each other; and our Lord's great

love to him, seems to have inspired his soul with a more extensive and generous affection than was common to the rest of mankind. St. Jerome tells us, that by reason of his great age, he was reduced to such weakness, as to be unable to go to the church, or Christian assemblies, unless carried by his disciples; and that not being able to make long discourses, he urged little more in those assemblies than this sentence, "My dear children, love one another." Those who heard him, being at length weary with this constant repetition of the same injunction, said to him, "Master, why do you always say the same thing?" To which he returned them this answer, worthy of the beloved apostle: "It is what our Lord himself has commanded; and if we can perform this, we need do nothing more." Thus we see love is not only the fulfilling of the Law, but the perfection of the Gospel too. See page 65.

SERMON V.

APPLICATION TO WISDOM AND LEARNING RECOMMENDED AND ENFORCED.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding.—Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; She shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.—She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.—PROVERBS iv. 7, 8, 9.

AN early and dilligent application to Learning and Wisdom, is the next duty we would wish to enforce upon young persons. SOLOMON, whose extraordinary praise it is, that he was the wisest of the sons of men, not only in the text, but in various other parts of this book, commends Wisdom as "the principal thing!" and speaks of her in the highest terms as most useful, comfortable, and honourable to mankind: nor can any words be stronger than those he uses, to recommend the acquisition of this valuable Wisdom: "Wisdom is the principal thing, &c."

Solomon is not peculiar in his opinion: all those, in every age, who have been most familiar with Wisdom, who have been blessed with the largest and most comprehensive understanding, have united their voice with him; have with one consent declared, "That Wisdom is the principle thing; that happy is the man who attaineth her; that she is

more precious than rubies; and all that we can desire is not to be compared unto her."

Nor will you hesitate to unite in this opinion, when you are shown, First, what is meant by this Wisdom; Secondly, what are its properties and effects: a due sense of which will, I hope, be sufficient not only to awaken in all your hearts a love of wisdom, but a serious application in youth, to the knowledge and acquisition of it; an acquisition, to which, as I will show, you are stimulated by every motive of duty to your GOD; to your parents; to society; to yourselves.

1. First, then, let us see, "what is meant by this Wisdom," which, according to the estimate of Solomon, is of such great price. "Wisdom is the principal thing, says he therefore get wisdom;" and he subjoins, in the next clause, which according to the Eastern mode of proverbial writing, is explanatory of the former, "and with all thy getting, get understanding." By Wisdom, therefore, or Understanding, which is the same, is meant, that cultivation and enlargement of mind, which enables a man clearly to see and understand all those things, which concern his present and future well-being.

CICERO, than whom no man was a better judge,—for no man more earnestly sought, or better understood the true nature of Wisdom; no man I mean, of the heathen world;—Cicero, has given nearly the same definition of *Wisdom*. "What (says he) is more desirable than Wisdom, what more excellent in itself; what more useful to man, or more worthy his pursuit? They who earnestly seek for it, are called philosophers; for philosophy, in the strict meaning of the word, is no other than the *love of Wisdom*. But Wisdom, as defined by the ancient philosophers, is the knowledge of things divine and human, and of their Efficient Causes; the study of which whoever despises, I know not what he can

think worthy of his approbation. For, whether you seek for an agreeable amusement, or a relaxation from care; what can be comparable to those studies, which are always searching out for something that may tend to make life more easy and happy? Are you desirous of learning the principles of fortitude and virtue?—This, or none beside, is the art by which you may acquire them. They who affirm that there is no art in things of the greatest moment, while nothing, even the most trifling, is attained without the aid of art, are men of no reflection, and guilty of the grossest error: but if there is any science of virtue, where shall it be learned, if not in the school of this Wisdom?"*

II. You see one of the noblest properties of this wisdom, this "enlargement of the mind," this "right knowledge of things divine and human," pointed out in these words of Cicero, which I have just read to you. Wisdom is the guide to virtue; unattainable without it, but certainly to be learned in that school. And as virtue, or the right discharge of our duty in every station of life, our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves, is at once the best prerogative, and the highest exaltation of the human nature; Wisdom on this account may justly be termed "the principal thing," and eminently merits our most zealous and laborious pnrsuit. As virtue contains the whole art of right and happy living, it may be unnecessary to enlarge on all those particular branches of virtue, which Wisdom inculcates and enforces; but I would just observe, that the study of Wisdom not only enables us, to live virtuously, but to live happily. Indeed virtue is happiness: "all the ancient philosophers," says Cicero, "thought man's happiness to be derived from virtue alone."

But, it may be possible for the good man to be

* See Cicero de Officiis, Lib. ii., sect. 2.

afflicted with evils; evils of such a sort, as may take off the zest and relish of life, and render its pleasures vapid and tasteless. In this case the love of Wisdom, will be found peculiarly excellent; it will afford the mind a thousand delights, which those who are strangers to it can never experience; and it will so far remove the unavoidable evils of our being, as to render them light and easy to be borne; much the lighter and more easy, for the peculiar comforts and gratifications it affords the soul.

Perhaps it may be thought I do injustice to the cause of Wisdom, by mentioning any particular cases in which it will profit and comfort mankind. In all cases, and in every situation of life, Wisdom is advantageous; and the love of knowledge no less pleasing than profitable. Nay, did learning afford no assistance to virtue; was pleasure the only benefit arising from study; it must, on every account, be allowed to be an amusement of the noblest, kind and every way best suited to the nature of man. "Other relaxations," says the fine writer above quoted, "are peculiar to certain times, places and stages of life; but letters are the ornament of youth, and the comfort of old age. They throw an additional lustre on prosperity; they are the resourse and consolation of adversity; they delight us at home, and are no embarrassment when abroad. In short, they are companions to us at night; our fellow-travellers on a journey; and attendants in our rural recesses."*

This is, and hath always been esteemed, one of the most elegant encomiums of letters; of that love of wisdom, which is so conducive to virtue; which so much promotes and increases the felicity and the comforts of life; and which, as another excellent property, is one of the best and surest means of acquiring riches and honour; "Exalt her, and she

* Cic. Orat. pro Archia; N. 16.

shall promote thee," says the wise man; "she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."

It requires, I suppose, no great reasoning to prove, that he is most likely to prosper in this life, whose mind is best cultivated and enlarged with the truest notions of things; and who joins to that cultivated understanding a correspondent practice, not less excelling in virtue than in knowledge. Humanly speaking, there seems no doubt of that man's "prosperity" in this world, who wisely, virtuously, and diligently fills up the duties of his station. The misfortunes of mankind are for the most part owing to their own ignorance, follies and vices.

Again, "Honour" is the general attendant upon Wisdom. That which peculiarly distinguishes man from the rest of the animal creation, is reason, is understanding; and however absurdly and weakly a man may act, there is no reproach which he bears so ill, or takes so heinously, as a reproach on his understanding. It is on this account, that, however deficient men may be in knowledge, however rude and uninformed in mind; you generally find them more or less affecting the appearance of knowledge. Hence that vanity, so universal among the sons of men. But the true value and general approbation of knowledge clearly follow from hence: if its appearance be so desirable, what must the reality be? Experience confirms this observation. Who are they of ancient times, but the wisest and best informed, whose memories are handed down to us; who are most honoured and regarded by us?—Who are they amongst our cotemporaries, whom we look up to with eyes of veneration and respect, but the wise and well informed; the judicious, and the good?

But, besides virtue, besides the most substantial

pleasure, and highest consolation; besides riches and honour; the wise man mentions another property of Wisdom, another blessing which she confers; and that is, "length of days;" which, whether it be understood of temporal or of eternal life, is strictly true. We all know that the wisdom which enlarges our mind with a right understanding of God and ourselves, and which leads us to the practice of all those duties which our nature and situation require, is that which necessarily recommends to the favour of our Almighty Judge; and, as it fits us for the fruition, so will it certainly, through CHRIST, admit us to the joys of eternity.

And it is equally certain, that the love of this Wisdom and the practice of Virtue, which we consider as its inseparable attendant, will tend above all things to lengthen our present existence. There can be no doubt, that the chances of long life are infinitely on the side of him who lives in the constant exercise of all those virtues which are most salutary to the human frame; who neither breaks nor destroys his constitution by irregularity of life or the debaucheries of vice; the known consequences of which are, if not a speedy death, yet what perhaps is worse, a dying life!—a life but lengthened out for woe; harrassed with tormenting diseases, rendered still more tormenting by painful reflection, and a total unacquaintedness with the consolations of Wisdom. To live is not merely to breathe; it is to enjoy oneself, happy in that right and pleasing self-possession, which Wisdom and Virtue only can give.* So that he who lives in the enjoyment of these, though his life be extended but to half the span of his who dissipates it in folly and vice, may well be said to live double the age of the latter; may

* See some fine pieces of professor *Hoffman's* translated in the Christian's Magazine. Vol. 6.

well be said, though he dies but in youth, to come "like a ripe shock of corn to the grave;" while the man of vice and folly must be thought to die immaturely, though he dies at fourscore.*

It is true, that as health and long life are not always and invariably the consequences of temperance, so neither is a right practice invariably the consequence of a right knowledge. But I have made one constant remark, which I never yet saw fail,—and which should be to you, my young friends, the strongest incentive to cultivate learning; should be to parents the strongest reason to enable and encourage their children to that cultivation: I have always remarked, that "the most studious are the most virtuous;" that they who had the greatest love for Wisdom, and the best application in the pursuit of it, were always the most ingenuous in their minds, and the most blameless in their manners. The reason is obvious: the pleasing and worthy pursuits in which they are engaged leave them no time or thoughts for those criminal dissipations, to which idleness and inattention always lead.

But further, Wisdom presents to the mind, once charmed with its beauty, and engaged in its acquisition, the loveliest and most regular order of things; accustoms it to contemplate what is most fair, decent and becoming; and consequently so engages it in the love and approbation of these, as to render whatever is opposite to them disagreeable and disgusting; but vice, above all things disgusting and disagreeable, as being most peculiarly opposite, and in itself most deformed. For as virtue, considered in every respect, is most lovely, and such as would strike all mankind with the greatest admiration (according to the observation of Plato) if it could be

* See Isaiah lxv. 20, and the Book of Wisdom, Chap iv. ver. 8, 9, 13, 16.

made visible in a human form; so is vice the most odious and hateful; the perverter of all order, and consequently, the absolute destroyer of all moral beauty.

Acquaint yourselves, therefore, early, my young hearers, with that Wisdom, which will represent to your admiring view Virtue in her loveliest form; the best guide of your youth, and the surest protectress of your innocence: that Wisdom, whose encomium Solomon hath so finely drawn, and which may serve in a great measure as the summary of what has been before advanced. "I loved her, says he, above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light; for the light that cometh from her never goeth out: all good things together came unto me with her, and innumerable treasures in her hands: I learned diligently, and do communicate her liberally; I do not hide her riches; for she is a treasure unto men that never faileth, which they that use become the friends of God, being commended for the gifts that come from learning. Wisdom is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence, flowing from the glory of the Almighty: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her; for she is the brightness of the everlasting light; the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness: in all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God; for God loveth none but them that dwell in Wisdom. In that she is conversant with God, she magnifieth her nobility; yea, the Lord of all things himself loved her; for she is privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of God, and a lover of his works." If "riches" be a possession to be desired in this life, what is richer than Wisdom which worketh all things? And if "Prudence" work, who of all that are, is a more cunning worker than she? And if a man love "Righteousness," her labours are

virtues: for she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude;* which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in their life. If a man desire much "Experience," she knoweth things of old, and conjectureth aright what is to come. She knoweth the subtilties of speeches, and can expound dark sentences: she foreseeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times. Therefore I purpose to take her to me, to live with me, knowing that she will be a counsellor of good things; and a comfort in cares and griefs. For her sake I shall have estimation among the multitude, and honour with the elders, though I be young. I will therefore repose myself with Wisdom; for her conversation hath no bitterness, and to live with her hath no sorrow, but pleasantness and joy. To be allied unto Wisdom is immortality; great comfort it is to have her friendship. In the works of her hands, are infinite riches; in the exercise of conference with her, prudence; and in talking with her, a good report."†

Thus many and great are the advantages which you will reap from an acquaintance with Wisdom; advantages sufficient to stimulate every ingenuous mind to the closest and most diligent pursuit of it. But, mistake not the matter, nor suppose that this is an affair of mere indifference, a thing of choice, left to your own inclinations whether you will or will not pursue it: it is very much the contrary; you are under the strictest "obligations, from motives of duty to GOD, to your parents, to society, to yourselves, to seek for this Wisdom; and in neglecting to do so, will not only deprive yourselves of the best blessings which your nature can share, but will become equally criminal and contemptible."

* See Cic. de Offic. N. 14. whose words are remarkably similar to the above.

† See Book of Wisdom, Chap. v.

(1) God, the great father of the world, of his immense bounty hath created you a reasonable being; has given you powers and faculties, elevated far above the animal world; capable of the noblest enlargement, capable of the knowledge of him, of nature, of yourselves; capable of producing all those fruits of good science and good practice, which are the dignity, the ornament, the prerogative of your race. And can you weakly and vainly suppose, that their is no duty incumbent upon you to improve and to enlarge these faculties? If so, they are given you in vain; and you are insensible of that which is the distinguishing excellence of your nature. It had been as well for you to have been created a horse, or a swine.

No! Reject the impious position! Say not that God, the all-wise and all-good, does anything in vain; he gave you those faculties and powers that you might improve them, and thereby improve your own happiness; that you might improve them, and thereby obtain his favour: for we may be certainly assured, that the improvement of that mind which he has made capable of improvement, and appointed various means to that end, must be acceptable to him. Nothing can be plainer than this, from a consideration of the Christian System. What is the great aim and design of that system? For what purpose all this labour of love; all this anxiety of Omnipotence itself?*—Solely for the perfection of the human mind; solely for the spiritual improvement of mankind; the present virtue and comfort, the future perfection and happiness of all who believe and embrace this system.

Can you then a moment doubt, that a neglect to improve your minds, is not only highly displeasing,

* "If a God bleeds, he bleeds not for a worm."
Young's *Night Thoughts*, 4.

but criminal in the sight of God? Thwarting his noblest purposes in nature and grace; and reducing the creature he formed for the sublimest enjoyments to a level with the beasts that perish.*

(2) You reverence your *Father in heaven;* and therefore will duly value and improve his best gifts: but your *Parents on earth* have a further claim upon you. You cannot doubt their love, which, all your life long, hath exerted its tender and affectionate offices towards you. It is this love which causes them, at much expense and pains, to provide you the best education they are able; and they provide you this education, from a full persuasion which they, with the wisest and best of mankind, have imbibed that such an education is one of the greatest blessings that youth can enjoy, and the likeliest means which they can propose for your acquisition of Wisdom; that Wisdom, which they, with us, are clearly satisfied, will give virtue, comfort, riches, honour and health to your life: a Wisdom, which "is better than all; more valuable than rubies; and all that you can desire is not to be compared with it."

Can any design, can any purpose be more kind

† How men, whose plentiful fortunes allow them leisure to improve their understandings, can satisfy themselves with a lazy ignorance, I cannot tell; but, methinks they have a low opinion of their souls, who lay out all their income in provision for the body, and employ none of it to procure the means and helps of knowledge; who take great care to appear always in a neat and splendid outside, and would think themselves miserable in coarse clothes, or a patched coat; and yet contentedly suffer their minds to appear abroad in a pye-bald livery of coarse patches and borrowed shreds, such as it has pleased chance, or their country tailor (I mean the common opinion of those they have conversed with) to clothe them in. I will not mention how unreasonable this is, for men that ever think of a future state, and their concernment in it; which no rational man can avoid to do sometimes. *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding.* B. iv. C. xx.

or amiable? Oh! my young friends, think what a charge you must incur; think in what a light you must appear, if you disappoint a purpose so kind and amiable! and repay—how sadly, how ungratefully repay,—all the solicitude, all the expense of your affectionate parents, by idleness and inattention; by wretchedly wasting that time, which can never return; and, instead of treasuring up learning and knowledge, suffering the wild weeds of ignorance and vice to grow rampant in your hearts, henceforward never by human power to be rooted up! I will not suppose that such ingratitude and baseness can dwell in the human mind: it cannot be, but a sense of your parent's love and care must operate forcibly, and incite you to such diligence and close application as will happily obtain the end desired, and crown every wish that throbs most anxiously at those parents' hearts.

(3) But not your parents only, *Society* has a claim upon you. You are now training up, my young friends, to fill your parts in the future circle of life: you are to become members of that society, which subsists by a mutual and relative discharge of duties amongst its members: and in whatever station GOD shall be pleased to place you, as you will have much need of the aid and assistance of others, so must you perform your duty, and concur for the universal good. Unless you do your part, what right or reason have you to expect that others should do theirs? An ignorant, idle man is a dead weight on society; a wicked profligate man is a pest, is a nuisance to society; but a wise and virtuous man, who labours by all means in his power to advance the universal good, to improve the knowledge and the happiness of mankind, is at once an ornament to his nature, and a blessing to the community; a good planet, shining with a benign influence on all

around him; the truest resemblance of his GOD, whose goodness is continually displaying itself through the whole extent of being; and, like that GOD, seeking pleasure in conferring good, and feeling happiness, according to the degree in which he communicates it.

YOU, my young friends, must be either this idle and useless, this wicked and noxious, or, this good and beneficient member of society: and it depends, principally depends upon your improvement in youth, on the present enlargement of your minds in tru learning and knowledge, to determine your future character. If you omit to search for, and to treasure up that wisdom which is more precious than rubies, society will have great cause to upbraid and condemn you: it calls upon you, with the united and important voice of all its members, to consider what you are hereafter to be; and in that consideration to form yourselves carefully, that you may do good, be honourable, and honoured.

Nor does it call upon you only: society has, in this respect, a just right to call upon parents, and especially upon those entrusted with the care of youth. Some ancient states were so strongly impressed with this notion, that they left not the important charge of education to the hazard of parental neglect, or precarious choice. They considered children as the property of the public; and they were thoroughly convinced how much the welfare of that public depended upon their right and early information. We act differently;—whether more wisely, is not our present inquiry. It is, however, most undoubted, that a right sense of this claim of the public, of this debt to society, should influence all parents to give their children the best and most rational education they can; should peculiarly influence every instructor of youth to form the minds and manners of those

committed to his care, in such a way, that they may best be enabled to fill their future stations in life, with comfort to themselves, and with advantage to others. A duty, alas! for the most part, how carelessly, how perfunctorily performed.

'Tis a mistake: the business of education is not merely to teach the child a few dead languages; to enable him to write finely; to understand the sciences; to fill the head, while the heart is neglected, and the mind uncultivated with moral knowledge. We may say of these what our Saviour said, when speaking of the Pharisees: "these ought ye to have done; but not to have left the other undone." There is in outh sufficient time for all: the improvement of the heart may well and properly go hand in hand with the information of the head; and he is a very unskilful, as well as a very blameable instructor, who either knows not, or cares not, to unite both together.

(4) No, my young friends; you must not neglect either: the acquisition of liberal science is most necessary, most useful, most pleasing. It has a thousand comforts, a thousand satisfactions attending it. For my own part, I think, I would rather be without my existence, than without the exquisite gratifications it has long, and will, I am persuaded, to the grave afford me,—thanks to the tender and judicious care of the best parents!* Cultivate therefore liberal science, as one the most distinguishing blessings of heaven; but still cultivate liberal science as

* What (says Cicero) are the pleasures of a luxurious table, of games, of shows, of sensuality, when compared with those resulting from the study of letters? A study, which, in men of sense and good education, still increases in charms with their years? Whence that fine saying of Solon, "That he grew old, still every day learning something new." Certainly, no enjoyment can surpass this pleasure of the mind, &c. See *De Senect.* c. 14, *and Penses*, p. 138—9.

the handmaid of sublimer knowledge. Moral virtue and the improvement of the heart are graces, which give to science its lustre, and to life its worth; they teach us to live; to act as children of God, and heirs of heaven: they expand, and enlarge the soul; and, joined to the love of liberal science, prepare us for the full draught of that comprehensive knowledge, which we shall enjoy when emancipated from the school of this world, and admitted to our inheritance in heaven.

Cultivate therefore liberal science, under the sanction and guidance of true virtue and religion: you owe this, not only to your GOD, to your parents, to society, but to yourselves also. Need I urge the reason, after what has been said in this discourse? Wish you to be virtuous, and to be happy? to possess your minds in calmness and in peace? Wish you to enjoy the honours and riches of this world? Wish you for health and length of days here, for a comfortable and honourable old age, and for the joys of eternal life hereafter? or, in one word, do you truly love yourselves; Then you will "get Wisdom; and with all your endeavours, you will strive, now in your youth, to get understanding."

Over and above all the motives thus urged, let me add, and let me intreat you seriously to weigh, this one further consideration: "That this is the only season for the acquisition of wisdom; that youth,—the short and quickly-passing period of youth,—is the only time when you can acquire it: this passed unimproved, you will be left to mourn, in a dark and deserted old age, the wretched irretrievable waste of former time, and the impossibility of gaining that knowledge, the value and importance of which you will then too feelingly experience: the value and importance of which you will do well now to estimate, by their opinion of its loss, by their

lamentation for the want of this capital advantage, who never were so blest as to enjoy the means of early improvement.''*

"There is a certain season (says an able writer) when our minds may be enlarged; when a vast stock of useful truths may be acquired; when our passions will readily submit to the government of reason; when right principles may be so fixed in us, as to influence every important action of our future lives: but the season for this extends neither to the whole, nor to any considerable length of our continuance upon earth: it is limited to a few years of our term; and if throughout these we neglect it, error or ignorance, is, according to the ordinary course of things, entailed upon us. Our will becomes our law; our lusts gain a strength, which we afterwards vainly oppose: wrong inclinations become so confirmed in us,

* "Letters (says one of the finest writers of the present times) are the ornament of youth, and the comfort of old age. For example, without that comfort, what a miserable creature should I be, oppressed as I am by various physical ills, and cut off from society by my unfortunate deafness? But, thank God, I had reflection enough, even at your age, to consider the necessity and the utility of knowledge, in every stage of life; and giddy as I then was, I always contrived to have an hour's voluntary reading in a day. This gave me a habit of reading, which must be acquired young or never. A very honest, but illiterate friend and cotemporary of mine, who had laid in no stock of learning in his youth, but had led a fashionable, dissipated, thoughtless life, began to grow a little weary of himself at fifty, and quite fatigued with his time and himself at threescore. He grew melancholick, as well he might; and told me, with shame and sorrow, the cause of it. I advised him to read amusing books, such as the Spectators, Tatlers, &c. 'Yes, answered he, so I would, if I could; but as I have never read in my life, I cannot begin at threescore, and I would rather take physic, than any book whatsoever. Would you think it, I cannot read a whole Spectator without being tired to death.'—This is by no means an uncommon case with illiterate, ignorant men, except they be handicrafts-men and labourers, whose hands and legs find them occu-

that they defeat all our endeavours to correct them."*

But, my young friends, there is still one reason further, why you should lose no single moment of this short, this only season of improvement: 'tis possible you may be cut off even in the midst of this season: 'tis possible you may be deprived of all the means of future improvement; and then how miserable will be your own case! How inconsolable that of your parents!

But I spare the sad reflection. Think on the contrary, how great a blessing it will be, if God should please early to call you hence, to be then found ripe in Wisdom, and fit for heaven. Amidst all their tender lamentations for your loss, your parents will find the amplest consolation in that thought; and with weeping eyes, but thankfully-resigned hearts, will adore the goodness of Him, who gave, and who fitted so early for himself, the child of their bosom!

These reflections, I trust, will be sufficient to make

pation enough, and secure them from the insufferable load of time unemployed. The Jesuits have a very good rule with their scholars; they shut them up in the school for one hour every day, to what they call voluntary study: They may, during that time, read whatever book they please, but some book or other they must read. This gives them a habit of reading; and some of them have assured me, that they are as impatient for that hour of study, as they are for the hour of breakfast. Now, why should not you, though not under the law of the Jesuits, be a law unto yourself, for the same purpose, and resolve to read only one hour to yourself every day, without fail. Choose your book; I do not care whether it be Tom Thumb, Tom Jones, or Thomas Aquinas. This will use you to read, and that is all my aim at present: as you grow older and wiser, you will choose your books better and better. Always be doing something, but let that something be really *something*, and not an idle loss of time upon nothings. A French Author says very justly, *qu'il aime mieux ne rien faire, que de faire des Riens.*"—See also Spectator, No. 52, On the Use of Time.

* See Locke, and p. 92, foregoing.

you solicitous for the acquisition of Wisdom, and diligent in all the means to procure it. The direction of those means must be left to their prudence to whose care you are committed; and in some measure to the station of life, for which you are designed: but of this I shall speak more fully in my next. In the mean time, let me only just recommend a serious review of all those considerations which may awaken in your hearts a love of Wisdom and a just sense of its necessity and utility. From hence, of consequence, will flow a steady and uniform application; and of such application, be well assured, the certain issue is success;* that is, I mean, always subordinate to the assisting grace of God. Without this, all the endeavours of frail men are weak and unavailing; and for this you should, night and day, prostrate yourselves in humble supplication before the throne of grace; imitating herein the example of Solomon, who, struck with the beauty and excellence of Wisdom, tells us, that "perceiving he could not otherwise obtain her, except God gave her unto him; he prayed unto the Lord and besought him with his whole heart." You know how pleasing his prayer was to God, and how eminent the success of it. May it prove equally acceptable and equally successful at present; while with united hearts we present it to the throne of grace, on behalf of you all.

"O God of our fathers, and Lord of mercy! who hast made all things of thy word, and ordained man through thy Wisdom, that he should have dominion over the creatures which thou hast made; give us all—but especially to those young ones of thy flock, who are training up in the way to life,—give them Wisdom that sitteth by thy throne, and reject them

* "Whoso seeketh her early," saith the wise man, "shall have no great travel; for he shall find her sitting at his doors." See Wisdom, Chap. vi. 14, &c.

not from among thy children! O send them out of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory; that being present she may labour with them, that they may know what is pleasing unto thee: for she knoweth and understandeth all things; and she shall lead them soberly in their doings, and preserve them in her power. So shall their works be acceptable; so shall their lives be honourable; so shall their latter end be blessed; and they shall dwell with thee and with Wisdom for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen!

ANECDOTES *to recommend an Early Application to Wisdom.*

1. Bias, as he was one day sailing with some wicked men who prayed in a storm, intreated them to be silent, lest their voices should be heard amidst the pious prayers of others; and being asked by one of them, what that piety, which he talked of, meant? He answered, "It is to no purpose to speak to a man of those things which he never intended to practice." When this same philosopher came to die, he bequeathed this instruction to those who survived: "That they should so order their lives, as if they were to live a *very little*, and a *very great* while." From which principle of his, his friend Cleobulus on his death-bed inferred this conclusion: "That those men only live to any purpose, who overcome carnal pleasures, make virtue familiar, and vice a stranger to their souls; the great rule of life, as he observed, being to be moderate, and the great work of it to meditate, according to the remark of his cotemporary Periander, who hated pleasures which were not immortal; leaving behind him this axim, Μελέτη, τὸ πᾶν: "Meditation is every thing."

2. Antisthenes being asked, what he got by his learning, answered, "That he could talk to himself;

could live alone; and needed not go abroad, and be beholden to others for delight." The same person desired nothing of the gods to make his life happy, but the spirit of Socrates; thereby meaning contentment to bear any wrong or injury, and to continue in a quiet temper, whatever might befal him.

3. Diogenes seeing a stranger in Lacedemon at great pains to prepare his matters, and decorate himself for an approaching feast day: 'pray, sir, said he, what may you be about? Don't you know that every day is a festival to a good mind!' He compared this world to a temple dignified by the Deity; in which man is so constituted, as to be under a moral obligation to demean himself with integrity, as always under the inspection of an all-seeing God.

4. Count Oxenstiern, the Chancellor of Sweden, was a person of the first quality, rank and abilities in his own country, and whose share and success not only in the chief ministry of affairs there, but in the greatest negotiations of Europe, during his time, rendered him no less considerable abroad. After all his knowledge and honours, being visited in his retreat from public business by Commissioner Whitlock, our ambassador to Queen Christina; at the close of the conversation, he said to the ambassador, "I, Sir, have seen much, and enjoyed much of this world; but I never knew how to live till now. I thank my good God who has given me time to know him, and likewise myself. All the comfort I take, and which is more than the whole world can give, is the knowledge of God's love in my heart, and the reading of this blessed book,—laying his hand on the Bible.—You are now, sir, (continued he), in the prime of your age and vigour, and in great favour and business; but this will all leave you, and you will one day better understand and relish what I say to you. Then you will find that there is

more Wisdom, truth, comfort, and pleasure, in retiring and turning your heart from the world, in the good spirit of God, and in reading his sacred word, than in all the courts and all the favours of princes.

5. The Romans, we are told, built their temple of Virtue immediately before that sacred to honour; to teach that it was necessary to be virtuous, before the being honoured. St. Augustin observes, that these temples were contiguous, but so, as that there was no entering into that of honour, till after having passed through that of virtue.

6. Seneca, after a serious study of all the philosophy then in the world, was almost a Christian in his severe reproofs of vice, and commendations of virtue. His expressions are sometimes divine, excelling the common sphere of heathen authors. How beautiful is that sentence of his in the preface to his natural questions: "Oh! what a pitiful thing would man be, if his soul did not soar above these earthly things." And though he was sometimes doubtful about the future condition of his soul, yet he tells his dear Lucilius with what pleasure he thought of its future bliss; and then goes on to argue, that the soul of man hath this mark of divinity in it, that it is most pleased with divine speculations, and converses with them as with matters in which it is most nearly concerned. When this soul, saith he, hath once viewed the vast dimension of the heavens it despises the meanness of its former little cottage. Were it not for these contemplations, it had not been worth our while to have come into this world, nor would it makes us amends for any pains and care we take about this present life." And at length he concludes his arguments with this remarkable reason whence to infer the blessedness of pious souls; saying, "Let us not wonder that good men go to God after death; since God vouchsafes to enter into

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them here, in order to render them good; for no soul can be good without him." See his *Ep.* 73.

7. Alexander the Great being asked, why he honoured his master Aristotle more than Philip, his father, he replied, "My father brought me down from heaven to earth; but my master made me reascend from earth to heaven." The only one gave him life, the other instructed him how to live well.

8. It is said that when Virgil, that prince of the Latin poets, was asked by his friend, why he studied so much accuracy in the plan of his poem, the propriety of his characters, and the purity of his diction; he answered, *In æternum pingo:* "I write for eternity." What more weighty consideration can there be to justify and enforce the utmost vigilance and circumspection in life than this, *In æturnum vivo;* "I am living for eternity?"

9. Pericles, in his famous oration at the funeral of those Athenian young men, who perished in the Samian expedition, has a thought very much celebrated by several ancient critics; namely, "That the loss which the commonwealth suffered by the destruction of its youths, was like the loss which the year must sustain by a destruction of the spring." The prejudice which the public sustains from a wrong education of children, is an evil of the same nature; as it in a manner starves posterity, and defrauds our country of those persons, who, with due care, might make an eminent figure in their respective posts of life.

10. The Spartans, we find, paid a particular attention to the peculiar genius and disposition of their youths, in order the better to adapt them to such spheres, as were most suitable to their capacities, and might be most beneficial to society. Among them it was not lawful for the father himself to bring up his children after his own fancy. As soon

as they were seven years old, they were all listed in several companies, and disciplined by the public. The old men were spectators of their performances, who often raised emulations among them, and set them at strife one with another, that by those early discoveries they might see how their several talents lay, and, without any regard to their quality, dispose of them accordingly for the service of the commonwealth. By this means Sparta soon became the mistress of Greece, and famous through the whole world for her civil and military discipline.

11. Agesilaus, King of Sparta, being asked what he thought most proper for boys to learn, answered, "What they ought to do when they come to be men." Thus a wiser than Agesilaus hath inculcated, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

12. Claudius Cæsar erased the name of a Greek prince from the roll of the Judges, and sent him to travel, on finding he was ignorant of the Latin tongue.

13. The story of Simonides may stand as a thousand arguments for assiduous application to knowledge, and demonstrates that the wise man's true riches are lodged within himself. That excellent poet, the better to support himself under his narrow circumstances, went the tour of Asia, singing from city to city the praises of their heroes and great men, and receiving their rewards. By this means having at last become wealthy, he determined to return to his own country by sea, he being a native of the island Ceos. Accordingly, he went on board a vessel, which had not been long on the voyage, before a terrible tempest arose, and reduced it to a wreck in the midst of the sea. Upon this, some of the people packed up their treasures; others, their most valuable merchandize, and tried them around their bodies, as the best means of supporting their

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future existence, should they escape the present dangers. But amidst all their solicitude, a certain inquisitive person observing Simonides quite inactive, and seemingly unconcerned, asked him, "What! don't you look after any of your effects?" "No," replied the poet calmly; "all that is mine is with me:" then some few of them, and he, among the rest, took to swimming, and several got safe ashore; while many more perished in the waves, wearied and encumbered with the burden they had bound about them. To complete the calamity, soon after some plunderers came down upon the coast, and seized all that each man had brought away with him, leaving them naked. The ancient city of Clazomenæ happened to be near at hand, to which the shipwrecked people repaired; here a certain man of letters who had often read the verses of Simonides, and was his great admirer though unknown, on one day hearing him speak in the market-place, inquired of him his name, and finding it was he, gave him a welcome reception at his own house, and supplied him with clothes, money, and servants to attend him; while the rest of the company were forced to carry a letter about this foreign city, setting forth their case, and begging bread: the next day Simonides met with him in his walks, and thus addressed them, "Did I not tell you, my friends, that all which *I* had was with me? But you see all that *you* could carry away with you, perished." Thus Wisdom is proved to be the most durable possession and the best security amidst every want or trial.

14. Nicholas Breakspear, who, on his advancement to the popedom, assumed the name of Adrian IV. was, in the early part of life, reduced to the necessity of submitting to servile offices for bread. He studied in France, where, though he laboured under the pressures of poverty, he made a wonder-

ful progress in learning. He was, for his merit, chosen Abbot of St. Rufus, in Provence; in 1146, made a cardinal; and 1154, he succeeded to the pontificate. One day, on an interview with an intimate friend, he told him, "all the hardships of his life were nothing, in comparison to the papal crown; though he had been as it were strained through the alembick of affliction." This great and exemplary man was in such high veneration, that Frederick, king of the Romans, condescended to hold his stirrup while he mounted his horse: he was the only Englishman that ever sat in the papal chair.

15. Thomas, Earl of Dorset, who lived in the reign of James I. may not only be ranked with the chief men of his age as a scholar and a statesman, but was moreover an admirable manager of his private fortunes and the public revenues. The former indeed he had been called to from the most substantial motives; for it seems, he succeeded early in life to an immense estate, which, as he thought it set him above economy, he lavished without care. However, in a few years, by means of his excessive magnificence and dissipation, he found himself involved in debt. The indignity of being on a certain day kept in waiting by an alderman, of whom he had occasion to borrow money, opened his eyes, and made so deep an impression upon him, that he resolved from that moment, to become a better economist. Accordingly, we are told, he managed his finances so well, that he was thought a proper person to succeed the great Cecil, Lord Burleigh, as Lord High Treasurer of England.

16. The famous Torquato Tasso, by his poem, entitled *Rinaldo*, extended his reputation throughout all Italy, but greatly chagrined his father, who thought it might seduce him from studies more advantageous. Accordingly, he went to Padua,

where his son then was, to remonstrate against his apparent purpose of devoting himself to philosophy and poetry, and made use of many very harsh expressions; all which Tasso heard with a patience and tranquillity that made the old gentleman still more angry; at last, he cried, "Of what use is that philosophy, on which you value yourself so much!" "Sir," replied Tasso calmly, "it has enabled me to endure the harshness even of your reproofs."

17. Sir Thomas Smith, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth, a few months before he died, sent to his friends the bishops of Winchester and Worcester, entreating them to draw up for him, out of the word of God, the plainest and best directions for making his peace with him; adding, "That it was a great pity men knew not to what end they were born into the world, till they were just at the point of quitting it."

18. Sir John Mason was born in the reign of Henry VII. and lived in high esteem with Henry VIII. Edward VI. Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth; having been a privy counsellor to each of the four last, and an accurate observer of all the various revolutions and vscissitudes of those times. When he lay on his death-bed, he called his family together, and addressed them as follows, Lo! I have lived to see five princes, and have been counsellor to four. I have been present at most state transactions for thirty years together: and I have learned this, after so many years experience, That seriousness is the greatest Wisdom, Temperance the best physician, and a good conscience the best estate. And were I to live again, I would exchange the court for a cloister; my privy counsellor's bustles for an hermit's retirement, and the whole life I have lived in the palace, for one hour's enjoyment of God in my closet. All things else forsake me, except my God, my duty, and my prayers."

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SERMON VI.

ADVICE TO APPRENTICES.

Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ; doing the will of God from the heart: With good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bound or free,—EPHESIANS vi. 6—8.

WE recommended in the last Sermon an early and dilligent Application to Learning;—to the attainment of that Wisdom which is the guide and the comfort of life. The duty, necessity and advantages of this applicatiou were then fully shown; which though they affect all young persons, in an especial manner, yet do they more particularly concern such, as, designed for the learned professions, can never expect credit or advancement in life, if they are wanting in a continued application to science. To those, therefore, what we have said on this subject may be applicable and useful throughout the whole of their education: but it will be necessary to offer further and more particular counsel to those, who, designed to fill up the common stations of life, are, after a short period, to be removed from literary improvements to a more active situation, where, giving up their liberty for a season, they are bound to the service of another.

I would not have it understood as if it was either fittiug or proper for a young person to drop all lite-

rary pursuits and attainments when become an Apprentice, and engaged in business; so far from it, the pursuit of Wisdom is, as we have shown, in a great measure, incumbent upon all; and there cannot be a more useful or entertaining amusement for young men, than reading at their leisure hours: a love for this, and a proper attention to it, will not only be found highly improving, but will answer a thousand good purposes. It will serve more especially to keep them from the dangers of temptation, and so fill up happily those vacant hours, which, if left unoccupied, idleness and vice will too probably seize. Parents and masters therefore would each do well, equally to encourage in their children and apprentices an affection for liberal science; which will undoubtedly be attended with the most salutary effects; will not only prove an effectual preservative from vice, but the greatest improver of virtue.

Be it observed, my young friends, that I now speak of reading merely as an amusement; and no amusement must ever interfere with the time and the duty you owe to those, who are made your masters. Placed under them, as they owe to you all the care, improvement, and knowledge they can impart, so you owe to them, all the *Time*, *Fidelity*, *Industry*, and *Attention* which they require.

With respect to *Time*, in the first place, consider, that this now is no longer your own but your master's. Therefore be careful not to idle or squander it away, but to improve every moment of it, that so you may not only fulfil the duties of your station, but gain such allowed hours, as may be properly employed to your own emolument and satisfaction. There is nothing so valuable and important as time; the flying moments of it, once passed, are never to be retrieved: ever mindful hereof, delay not the immediate performance of that, which, the occasion

slipped, you may perhaps never have it in your power to perform at all. Be assured, there is nothing will so much recommend you to an observing master as a regular distribution, and exact improvement of time. See Serm. xvii. Part 1.

As of your *time*, so must you be particularly careful of your *trust*. Your master's interests are become yours; you owe him the strictest fidelity; and if you are found deficient herein, you must never expect either confidence or character. Fidelity shows itself in words and actions, and may be distinguished into truth in words, and integrity in deeds. Nothing is so dishonourable and disgraceful, as lying or a deviation from truth. It is always the mark of a mean and worthless spirit; a vice GOD knows, which too early discovers itself in the human mind; and to discourage and eradicate which, no caution or attention can be too great or severe. As it is founded in the worst principles, so is it productive of the greatest evils; not only extremely vicious and faulty in itself; but generally the introduction to and cloke for other faults and vices. Simply to *lie*, is an offence; to lie in order to conceal a fault, is a double offence; but to lie with a malicious purpose, with a view to injure or prejudice others, is an offence aggravated tenfold, and truly diabolical; an indication of the most corrupt and abandoned heart: and the mischief of it is, that they, who indulge themselves in the practice at all, generally are led on by the father of lies to the very excess of it. Never, therefore, in a smaller or greater matter, suffer your lips to deviate from the truth: speak it honestly, openly, and without reserve; You cannot conceive how easily the mind is corrupted by the slightest indulgence in falehood, by the least licence given to little mean reservations, equivocations, and mental chicaneries. Be assured, a fault is always doubled by denying it: an open, frank

confession disarms resentment, and conciliates affection: such a regard to truth will gain you credit, and give you dignity. It is an high, it is an amiable character of any man, of a young man more especially, to say, that his veracity is always to be depended upon; whereas the contrary is just as low and despicable. And if you accustom yourself to falsehood, such will be your character; for the natural consequence of being caught in one lie, is, in future, doubt of whatever you shall say: and I would ask, can there be anything more disgraceful, than to stand in such a light amongst your fellow-creatures, as to have your words despised and unregarded, and even the truth you speak disbelieved?

I might urge many religious motives to deter from this infamous practice; its contrariety to Christ and his Gospel, which is truth; its agreement with the devil, who is the father of lies; the signal punishment which God hath sometimes thought fit to inflict upon it (as in the remarkable case of Ananias and Sapphira), and the future and fearful punishment which is denounced upon all liars, that "they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." I might urge these and many other arguments to show the sinfulness of this practice: but I write not professedly on the subject; meaning only, my young friends, to show you the great importance and necessity of a strict adherence to truth, if you would recommend yourselves to your masters, and indeed to mankind in general.

There is great reason to believe, that those who are conscientious in their words will be so in their actions; that they will show the same regard to truth in the one as in the other; this is indispensibly requisite. The least temptation to fraud must never be suffered to remain a moment in your hearts; dishonestly will blast your reputation, and all your

hopes; and it will still be the worse in you, to whom your master intrusts the care of his property; for a breach of trust is ever the highest agrravation of an offence. Always therefore consider yourself as entrusted with the charge of your master's property; consider it as most sacred; and while you never allow in yourself a single thought of embezzling or injuring it, never permit yourself to connive at such practices in others. Next to the being vicious ourselves, is the consenting to, or conniving at vice in others; and he is not far from falling into the same sin, who can see it with unconcern, or without reproof in another. Not that I would have you busy and pragmatical; ready at all turns to whisper idle stories in the ears of your superiors. This will certainly render you extremely odious and disgusting to those who are upon a level with you: your life will become uneasy; and your own conduct will be most scrupulously examined. But this avoided, no fear or favour should ever influence your honest heart to see your master injured, and to pass by that injury unnoticed. If gentle and seasonable remonstrances will not avail with the injurer, you are bound by all the ties of duty and of honour to give information, lest your connivance at guilt should be judged, when disclosed, an actual participation of it.*

Let me finish this head with briefly hinting to you, that there is a duty which you owe to your master and his family out of doors, as well as within, and a duty of great importance; the neglect of which will tend greatly to deprive you of confidence and esteem; and that is, a caution never to disclose the secrets of your master's family; never to talk unseasonably and improperly of his affairs; much less to whisper any thing which may tend to depreciate his reputation.

* The example of *Joseph*, as a faithful servant, is too well known to need more than just mentioning in this place.

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Indeed your master's reputation should be dear to you as your own, and you should as carefully vindicate and defend it, if you hear it maligned and aspersed, as you would your own. But it not merely reputation whereof you are to be thus cautious: there are a thousand little transactions in every family which should never transpire through the walls, and which bear, in the relation, a very different appearance from the reality. These it should be your care never to disclose; and though I would advise you, not to desire by any means the trust of other people's secrets, yet, if intrusted, be sure to keep them as religiously as you do your own. One powerful means of enabling you to attain this fidelity, will be a firm resolution to place a bridle on your tongue; to check a forward, prating humour, which is always offensive in young men, and generally prejudicial: for it is not to be questioned, but that the unguarded tongue, which is suffered to run at all adventures, will frequently supply the want of sense with folly, and of truth with falsehood.

Besides this strict fidelity in words and actions, you owe to your master, and indeed to yourself, *Indvstry*, and close application to business. He expects it from you as his right; and you will do well to give it, as for that reason, so for your own sake also; because thus you will not only improve in the proper knowledge of that business which you are apprenticed to learn, but will preserve yourself from the numberless dangers attendant upon idleness. Every thing is possible to industry; and it will be very difficult to produce any instances of men, who, joining strict honesty to continued industry, have failed of their due success in this world*.

Well husbanding your time; nicely observant of truth, in words and in actions; industrious and punc-

* See Sermon xvii. Part 2.

tual in business, you will necessarily be esteemed. But there is a certain something in behaviour, a certain manner, which is, as it were, the polishing to the diamond, and highly requisite to render you beloved. Some worthy persons do even the best actions in an ungraceful manner; they have not and they do not study the art to please: you should make this your endeavour. Mild, gentle, and affable in your conversation; easy, and even *attentive* to the wishes of your master, in your actions; studying every little office which may render you acceptable, and striving to do whatever you do with grace and good nature: industriously avoiding at the same time every thing which may have the appearance of the least officiousness, or of a busy intrusion where you have no concern.

In short, in this and in all the other instances of your duty to your master, let one general rule ever have its due influence on your conduct, and it will always direct you right: "Consider his interests and welfare as your own." Thus, as a son with a father, you will never injure or see him injured: on the contrary, sensible of your duty to him, and to your all-seeing Master in heaven, you will study to do your part with all fidelity; thus recommending yourself at once to your earthly and your heavenly master.

I have thus far considered your duty in apprenticeship, only as it relates to your superiors: it will require some care and attention to conduct yourself properly towards your equals and inferiors. Your equals I call your fellow-apprentices, from whose acquaintance, if virtuous and good, you will reap great advantages and comforts, and which you can never be too careful to cultivate and cement in a proper manner, as perhaps you may derive from thence through life the highest emolument and satisfaction. If they are vicious and unworthy, the utmost

caution will scarce be sufficient, to guard you from the infection of their ill advice, and worse example. You must not only set your face like a rock against them; but strengthening your mind every day more and more with religious and virtuous principles, must both repel their noxious persuasions, and at the same time do your utmost to advise and reclaim them from their ruinous principles and practices.

But I dwell not on this subject, as proposing to set forth at large in a future discourse the dangers of Evil Company, and the proper method of avoiding it. I must not however fail just to advise, that you treat your inferiors with great courtesy and humanity, at the same time avoiding most carefully all undue freedom and familiarity, especially with the female servants; and more particularly, if you are so unhappy as to be placed with a master, who, according to the prevalent, but destructive mode of modern times, thinks himself excused from all care of his family in town, while he flies to indulgence and a country seat: in this case, much prudence and vigilance will on your side be necessary, lest you be inticed into snares, which may find cause ever to lament, or allow yourself in freedoms, which may imbitter the whole stream of your future life.

To prevent this, and other evils of the like kind, labour to maintain the strictest self-government, and seek, through God's grace, for a dominion over your passions. Temperance in meat and drink is to be maintained invariably: but this too, is a matter of so great consequence, that we shall afford it a separate discourse. Nor is temperance in dress of much less consequence. Solomon has well observed "that a man's character may be known by his apparel:" and though certainly different stations not only allow, but even demand different and more elegant modes of dress; yet a foppish attention to

it, in every sphere of life, is a mark of imbecility of understanding, and effeminacy of mind. But in your sphere of life, where dress, so far from being requisite, *is in a degree reproachful, such an attention will betray much want of prudence indeed; not to say that it will very probably plunge you into expenses greater than you are able to bear, and at the same time lead you to show yourself at such places and in such company, as will prove extremely pernicious to your morals. Neatness, cleanliness, and simplicity in apparel are proper to your sphere of life; they are in character; and be assured throughout your life, whatever is so, will always be found right, and will recommend you to the judicious and discerning.

Cautious of your company, temperate in meat and drink, neat and simple in your dress, you will have no temptation to those expensive pleasures, which too often involve young men in inextricable difficulties; and lead them to steps which end only in destruction. This may be said peculiarly of a pleasure, a fashionable pleasure—very falsely so called,—as it surely deserves to be stigmatized with the appellation of the most odious vice; I mean gaming: which, however common, is so pernicious in its effects, that it also may well claim a separate discourse, to set forth those effects in their proper colours, and to dissuade you, my young friends, from the least approach to so hazardous a precipice. Think not, however, that while I warn you from such as are false and destructive, I would rigidly have you debarred from all pleasures. Enjoy such as are consistent with virtue and your station; and of these there are sufficient, cheap, allowable, and highly refreshing; such as will neither injure your virtue,

* See the Beauties of Shakspere. Vol. 1. p. 220, Hamlet, Act 1. Scene 5.

your pocket, or your health. Indeed it is observable that the most exquisite, as well as the most innocent of all enjoyments, are those which cost us least; such as that of reading which I mentioned, though somewhat out of place, at the beginning of this discourse; the enjoyment of agreeable and sensible conversation; the pleasures of walking, and contemplating the high beauties of nature. These pleasures will supply all the relaxation you will need; and, to their great commendation, they afford a quick relish while they last, and leave no remorse when they are over.

But can we say this, of the fashionable pleasures of the town? Ah! my young friends, how I tremble for you on account of these! Syrens they are, that soothe to destruction: they allure but to spoil, and present the bowl of joy but to intoxicate and poison! Beware of, and fly from them, as you value your own present peace and future felicity in life: dare not to look, lest, enticed by their false beauty, you admire, and are undone.

It is, I well know, extremely difficult for a young man to withstand the artful sneer of ridicule, and the delusive sophistry of persuasion. You must, however, exert all your fortitude. Consider well the remorse of soul which will follow your departure from the ways of truth—the awful consequences of sinning against God.—Remember His all-seeing eye is upon you—lift up your hearts to Him for strength, and fly from the company of every one who even proposes an amusement inconsistent with your duty.

There is a danger;—how shall I speak of, or warn you against it? Oh that I had power to infuse virtue into your souls, or to guard you from an evil big with the most fatal and formidable consequence! Beware, as you value your life and salvation, beware of those infamous pestilential nightly

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prowlers, who, in the shape of women, take the devil's part, and tempt the innocent and unwary to foul shame and fearful ruin! Disease, and misery are in their embraces: blasphemy, theft, and murder, dwell in their secret chambers. True, poor miserable wretches! when early and cruelly deluded into this detestable mode of life; when weary of it, and sincerely desirous to repent and amend; we feel a generous pity for them, and gladly lay open the golden gate of mercy for their reception.* But, while persevering to debauch and delude; while permitted by the shameful negligence of the sleeping magistrate, to infest the most public passes of our streets, to corrupt the health, the peace, the morals, of our people, they can never be painted in too frightful colours; nor, trust me, my young friends, can any colours, however frightful, represent them as they are.

I could tell you, if the time or subject allowed, tales which would make attention bleed; of amiable youths, the hopes of their parents, the expectation of their friends, in an unguarded moment deluded and undone by these miscreants: an early, immature or ignominious death, or, what is almost worse, an howling mad-house, ending their sad and mournful history. Oh, my young hearers! beware of these spoilers of innocence, and look not, approach not, parly not with them; fly from them as from the grave; your safety is in flight; and whenever you behold them, with garish dress and artful, painted smiles, attempting to betray, consider you behold serpents prepared to sting you to death; tempters, who for a poor, little, inconsiderable bribe, will prostitute a fair frame, formed by a good God to delight and please; prostitute it to the foulest, filthiest pur-

* See "The State of the Magdalen Charity," last edition; with the Sermons, &c.

poses; their breath pollution, and their connexion worse than a devouring pestilence!

But moral motives and worldly respects, however powerful and persuasive, will be found, my young hearers, utterly ineffectual to preserve you from this, and all other temptations, to give stability to your virtue, and uniformity to your conduct, without the aid of Religion. It is from hence alone that motives sufficient to sway, and succour sufficient to influence, can be derived. Cultivate therefore, with undissembled sincerity, the practice of religion; that religion, which alone teaches you the true nature and end of your being, which informs you of the value of time, and calls upon you to improve and redeem it; which exhorts you to speak the truth from the heart, to be just and faithful in all your dealings; to provide things honest in the sight of all men; to study to be quiet, and do your own business; to be temperate in all things, sober, chaste, considering yourselves as the members of Christ, as the temples of the living God; and from that high and awful consideration, dreading to pollute those members, to defile and desecrate those temples.

Religion, teaching you to look up to the omniscient eye of an Almighty Master, will supersede a thousand other rules; will prevent all eye-service, all man-pleasing; will lead you, as the servants of Christ, to do the will of God from an obedient and conscientious heart. For, whatever men may say or urge (fools and blind!) to loosen the bonds of this divine principle, religion is that alone, which gives a man a sure and certain government over himself; and consequently, is that alone which can assure others of a good government over him. Suffer not, therefore, your religious principles to be shaken by the sophistry of infidels, or the scoff of sneerers. Suffer not your religious practice to be debauched by

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the delusions of immorality, or the enticing lure of pleasure; and, as one certain method to preserve you stedfast, let no arguments or considerations ever prevail upon you to profane the sabbath. If you do it once, you will find yourself more easily induced to do so a second time; and thus you will fall insensibly into a habit. There is not a better rule for the preservation of virtue than to 'resist beginnings;' for no man can tell to what length he shall be carried, who suffers vice of any kind to gain the least ascendency over him. Let nothing therefore persuade you once to profane the sabbath.* Depend upon it, the consequences of such profanation are ruinous; and we generally find, in the wretched confessions of those who conclude their lives ignominiously, that this was the first error which introduced them to a life of profligacy, and a death of shame.

Reverence therefore, and hallow in the strictest manner, God's holy sabbath. Attend the divine worship regularly each part of the day: pass the rest either in reading or meditation, or in innocent and amusing walks with such, as you are sure will lead you into no evil, but instruct and improve you by their friendly and rational conversation. If you are so happy as to be placed in the house of a religious master, comply invariably with the rules of his family, and think yourself peculiarly fortunate in so chosen a lot.† If it be otherwise, as there is too much reason to fear in the present dissipated mode of life; if you are left to yourself, or with your fellow-servants, to pass the sabbath, without the careful inspection of a master's eye, remember always that

* See a Sermon entitled, "A Sabbath Day well spent." Printed for Faden in Fleet Street.

† Need I recommend, to enforce the subject of this discourse, the admirable and instructive prints of Hogarth, called "The good and bad Apprentice?"

you have a Master in heaven, and that no neglect of your superiors can ever dispense with your neglect of duty to him and to them.

But, alas! let me refer it to the just decision of your hearts, who thus neglect the young men committed to your trust: how, O ye masters! can you expect that young people placed in your families should discharge their duty to God, to you, and to themselves, when they see you so shamefully neglect your own duty; leaving them to chance and temptation; and pursuing your pleasures on that sabbath especially, which ought to be dedicated to the exercises of religion, and the duties of good example? Who knows not the prevalence of example in every respect? Can it be wondered that young men (especially if of fortune) think themselves entitled to assume the same licence, and to pass their Sundays in riding, dissipation, and riot? Indeed, the greatest corrupters of youth, in the trading world, next to the evil of country houses and separate families, are the large premiums given with, and, consequently, the very large liberties given to young men, who yet are supposed to be engaged for a life of servitude, industry, and application. It is, I fear, too common for many to take those large premiums, who very little concern themselves with the morals and virtues of such, as tender parents, with the best hopes, have committed to their trust. It is not easy to say how they can answer to their consciences so gross a neglect. If the necessary management and restraint be more difficult, as probably it may, in proportion to the largeness of the premium, the master should certainly consider himself as engaged to superior care and attention: and it is a truth which none can deny, however strangely they may contradict it in practice, that the higher and more important the charge, the more the master is obliged to abound in

instruction, diligent inspection, and good example. But whatever the charge, nothing can, nothing ever will, excuse an honest and good master from the discharge of these duties. Attentive to the importance whereof, those parents, who are studious of their children's good, will made it their first care,—not to look out for a master, who, most eminent in his station, will possibly prove most negligent of their children, and from whom they may purchase for them the greatest indulgences; that is, the most certain ruin, at the highest rate; as if the virtue and future well-being of their children was not of more consequence, than the gratifying a poor temporary vanity; but they will make it their first care to place them with a master, who, like Abraham, fears God, and serves him with all his house; whose honesty and good character, founded on this basis, are irreproachable; and from whose virtuous example, the most lively and constant motives will arise to a similarity of conduct.

Happy parents, who thus prudently and wisely choose! Happy masters, who thus excellently, and conscientiously rule their families! Happy youths, committed to such faithful and worthy directors! Established in good principles, you will enter upon life with the best hopes; will become an ornament and a blessing to society, and meet the future reward of your good conduct in a kingdom of peace and glory. Amen!

ANECDOTES *for the "Advice to Apprentices."*

1. The Archbishop of Cambray makes Telemachus declare, that though he was young in years, he was old in the art of knowing how to keep both his own and his friend's secrets. "When my father," says the prince, "went to the siege of Troy," he took me on his knees, and after embracing and blessing

me, as he was surrounded by the nobles of Ithaca, 'O my friends! said he, into your hands I commit the education of my son; if you ever loved his father, show it in your care towards him: but above all, do not omit to form him just, sincere, and faithful in keeping a secret.' These words of my father, says Telemachus, were continually repeated to me by his friends in his absence; who made no scruple of communicating to me their uneasiness, at seeing my mother surrounded with lovers, and the measures they designed to take on that occasion. He adds, that he was so ravished at being thus treated like a man, and at the confidence reposed in him, that he never abused it: nor could all the insinuations of his father's rivals ever get him to betray what was committed to him under the seal of secrecy. See the *Spectator*, No. 338.

2. "There is nothing," says Plato, "so delightful, as the hearing or the speaking of truth." For this reason it is, that there is no conversation so agreeable, as that of a man of integrity, who hears without any intention to betray, and speaks without any intention to deceive.—As an advocate was pleading the cause of his client in Rome, before one of the prætors, he could only produce a single witness in a point where the law required the testimony of two persons; upon which, the advocate insisted on the integrity of the person whom he had produced: but the prætor told him, that where the law required two witnesses he would not accept of one, though it were Cato himself.—Such a speech from a person who sat at the head of a court of justice, while Cato was still living, shows us more than a thousand examples, the high reputation this great man had gained among his cotemporaries, on the account of his sincerity.

3. As I was sitting (says an ancient writer) with some senators of Bruges, before the gate of the

Senate House, a certain beggar presented himself to us, and with sighs and tears, and many lamentable gestures, expressed to us his miserable poverty, and asked our alms; telling us at the same time, that he had about him a private maim, and a secret mischief, which very shame restrained him from discovering to the eyes of men. We all pitying the case of the poor man, gave him each of us something, and departed. One, however, amongst us, took an opportunity to send his servant after him, with orders to inquire of him, what that private infirmity might be, which he found such cause to be ashamed of, and was so loth to discover. The servant overtook him, and delivered his commission; and after having diligently viewed his face, breast, arms, legs, and finding all his limbs in apparent soundness; "why, friend," said he, "I see nothing whereof you have any such reason to complain." Alas, sir! said the beggar, the disease which afflicts me, is far different from what you conceive, and is such as you cannot discern: yet it is an evil which hath crept over my whole body; it has passed through my very veins and marrow, in such a manner, that there is no member of my body that is able to work for my daily bread. This disease is by some called Idleness, and by others Sloth. The servant hearing this singular apology, left him in great anger, and returned to his master with the above account; but before the company could send again to make further inquiry after him, the beggar had very prudently withdrawn himself.

4. Action, we are assured, keeps the soul in constant health; but idleness corrupts and rusts the mind; for a man of great abilities, may, by negligence and idleness, become so mean and despicable, as to be an incumbrance to society, and a burden to himself. When the Roman historians described an extraordi-

nary man, it generally entered into his character, as an essential, that he was *incredibili industriâ, diligentiâ singulari*,—"of incredible industry, of singular diligence and application." And Cato in Sallust informs the Senate, that it was not so much the arms, as the industry of their ancestors, which advanced the grandeur of Rome, and made her mistress of the world. Similar to which is the observation of Solomon (Prov. 22. 29), "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men."

5. A physiognomist, who professed, that from the outward features of the face and habit of the body he could assign the inward disposition of any man to a degree of certainty, one day seeing Socrates, he pronounced him stupid, ignorant, effeminate, drunken, and addicted to unnatural vices. Upon this, the philosopher's friends were so irritated, that they threatened the man, and vowed to punish him as an imposter; as in all likelihood they would, had not Socrates restrained them by saying, "the man is no way mistaken: I should have been just the person he describes, had I not trained myself up by the precepts of philosophy."*

6 Cæpio was adjudged to death for some offence, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar; but his servant in the night time carried him in a chest out of Rome, and brought him, by repeated nocturnal journies, from Ostia to the Laurentine fields, where was his father's villa. Afterwards, in order to be at further distance from danger, they took ship; but being forced back by a tempest, and driven on the coast of Naples, the servant was there apprehended, and

* See Proverbs, Chap. vii. ver. 6, &c. than which the inexperienced youth cannot, perhaps, meet with a more striking and beautiful admonition in all history, sacred or profane.

brought before the Centurion, who put him to a strict examination; every art, however was ineffectual to warp him from his duty; nor could he be prevailed on either by bribes or menaces, to make any discovery respecting his master's retreat.

7. Micithus, a domestic of Anaxilaus, king of the Rhegini, was left by his dying master to govern his kingdom, and superintend his children during their minority. Throughout this viceroyship he behaved himself with such clemency and justice, that the people saw themselves happily placed under a person, whose quality was neither unfit to bear rule nor too mean for the high post he occupied: and yet, when the children of Anaxilaus came of age, he immediately devolved the power into their hands, and at the same time transferred to them the treasures, which by his economy he had accumulated; accounting himself merely as their guardian and trustee: while for his own part, content with a small pittance, he retired to Olympia, and there lived in the private enjoyment of respect, security, and the noble testimony of a faithful and upright conscience.

8. The following, we are informed, is a true relation of an event, which happened in a neighbouring state not many years ago. A jeweller, a man of good character and considerable wealth, having occasion, in the way of business, to travel at some distance from the place of his abode, took along with him a servant. He had with him some of his best jewels, and a large sum of money, to which his servant was likewise privy. The master having occasion to dismount on the road, the servant watched his opportunity, took a pistol from his master's saddle, and shot him dead on the spot. Then rifling him of his jewels and money, and hanging a large stone to his neck, he threw him into the nearest canal. With this booty, he made off to a distant part of the coun-

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try, where he had reason to believe that neither he nor his master were known. There he began to trade, in a very low way at first, that this obscurity might screen him from observation; and in the course of many years seemed to rise up, by the natural progress of business, into wealth and consideration; so that his good fortune appeared at once the effect of industry, and the reward of virtue. Of these he counterfeited the appearance so well, that he grew into great credit, married into a good family; and by laying out his hidden stores discreetly, as he saw occasion, and joining to all a universal affability, he was at length admitted to a share of the government of the town, and rose from one post to another, till at last he was chosen chief magistrate. In this office he maintained a fair character, and continued to fill it with no small applause, both as governor and judge; till, one day, as he sat on the bench with some of his brethren, a criminal was brought before him, who was accused of murdering his master. The evidence came out full; the jury brought in their verdict that the prisoner was guilty, and the whole assembly waited the sentence of the President of the court (which he happened to be that day) in great suspense. Mean while he appeared to be in unusual disorder and agitation of mind; his colour changed often: at length he arose from his seat, and coming down from the bench, placed himself just by the unfortunate man at the bar, to the no small astonishment of all present. "You see before you," said he, addressing himself to those who had sat on the bench with him, a striking instance of the just awards of Heaven; which, this day, after thirty years concealment, presents to you a greater criminal than the man just now found guilty." Then he made an ample confession of his heinous offence, with all its peculiar aggravations; saying, "nor can I feel any relief from the agonies of an

awakened conscience, but by requiring that justice be forthwith done against me in the most public and solemn manner." We may easily suppose the amazement of all, especially his fellow judges. They accordingly proceeded upon his confession to pass sentence upon him, and he died with all the symptoms of a penitent mind. See *Dialogues on Education*, vol. ii. p. 401.

9. All the real pleasures and conveniencies of life (says a fine writer) lie in a narrow compass:

> "Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long."

But it is the humour of mankind to be always looking forward, and straining after such as have got the start of them in wealth and honour. Nay, persons of a higher rank live in a kind of splendid poverty, and are perpetually wanting, because instead of acquiescing in the solid pleasures of life, they endeavour to outvie each other in shadows and appearances. This ridiculous chase after imaginary pleasures cannot be sufficiently exposed, as it is the great source of those evils which generally undo a nation. Let a man's estate be what it will, he is a poor man, if he does not live within it; and naturally sets himself to sale to any one who can give him his price. When Pittacus, after the death of his brother, who had left him a good estate, was offered a great sum of money by the King of Lydia, he thanked him for his kindness, but told him he had already more by half than he knew what to do with. In short, content is equivalent to wealth, and luxury to poverty; or to give the thought a more agreeable turn, "content is natural wealth," says Socrates; to which I shall add, luxury is artificial poverty. I shall therefore recommend to the consideration of those, who are always aiming at superfluous and imaginary enjoyments, and will not be at the trouble of contracting their desires,

an excellent saying of Bion the philosopher; namely, "that no man has so much care, as he who endeavours after the most happiness."—*Spectator.* No. 574.

10. Scipio the younger, when only twenty-four years of age, was appointed by the Roman republic to the command of the army against the Spaniards. Soon after the conquest of Carthagena, the capital of the empire, his integrity and virtue were put to the following exemplary and ever memorable trial, related by the historians, ancient and modern, with universal applause. Being retired into his camp, some of his officers brought him a young virgin of such expuisite beauty, that she drew upon her the eyes and admiration of all. The young conqueror started from his seat with confusion and surprise; and like one thunder-struck, seemed to be robbed of that presence of mind and self-possession, so necessary in a general, and for which Scipio was remarkadly famous. In a few moments, having rallied his straggling spirits, he inquired of the beautiful captive, in the most civil and polite manner, concerning her country, birth and connections; and finding that she was betrothed to a Celtiberian prince named Allucius, he ordered both him and the captive's parents to be sent for. The Spanish prince no sooner appeared in his presence, than even before he spoke to the father and mother, Scipio took him aside, and to remove the anxiety he might be in on account of the young lady, he addressed him in thus: "you and I are young, which admits of my speaking to you with more liberty. Those who brought me your future spouse, assured me at the same time, that you loved her with extreme tenderness; and her beauty left me no room to doubt it. Upon which, reflecting, that if, like you, I had thought of making an engagement, and were not wholly engrossed with the affairs

of my country, I should myself desire that so honourable and laudable a passion might find favour; I therefore think myself happy in the present conjuncture to do you service. Though the fortune of war has made me your Master, I desire to be your Friend. Here is your wife; take her, and may the Gods bless you with her. One thing, however, I would have you be fully assured of, that she has been amongst us as she would have been in the house of her father and mother. Far be it from Scipio to purchase a loose and momentary pleasure at the expense of virtue, honour, and the happiness of an honest man! No; I have kept her for you, in order to make you a present worthy of you, and of me. The only gratitude I require of you, for this inestimable gift is, that you will be a friend to the Roman people." Allucius's heart was too full to make him any answer; but, throwing himself at the General's feet, he wept aloud: the captive lady fell down in the same posture; and remained so, till the aged father, overwhelmed with transports of joy, burst into the following words: "oh, divine Scipio! the Gods have given thee more than human virtue! Oh, glorious leader! oh, wondrous youth! does not that obliged virgin give thee, while thus praying to the Gods for thy prosperity, rapture infinitely above all the transports thou couldst have reaped from the possession of her injured person?" Such was Scipio; a soldier, a youth, an heathen! nor was his virtue unrewarded. Allucius, charmed with such magnanimity, liberality and politeness, went into his own country, and published on all occasions the praises of his generous and humane victor; crying out, "that there was come into Spain a young hero, like the gods; who conquered all things less by the force of his arms, than by the charms of his virtue and the greatness of his beneficence." Upon this report (continues the

historian) all Celtiberia submitted to the Romans; and Allucius returned in a shout to Scipio, at the head of 1400 chosen horse, to facilitate his future conquests: and to render the marks of his gratitude still more durable, Allucius caused the action above related to be engraven on a silver shield, which he presented to Scipio; a present infinitely more inestimable and glorious, than all his treasures and triumphs. This shield, which Scipio carried with him when he returned to Rome, was lost in his passing the Rhone, with part of the baggage: it continued in that river till the year 1665, when some fishermen found it; and it is said to be now in the cabinet of the French King.

11. It was a good piece of advice which Pythagoras gave his scholars, "that every night, before they slept, they should examine what they had been doing that day, and so discover what actions were worthy of pursuit to-morrow, and what little vices were necessary to be prevented from slipping unawares into a habit." If you would be free from sin, fly temptation. He who does not endeavour to avoid the one, cannot expect Providence to defend him from the other. If the first sparks of vice were quenched, there would be no flame. For how can he kill, who dares not meditate revenge? Or he be an adulterer in act, who does not transgress in desire? How can he be perjured, who fears an oath? or defraud another, who dares not allow himself to covet? "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city."

SERMON VII.

ON BAD COMPANY.

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.—1 CORINTHIANS xv. 33.

ALL nature loves and seeks society: even the animals which are not of the most ferocious and untameable kind, delight to herd together, and feel a satisfaction in each other's presence. Man, peculiarly formed for society, has no joy in absolute solitude: cut off from his fellow-creatures, so far is he from partaking of the pleasures of life, that he finds it extremely difficult to support his being. From society proceed all the refined comforts and superior enjoyments of life; and from society,—so very much mixed are all human blessings—proceed the greatest dangers and evils of life. 'Tis unpleasing to think, that from our chief advantages our greatest evils should flow; but this is not the only instance wherein the observation holds good. Alas! my young friends, how I shudder for you, when recollecting the various perils you have to encounter, from assorting with that world, where you will find so many pleasing temptations to allure; so many gilded snares to entrap; where, perhaps, your own good dispositions and good inclinations will be made the foundation of your utter undoing! Society you must, you will have: good society is not less difficult to attain, than it is advantageous when attained; evil society, as common as the air, is as blasting to the manners, as that air, when it bears on its noxious wings pestilence and

disease. I would warn you from the latter: I would show you, in conformity with the apostle's declaration, that "Evil communications corrupt good manners," I would show you that they must necessarily and unavoidable do so. I would point out, on the other hand, the advantages of good company and conversation, and intreat you, by all you hold dear, as cautiously to fly the one, as you cultivate the other.

The fatal consequences of Bad Company have been known and confessed in all ages. The passage which St. Paul produces, is taken from a very ancient heathen poet;* and it seems to have been one of those passages, which had gained universal assent, and was received as a maxim. Indeed, nothing is more true. For suppose a young person to set forward in the world, stored with the best principles, and unpolluted in virtue, there can be no question but those principles will be overthrown, and that virtue corrupted, if he communicates constantly, and by choice, with the vicious and loose. For, observe, we speak here of such company as we ourselves choose. 'Tis very possible in our connections with the world we may be obliged to converse with many, whose principles and practice are totally abborrent from our own: but from these we are not in much danger. Our dislike and disapprobation of their manners which we feel, will rather serve to improve our own. Our peril lies in the company of such, as we voluntarily choose for the associates of our freer hours: not only because such choice evidently shows "the turn and disposition of our minds, but because, from the very nature of social union, both we ourselves shall wish and study to be assimilated, and our companions will be zealous to have us assimilated to them."

* From Menander, according to St. Jerome, in whom the verse runs thus:

φθειρουσιν ηθη χρησθ' ὁμιλιαι κακαι.

Theognis has a passage very similar.

The choice of bad company, in the first place, evidently proves a bad disposition of mind. "Tell me with whom you go," says the proverb, "and I will tell you what you are." Free society is a matter of absolute choice, and, like another alliance, can never be contracted without consent of parties. Like universally efforts with like: and it is as impossible for a virtuous mind, desirous of improvement, and studious to excel in duty, to take pleasure in the company of idle, ignorant, and vicious persons, as it is for the two greatest countries in nature to unite. Where the sentiments, the conversation, the pursuits totally disagree, what but strife and contention can ensue? Is it probable that persons thus dissentient will delight to associate merely to jar and contend? Far different is the end and design of social intercouse. Indeed, the matter wants very little proof: the choice of bad companions is as infalliable a proof of a bad mind, as the choice of bad, trifling and unimproving books would be of a depraved taste, in the man who had a large and excellent library of the best and most improving authors around him, whence to make his election.

But I am wandering from my subject. The voluntary choice of bad company is so sure and sad a proof of a worthless mind, that all instruction will certainly prove fruitless: we think not therefore of such. We suppose you, my young friends, entering into life with good principles and good dispositions; not voluntarily choosing, but accidentally thrown into bad company; an evil too much to be dreaded, from the prevalence of such company in this corrupted world, where the number of the vicious, it is to be feared, far exceeds that of the good; and where, unfortunately, the good are often difficult of access, and very nice in their acquaintance; while the vicious,—bold and assuming—are

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forward to court the young and the virtuous to associate with them; anxious to corrupt their principles, and pollute their manners, as if numbers added strength to their cause, and their own shame and ruin would be less aggravated, the more they involved others in shame and ruin with them.

But be not you deceived, my young friends, by their glozing speeches, and loud promises of felicity: neither trust to yourselves or the imagined rectitude of your own intentions, as if you might pass safely amongst them. Who, though in full health and strength, would ever think of visiting the place where an epidemical and pestilential disorder ravaged all before it? Believe me, the company of the vicious is more dangerous, as being more contagious; and however you may escape for the present, will undoubtedly in time corrupt, and work a fatal wound in your mind. For, tell me, upon what terms do you intend to converse with this evil company, into which you are unhappily fallen? You must either approve or disapprove them. If you approve them, there can be no doubt but you will imitate and resemble them. All hopes are then over! If you disapprove them, and continue stedfast in that disapprobation, there will probably soon be an end of your society: and you may possibly come off safe. Though this is not so sure as you may think, particularly if you renew your visits, and are frequently found in the same society. For it is not in your power to tell what weight their arguments will havs upon your mind; and be assured, they will use every argument which they conceive may be of weight: since, as we just observed, the vicious and abandoned are very uneasy to have any person with whom they converse, better than themselves: and mighty zealous to make proselytes, that the virtue of others may not give pain to their own reflections.

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Indeed, as men of this class are generally ignorant enough, and sufficiently superficial in their understandings, you might perhaps with no great difficulty refute their arguments, and, on the footing of fair reasoning, show the futility of all they advance: but they have a kind of reasoning of their own, a method of argumentation, which will baffle all your logic, and confute at once all your arguments; and that is, *Laughter and ridicule.* A loud laugh, or a ridiculous jest; a little well-timed mockery, or despicable buffoonery, will serve at once to render all you would say insignificant, and to make you feel very uneasy in yourself, very laughable in the sight of others. This may be called, the strong-hold of the vicious, and if you have fortitude enough to stand it,—which, believe me, is the case with very few of your fellow-creatures, for the human mind sustains persecution and pain much better than ridicule and scorn: yet, if you have fortitude enough to bear it,—and can, with a manly resolution, despise and forsake such company, you are safe: you need fear no danger. But, as the contrary is much to be apprehended; as none of us can maintain too low an opinion of his own virtues, and consequently should avoid with the utmost caution every temptation; it will be much your best method never to trust yourself a moment in that company, where you find good principles and good manners bantered and laughed at, and where this successful engine of corruption, ridicule,* is played with all its force against virtue, religion, good manners, and your own profession of them.

But, suppose this not to be the case; there are other reasons to fear, lest your morals should be corrupted, though at present you disapprove what you see wrong

* See this matter more fully handled in the subsequent Sermons on "Ridicule."

in your companions. It is common to us all, to behold with gradually-decreasing horror, as we grow familiarized to the sight, the objects which at first chilled our blood. However you may disapprove, at first, the loose and profane language, and the more loose and criminal actions of your associates, be assured that you will find that disapprobation gradually diminish, as you accustom yourself more to hearing such language, and seeing such actions. The very allowance hereof, is a large stride in wrong. You have lost immediately, on this permission, the pure and undefiled guard of virtue; and when once an avenue, however small, is open to vice, it is the nature of the insinuating monster to creep in more and more, till she has wormed herself into the very inmost heart.

Besides, the nature of friendly society is such, that, as we before remarked, it must necessarily have consent of parties. Meetings of this kind are designed for pleasure and satisfaction; and as every one, of a good disposition at least, finds in himself a desire to please, and to render himself agreeable to those with whom he converses, this very principle, amiable and excellent as it is in itself, will greatly increase your danger in bad company. Though many things may be said, proposed and done, which your best sentiments totally disapprove, yet, unwilling to disturb the good harmony of the social set, reluctant to disgust and give offence, and fearing the stigmatizing appellation of "singularity," you will run the same length of riot with them; and, contrary to your better judgment, plunge perhaps into evils, which you may find cause to lament all the future days of your life. And further, my young friends,—O see how dangers thicken, and inconveniences press around, when once you set your foot in unbidden paths!—If further you happen to possess a good degree of spirits and

vivacity, think, when your blood flows with a quicker circulation, when all is cheerful, all is alive; think, when the riot increases, and mirth mounts into madness; O think, how easily you may be thrown entirely off your guard, and he carried by those spirits, which now no longer obey the rein of reason, into actions bad as the worst of those, whereof we frequently hear dissolute young persons boast!—vain and foolish, as if any honour could accrue, from seeming to be more vicious than men really are; or from talking of crimes, which they have neither power nor hardiness to commit! 'Tis certainly a sad proof of the corruption of the present times, that such persons are found amongst us: such however there are among the young; and if only amongst the young, their youth and inexperience might happly plead some excuse. But such there are too amongst the old; who not only presume, against the laws of decency and God, to speak of their filthy vices with relish; but even to boast of vices, which they never committed; as if it were a credit to be more abominable than they in fact have made themselves. Blush, and hide your heads, ye sons of shame! Unworthy the name of Christians, the heathen world will rise up against you in judgment, and condemn you.

I have hitherto reasoned, my young friends, upon principles common and congenial to our nature, such as operate almost invariably and irresistibly upon us; and consequently, such as prove to a demonstration the certain danger there is, that "Evil communications will corrupt good manners." There is one other such principle in the human nature, which tends still more to confirm what I have advanced; and that is our proneness to imitation. This is so general a principle, that from the cradle to the day of death our life is almost all imitation. Few think

or act for themselves, forming their opinions and manners upon the manners and opinions of others: And in social life we no sooner approve, than we are immediatetly led to imitate. Indeed, friendly society being formed upon a similarity of manners; such society can never be maintained without that similarity be preserved. It cannot therefore be supposed, that if you converse with the vicious and immoral, you will be divested of this common principle of your nature: it is certain that this principle will have its influence on you; your thoughts, speech, and actions will be formed upon the model of theirs: you will become one of them. Then, farewell all the pleasing hopes of your affectionate parents; farewell all the delightful prospects of your felicity, wherewith they flattered themselves: farewell all those comfortable expectations, which virtue and religion naturally form: and for yourselves, farewell the body in health, the mind at peace; and the conscience serene and applauding. Farewell true tranquillity on earth; farewell the hope of eternal tranquillity in heaven!

These are the consequences of a corruption of manners, which will assuredly follow from the choice of bad company; and therefore Charondas, an ancient lawgiver, wisely enacted a law with reference to this evil. "As he conceived that the morals of the good were sometimes quite ruined by their dissolute acquaintance; that vice was apt, like an infectious disease, to spread itself, and to extend its contagion even to the best disposed of our species: in order to prevent this mischief, he expressly enjoined that none should engage in any intimacy or familiarity with immoral persons. He appointed that an accusation might be exhibited for keeping bad company, and laid a heavy fine on such as were convicted of it." This wise and salutary law was founded on the truest knowledge of human nature; which it

is unquestionable, however pure and well disposed, bad company and bad example will for the most part be found sufficient to corrupt.*

In this case then, as well as in respect to vice in general, be assured, that your safety is in flight; in avoiding as much as possible every temptation, which may seduce into evil. Now entirely to effect this safety, there are three things which I would peculiarly recommend: the *first* is, "to avoid, with the nicest caution, all society with the bad." If by accident thrown into their company, maintain your decency and dignity with all possible firmness; but comply not with any of their solicitations: approach not to any the least intimacy; but on the first occasion make your retreat, nor enter into their assembly again.

And, as the best antidote against such society, as one of the surest methods to render it disgusting, and to show it in its own true and despicable colours; let me advise you, *secondly*, "to seek and to cultivate with all your power to society of the virtuous and the good:" of those who are superior to you, rather than those beneath you. A love of low company is certain ruin! You will find a serenity and satisfaction in the converse of the worthy, always innocent, agreeable and improving, which you will never find in the obstreperous mirth and loose riot of the dissolute and profane. You will find yourself stimulated to higher degrees of virtue, the more you are familiar with the virtuous; and consequently you will find your happiness daily increase, in proportion as your virtue increases: for "virtue is happiness."

But, besides a general correspondence with the virtuous, endeavour if possible to cultivate a pure

* See the Anecdotes, for a striking proof hereof, in the case of Prince Eugene of Soissons, p. 143.

disinterested friendship with one of similar dispositions, and similar good intentions with yourself.* From a friendship founded in true virtue and religion, you will reap, not only the most delicate pleasure which the human soul can feel, but, in many respects, the highest advantages which the human life can experience.

A celebrated Heathen writer† mentioning the use which friends are of to us, in every part of life, remarks the benefit which young men find from them to be, that "they keep them in their duty." Certainly nothing more strong or more important could be urged in behalf of friendship. To keep us stedfast in our duty, is the best office which can be done for us: a virtuous friend can and will keep us so stedfast: surely then, above all things, it should be our study to cultivate virtuous friendship.

But, avoiding the company of the bad, and solicitously cultivating that of the good, you must take care, *thirdly*, as the most important point of all, "to preserve in your minds, a deep sense of the importance, and a high relish of the comforts of religion;" —of that religion, which exhorts not only to avoid evil, but every the least appearance of it: that religion, which, maintained in all its life and power upon the soul, by a regular and uniform application to all the means of grace, will serve to render the company and conversation of the vicious of disgusting and detestable, that the mind would prefer, under the happy impressions of it, perpetual solitude in the wildest desart, rather than the society of those whose

* Facillime et in optimam partem cognoscuntur adolescentes, qui se ad claros et sapientes viros, bene consulentes reipublicæ, contulerunt: quibuscum si frequentes sunt, opinionem afferunt populo, eorum fore se similes, quos sibi ipsi delegerunt ad imitandum.—*Cicer. de Offic.* lib. ii. 13. See Sermon xvi.

† Aristotle.

every word is a wound to the chaste and virtuous ear; whose every action is as a poignard to the good and religious heart.

No, my young friends! while the religion of Christ has its due influence upon your souls; while you direct your thoughts and guide your actions by the pure and blessed precepts of the gospel; you have no need to fear the loss of the relish of that virtue, the nice feelings of that tender conscience, which will render vice odious, and goodness alone pleasing to you. Show yourselves only firm and well-grounded in your principles; dare but to be singular a while, and to confront the little scoffs and ridicule of despicable sneerers; and, be assured, your company will become, to your great felicity, as unpleasing to the vicious, as theirs can be to you. As a living reproach to their infamous proceedings, they will not care how little they see or know of you; and finding you like a rock amidst the waves, firm and secure against all their noisy attacks; while they cannot refuse you the silent approbation and involuntary homage of their hearts, they will leave you to pursue your happy and well-chosen course of life. A course which will infallibly lead you to true contentment and inward peace: which will enable you, perhaps, hereafter to give relief and consolation to many of those, who, to their own ruin, have pursued a different course; but which will certainly procure you the honour and esteem of your fellow-creatures, and the future applause of a just and benevolent Redeemer. Which, &c.

ANECDOTES, *On the Subject of Bad Company.*

1. "Art thou any kind of tree?" (said an eastern Sage to a lump of odoriferous earth, which he picked up in a grove) "thou charmest me with thy perfume?"—It answered him, "I am only a vile piece

of earth; but I dwelt for some time with the rose." One of our poets has prettily conveyed this sentiment, by observing,

> Who can travel through th' Arabian groves,
> And not bear thence some fragrance?"

2. The divine mercy had inspired a vicious man to request admission into a society of Sages, whose morals were holy and pure. He obtained what he earnestly desired: the constant example of their virtues deeply affected him. He could not be taught a better lesson. He made no delay to imitate them, and to relinquish his former ill habits. He became just, sober, patient, laborious, beneficent, amiable. His good works could not be contradicted; but, odious motives were attributed to them; and though his actions were commended, his person was not beloved or esteemed. In short, most people seemed inclined to pass their judgment upon him, from what he had been, but not from what he was. This injustice pierced him with sorrow: he shed tears in the bosom of an old and venerable friend, whom he knew to be just and humane. "My son," said the Sage to him, "thou art of more worth even than thy reputation: give God thanks for it. Happy is the man, who can say, 'my enemies and my rivals censure in me the vices which I no longer retain.' What signifies it, if thou art but good, that others persecute thee as a wicked man? Hast thou not for thy consolation, two clear-sighted witnesses of thy actions, GOD, and thine own conscience?"

3. The excellent Bishop Taylor, in one of his volumes, has the following remark: "As those creatures," says he, "that live among the snows of the mountains turn white * with their food, and conversation with such perpetual whitenesses; so our souls

* See Smollet's "View of all Nations," Vol. i. p. 32, 80, and 195, for some curious facts on this head.

may be transformed into the similitude and union of Christ, by our perpetual feeding on him, and conversation, not only in his courts, but in his very heart, and most secret affections, and incomparable purity." Thus too the royal poet observes, with respect to our associates in life: "With the holy, thou shalt be holy, and with a perfect man, thou shalt be perfect: with the clean, thou shalt be clean, and with the froward thou shalt learn frowardness."

4. Gallus Vibius, we are informed, was in the earlier part of life a man of great eloquence, yet, in a course of time he fell into a state of as great madness; which seized on him not so much by accident, as by his own affectation, having so long mimically imitated madmen, that he became frantic himself And Tully confessed that whilst he laughed at one Hircus, a very ridiculous fellow, he almost became the same kind of person: "Dum illum rideo, pene factus sum ille."

5. It was an ancient custom of the Ethiopians (says Diodorus Siculus) that if the king by any cause or accident was maimed in his limbs, his domestics and familiar friends would voluntarily weaken themselves in those members; thinking it uncomely for them to walk upright, while their king halted, or if he had but one eye, that they should have perfect sight. Thus too, when their monarch died, his particular friends used to kill themselves; as if supposing such a period of their own existence honourable, and a testimony of undissembled friendship. How many such self-sacrificers are to be found in the world, devoting themselves as wildly to ruin, through false complaisance, and a vicious deference to the rank and influence of others!

6. The following is related by a writer of undoubted reputation: speaking of Prince Eugene of Soissons, he observes, "All those qualifications and

endowments that can procure love and esteem, shone conspicuous in this young prince. A graceful person, the most engaging affability and sweetness of temper, a quick understanding, an heroic ardour, a skill in the sciences, and other parts of polite literature (which was the more extraordinary in a prince then but fifteen years of age) united to justify the exalted hopes conceived of him. He showed a strong inclination to a military life, and at that early period was already inuring himself to it; so that, commonly a bare board served him for a pillow. The king had taken the greatest care of his education, and suffered him to be ignorant of no branch of knowledge, which might contribute to his future advancement. To keep him out of the way of public diversions, and other dissipations, he resided at a distance from court, having apartments at the riding academy: there he gave himself up to the study of the sciences, with such intenseness and application, that he scarce came to court once in a week, nor appeared at any public diversions. The apartments of the prince and his excellent tutor were full of a philosophical apparatus, and mathematical instruments; of the construction and use of which the prince had gained a perfect knowledge, as it were by way of diversion. Nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to explain every thing to strangers of curiosity who happened to visit him. The young prince allowed himself no other amusements but such as improve, as well as divert the mind; and was as fond of mathematical problems, and philosophical experiments, as too many young gentlemen are of such diversions as tend to alienate their minds from any intense application, and render them unable to bear the least hardship.

"How great things were to be expected from a prince of such endowments! so disposed to the worthiest pursuits, so closely applying himself to them,

making so happy a progress in them. Alas! every pleasing expectation formed of him proved in the event vain! Bad companions insinuated themselves into his good esteem; bad examples found him unable to withstand them; when the vicious were his companions, their manners were no longer his abhorrence: by associating with them, he soon became as abandoned as the worst of them; and in a few years, having lost his virtue, unhappily lost his life."* There cannot be a stronger or more melancholy proof of the fatal influence which bad company and bad examples have over even the best cultivated and best disposed minds. How then can others expect to avoid the contagion, though ever so carefully informed and well inclined, if they are hardy enough to venture in the midst of it; even when they see before their eyes a youth thus well and nobly trained, blasted at once, and all his fair blossoms withering, or ere they were ripened into the promised fruit?

7. The learned and pious Sir Matthew Hale, when a youth, was too much addicted to the society of some vicious people, which he did not break off, till an alarming accident drove him from it. Being invited with some other young students, to a merry-making out of town, one of them during the carouse called for so much wine, that notwithstanding all Mr. Hale could do to prevent it, he went on in his excess, till he fell down as dead before them. All present were not a little terrified, and did all they could to bring him to himself again: this particularly affected Mr. Hale, who went into another room, and shutting the door, fell on his knees, and prayed earnestly to God, both for his friend, that he might again be restored to life; and that himself might be forgiven for having countenanced such excesses. Moreover, he vowed to God, that he would never

* See the Preface to Dean Bolton's Tracts.

again keep company in that manner, nor drink another health while he lived. His friend recovered, and Mr. Hale most religiously observed his vow, till his dying day. It was this great man's resolution, drawn up by him in writing for his own private use, with regard to *company* (among other articles of conduct) to "do good to them; to use God's name reverently, while with them; to beware of leaving an ill example among them; and to receive good from them, if they were more knowing than himself." See his life, by Bishop Burnett.

8. That ever memorable instance of God's mercy, Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, was in early life always much given to riot and licentiousness. During his travels, however, and those sciences at sea in which he was soon after engaged, his mind being better occupied, he had so entirely laid down his former intemperance; that at his return, we are informed, he hated nothing more. But falling again into company that loved those excesses, he was, though not without difficulty, and by many steps, brought back to it, and that in a shocking degree: for the natural glow of his fancy, being enflamed by wine, made him so extravagantly pleasant, that many, to be the more diverted by his humour, were ever studying to engage him deeper and deeper in intemperance; and this at length so entirely subdued him, that (as he told Dr. Burnett his historian) for five years together he was continually drunk; not indeed all the while under the visible effect of it; but his blood was so inflamed, that he was not in all that time cool enough to be perfectly master of himself. This led him to say and do many wild and unaccountable things; and by this, he said, he had broken the firm constitution of his health, which once seemed so strong, that nothing was too hard for it; and he suffered so much in his reputation, that he almost despaired to recover

it. This course of life, however, was not always equally pleasant to him. He had often sad intervals of severe reflection upon it; and though at that time he had not these awakened in him from any deep principle of religion, yet the horror which nature excited in him (especially in some sicknesses) made him too easy to receive those ill and sceptical principles with which others endeavoured to possess him, so that he was soon brought to set himself to secure and fortify his mind against religion, by dispossessing himself all he could of the belief or apprehensions of it. To complete his ruin, the licentiousness of his temper, with the briskness of his wit, disposed him to love the conversation of those, who divided their time between lewd actions and irregular mirth: and thus he came at last to bend his wit, and direct his studies and endeavours to support and strengthen those evil principles both in himself and others. At length, God was pleased in a very striking manner to bring him, by pain and sorrow and strong conviction, to repentance; during the course of which he said to Bishop Burnett, "In what a condition shall I be, if I relapse after all this?"—but added, "He trusted in the grace and goodness of God, and was resolved to avoid all those temptations, that course of life, and company, that were so likely to ensnare him; and he desired to live on no other account, but that he might, by a change of manners, take off the high scandal his former behaviour had given."—This the dying penitent uttered in various terms to his spiritual friend; with other expressions to some of his former companions, which well became his state: giving them a charge to publish anything concerning his conversion, which might be a means to reclaim others; "and praying God, that as his life had done much hurt, so his death might do some dood."

We should do well always to carry about us a sense

of such events; together with that excellent advice of St. Bernard, which is one of the great rules for propriety and self-government in life; Inde lætari in adolescentiâ, unde in senectute non pœniteat:" "To rejoice and take pleasure in those things or persons when young, which we shall not repent of in the wintry season of old age;"—for though a man be ever so clear and unblameable himself, yet by frequenting company who are tainted either in mind or manners, he will necessarily contract some pollution from them.

9. When Marius was sent against the Cimbri, his soldiers durst not look the enemy in the face; their gigantic stature and barbarous aspect awed the Roman bravery. But when they had beheld these same barbarous Germans three days together from the camp, their spirits revived, their congealed courage began to circulate through every vein; they not only fought, but overcame the foe they had so lately dreaded. Reverse the medal, and apply it to those connections in which the young and inexperienced are daily enlisted to their hurt;—the effect is obvious and striking. A youth educated in the principles of Christianity, cannot at first think of the breach of a commandment, without trembling and inward convulsion: but then he slides into seemingly trivial commissions. The associates of his unguarded hours strew every pitfall of pleasure with flowers. At first, a damp arises over his mind, and he almost inclines to doubt there is some error, in his progress. He becomes uneasy for a while; yet, urged by example, continues his course, and at length conscience begins to slumber; its reproaches are faint, its stings scarce perceptible; custom blunts the edge of reflection, and, when once arrived at this pitch of insensibility, he hesitates not at many impieties, which before were abhorrent to his nature. So true is that ancient

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aphorism, "Nemo repentè fuit turpissimus;" No one becomes very wicked on a sudden. Negligence and distrust first unite to weaken the sacred sanction of God's commands, before men can presume to break them.

10. Eusebius was not one of those plodders, who seem to disband all society, and to forswear conversation; who place virtue in sourness, and confound piety with spleen: no; he was free, easy, and cheerful, and never refused to partake of those festivities, which recreate the mind and refresh the body, without prejudice to the conscience. This was his *ne plus ultra*, and he thought it a noble and an ample field; since here he could enjoy every gratification suited to a rational being, and not unworthy his understanding and his nature. "But, to pawn innocence for pleasure (said he) as many do, is to overrate the one, and to undervalue the other. To laugh whilst we sin, is, in some sort, to renew the barbarous cruelty of Nero, who is reported to have played while Rome burned; or the foolish temerity of the Indian philosopher, who sung on the funeral pile just ready to consume him." Disgusted therefore at such society, and still more at follies which he could neither endure or correct; he lamented in silent indignation, to behold Christians leading the lives of the lowest Pagans, and profaning the best religion with the foulest crimes.—"What pleasure (would he say) can any Christian take in those places, where vice rides in triumph, and virtue groans in a dungeon? Where goodness and decency lie under contempt, and irregularity receives applause? Where the best actions are lampooned, and the worst glozed over or deified by their short-sighted votaries?"—This consideration so weaned Eusebius from the love of the world, that he withdrew into the country, and there allied all the qualities of a gentleman so handsomely with the

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duties of a Christian, that it was hard to judge whether his behaviour was more genteel, or more religious. He was wont to say, "those lie under a great mistake, who fancy that virtue is an enemy to good-breeding; that a man must turn off civility to become a saint; and exclude himself from the society of all men, in order to keep up a correspondence with his God. No (continued he), Christianity makes men honest, indeed, but it does not make them clowns; it forbids grimace, but not sincerity; it puts a mean between foppishness and rusticity, and forbids us to show no breeding, by affecting to show too much. Virtue smooths the brow as well as the conscience, and knows how to temper innocent mirth with a seasonable reservedness and decorum. So that we may, if we so incline, keep up to the height of our duty to God, without dropping our obligations to good neighbourhood, and abandoning the comforts of society."

SERMON VIII.

ON BAD BOOKS.

Many also of them who used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed! Acts xix. 19, 20.

The only true happiness of human life consists in a virtuous and religious conduct, formed upon virtuous and religious principles. The greatest enemies we can have, and the most formidable temptations we can encounter, are those which tend to deprive us of this felicity, either by corrupting those principles, or causing us to decline from that conduct.

It was on this account, my young friends, that I endeavoured to set forth so fully in my last, the fatal consequences of *Bad Company* to both; to show you, in agreement with St. Paul's declaration, that there is a necessary and unavoidable connection between evil communications, and a depravity of manners.

The word made use of by the apostle, and rendered "communications*," is of extensive import: it may imply, not only conversation, but reading also; and consequently leads us to another mode of evil communication, by which good morals are as much prejudiced, as by bad company: for it is certain that the reading of corrupt, irreligious and profane books, tends, in an especial manner, to pervert the judgment, to inflame the passions, and pollute the mind.

* Ομιλιαι. See Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon.

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Willing, therefore, to point out every danger you have to encounter in your journey through life, I propose to offer a few observations, and to give you some necessary cautions respecting "Bad Books." The pernicious effects of these were so palpable to the Ephesian converts mentioned in the text, that they judged rightly, no other method could testify the sincerity of their conversion, than the total destruction of them: and though the value of what they burned was great,—upon the lowest calculation exceeding two thousand pounds*,—yet they chose to annihilate so much property, rather than, by selling these books, to propagate infamy, and communicate the knowledge of those vile practices which they taught. A noble example of real and disinterested repentance; the seal and proof of which, is always the putting away and avoiding every occasion of sin. Nor can the value of anything, however great, be in any degree comparable with the price of truth, and the practice of virtue.

The books which the Ephesians burned were such as instructed them in the "curious arts" of sorcery and magic, for which that city was famous; insomuch, that those arts were even proverbially called "Ephesian Letters." The professors of these arts, were a set of imfamous and despicable miscreants, who pretended to communications with infernal spirits, and were extremely instrumental, by their diabolical persuasions, to disturb the peace, and deprave the morals of the people.

The light of Christianity has dispelled the darkness and ignorance of these pretended arts; and there are not at present any compositions more harmless than those which treat of this subject. From books of this kind, neither young or old are in any

* See Calmet, Prideaux, Arbuthnot, &c.—and Henry on the place.

danger. Those which are to be dreaded; by which the mischief is done, and which unhappily abound amongst us, are books of irreligion, and of immorality; writings, whose sorcery is more bewitching, and whose magic is much more fatal: for they attempt to corrupt either our principles or our practice.

I shall consider them under these two heads; adding some short strictures on Books of Enthusiasm. And first, with respect to books which attempt to influence and corrupt your "Religious Principles," be advised, my young friends, never to take them into your hands, or to concern yourselves with them. Much of your happiness in life depends upon the stedfastness of your religious principles. I suppose you, by the care and instruction of your parents and pastors, well grounded in these, and sufficiently able to give, when a proper occasion demands, a satisfactory account of the hope that is in you. If this be the case, what possible end can it answer, for you to perplex yourselves with those subtle distinctions, and nice objections, which enemies to the Gospel of Christ have been so solicitous to raise? Lay it down as an infallible truth, that both the economy of nature and of grace is liable to a variety of seeming objections, which, with our limited and narrow faculties, we can never hope totally to remove. And consider, with respect to "Revelation" in particular, that the very term implies a discovery of something, to which the unaided human mind was inadequate: And therefore it is most reasonable to suppose, that the human mind must be inadequate to the full comprehension of what that revelation contains. Certainly, it is the province of reason to examine the evidences of a revelation: but when once those evidences have fully approved themselves, Reason immediately submits herself to the guidance of humility and faith.

Do not imagine that I am pleading for a blind deference to opinions, or that I would recommend to you an implicit submission to established modes of faith, without proper and deliberate examination. This is a principle most abhorrent to truth, and to all improvement in knowledge; a principle which makes a man a Mahometan at Mecca, with just as good reason, as he is a Christian at London. No; the religion of Jesus Christ expects and solicits examination: nor is it possible for any one to be a Christian, in the proper sense of the word, without such examination; without a knowledge of the evidences upon which he grounds his faith. And I am thoroughly persuaded, that one very pregnant source at least, of the lukewarmness and indifference discernible in the lives of so many professing Christians, as well as of the facility wherewith others fall a prey to popish superstition, infidelity, aud enthusiasm, is a want of this thorough examination; is an unacquaintedness with the solid grounds and reasons of their belief. Look at the lives of those who first embraced the religion of Jesus: see how glowing was their zeal; how vigorous their piety; how extensive their benevolence!—The religion of Jesus is still the same: the succours of divine grace are equally open and operative; but here lies the great difference: they became Christians by choice; we are born and made such, without any choice of our own. They took not up their religion, but on the strongest conviction of its truth: we profess that religion, because we happen to be born of parents who professed it, and who, in early infancy, baptized us into it;—and who perhaps, further, thought it necessary just to teach us a little catechism by rote, and then left us to shift for our religious principles as well as we could.

Let me believe, and let me hope, my young friends,

that your parents and instructors have done more for you; that they have shown you the evidences of the Christian faith, and have enabled you to oppose and confute those subtle arguments which Infidels and Deists may throw in your way. If they have not, strengthen yourselves by the perusal of some one or other of those many excellent performances, which the advocates for Christianity have compiled in proof of its divine original. Consider the train of evidence at large; and upon the subject of any material objections, either read such writers as are of allowed and universal character, or consult such persons of ingenuity and candour, as you think are able, and you may be assured will be ready, to remove your scruples, and convince your mind. Thus fortified and established in the truth (for I am thoroughly satisfied, that the consequence of such a serious and sincere inquiry will be an establishment in the truth) make it your chief, your only care to fulfil the precepts of the gospel; not to dispute about its divinity, or to attend to objections which may possibly be urged against it. Our Saviour hath promised that "they who do his will, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Let it be your labour to gain increase in such knowledge by this life of obedience: and for the rest, pass over in neglect whatever Deists and Infidels may urge; nor make so idle a waste of time, or perhaps so sad a shipwreck of your mind's quiet and peace, as to lose your hours in perusing their subtle and perplexing performances. Their grand business is to embarrass and confuse; and it is often enough for them, if they cannot subvert, to render arguments dark and doubtful: unrestrained by any motives of religion or decency, they fear not to speak bold things with confidence, and to pronounce gross falsehoods, even against their GOD: though answered a thousand times, they hesitate not

to urge and re-urge the same stale objections, and have the temerity to repeat the blasphemies afresh, whereof their predecessors have been fully convicted: for it seems, in the cause of infidelity, want of novelty is no reproach, not the repetition of profaneness any shame; as its favourers dread not the immediate vengeance of God, while allowed by the civil arm to affront him with impunity. And GOD forbid, that the civil arm should interfere in this case! GOD forbid, that in the land of liberty, any man should be precluded from the free delivery of his sentiments! for though many and great evils unquestionably arise from hence, yet it is as unquestionable that the good preponderates; and I think it is clear to a demonstration, that however individuals may have been hurt, the cause of Christianity in general has been advanced and benefited by opposition, and the opposition of Infidels in particular.

This it were easy to show; as well as how the Infidels of ancient and modern times have shifted the argument;* diametrically opposing and confuting each other;—and this perhaps we may take some future occasion to show: but for you, my young friends, let it suffice, to urge against all their objections, that Christianity has now been professed for near 2000 years; that it has withstood all the attacks which persecution and sophistry, in their most varied forms, could make against it; that it is allowed on all hands to be a most benevolent religion, calculated in the best manner for the improvement of morals, and the felicity of men; that if it were to be taken from you, it would be most difficult to supply its place with any thing at all comparable; that if its evidences could be subverted, with them all historical evidence, and all the faith of ancient times must fall; and that, in short, upon the presumption of the falsehood and

* See Gerhard's excellent Dissertations.

imposture of Christianity, perfect doubt and scepticism must ensue, and the only system in which a man could take shelter would be downright Materialism; would be in the gloomy disbelief of a Providence here, and of an immortality hereafter!

In the view of these consequences, what advantages can you discern to yourselves, from espousing the cause of infidelity? Certainly none; and therefore, you can have no temptation to peruse the works of those, who are the patrons and teachers of infidelity. Books of this kind, you will carefully avoid, not only as extremely trifling, but as likely to prove extremely pernicious: trifling, because if their arguments have no effect, they will consume your important moments without the least improvement: pernicious, because if their arguments have their effect, they will deprive you of the best hopes which human creatures can enjoy; and will entirely "corrupt your morals," which, indeed, for the most part, is the grand foundation and mystery of all infidelity.

But books of infidelity, are not those alone which are to be dreaded, as the "corrupters of morals." There are books whose immediate and direct tendency it is, to serve the cause of immorality, and to be the foul vehicles of indecency, obscenity, and pollution. These are a kind of writings so impure and defiling, that it is scarcely possible to speak of them without incurring some degree of defilement; for who can touch pitch and be clean? And they are so prejudicial and obnoxious to all purity of mind, that the least share of virtue, I must believe, will be sufficient to render them odious and disgusting. Nor will you, if you have the least regard for religion, the least reverence for yourselves, ever be persuaded to degrade your nature so much, as to peruse such infamous and detestable performances.

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You will find, my young friends, the combat with your passions sufficiently strong: you will find that every method you can use to keep those passions in subjection will be requisite: but if you allow yourselves in the use of anything which serves to inflame and arouse those passions, how can you ever expect a victory over them? And, believe me, books of that immoral sort, from the use of which I am dissuading you, are inflammatory to a high degree and the more to be dreaded, as some of them present their poison under a specious covering, and gild with seeming beauty the horrid bait which they lay for your virtue.

It is indeed a melancholy reflection, that any such books should be extant amongst us; 'tis melancholy to think that any of the human species should have so far lost all sense of shame, all feelings of conscience, as to sit down deliberately, and compile a work, entirely in the cause of vice and immorality! a work which, for aught they know, may serve to pollute the minds of millions, and propagate contagion and iniquity through generations yet unborn: living and spreading its baneful effects long after the unhappy hand which wrote it is mouldered into dust; but perhaps, not so long as the unhappy mind which composed it is paying the due punishment for its offence in the doleful regions of futurity. Good God! if the authors of such writings could feel this reflection; if they would consider the numberless youths, whose minds may be blasted by their evil efforts: if they would consider, that works of this kind once made public, are impossible to be recalled; that however they may themselves repent of the evil, it is yet of such a nature, as can never be repaired! for which no restitution can ever be made; if men would a moment attend to this reflection, certainly we should hear no more of such

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contaminating works; certainly some of those who have taken the devil's office, and turned corrupters of our youth, in the present day, would endeavour to be as exemplary in their repentance, as they have been notorious and noxious by shameful publications.

It is a striking observation made by one of the fathers, that "as the authors of good books may hope to find their future crown in glory brightened by the degree of wisdom and virtue which their writings impart through successive generations; so the writers of bad ones may well dread an increase of punishment in the future world, proportionate to the pollution they spread, and the ill effects which their writings shall produce, so long as they continue to be read."*

There cannot be a more awakening example to persons who are any ways concerned in writings of this kind, than that unhappy, witty, and profligate nobleman, whose repentance, it is to be feared, however advantageous and honourable to himself, will never be sufficient to counterbalance the continued ill-effects of his loose and filthy writings. And it is remarkable, that upon his death-bed, this reflection gave him the keenest uneasiness: on which account he was extremely anxious to have all his profane and lewd pieces burned, as well as to call in, if possible—but alas! that was impossible—all the copies of them which had been unhappily dispersed. Giving those persons who were nearest to him a strict charge to do so; and "acknowledging, with a sincere contrition, that those works were only fit to promote vice and immorality: that by them he had most highly offended God, and shamed and blasphemed that holy religion into which he had been baptized."†

* See Parson's Christian Directory, translated by Dr. Stanhope, p. 147.

† See Bishop Burnett's account of the death, &c. of the Earl of Rochester, and the Anecdotes, p. 146.

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I cannot conclude this head, without expressing my concern for, and bearing my testimony at least, against another species of corruption, eminently fatal to the minds of our people in general, and youth in particular: I mean the loose and obscene prints and pictures, which, to the great scandal of good manners and religion, are not only engraved and sold, but publicly exposed in the most frequented parts of the metropolis. There are in this Christian land, men, that have been baptized too, and call themselves Christians; who yet, lamentable to think! start not at any profession or mode of gain; and heed not, if they can clothe their own backs, by what beastly vices they are supported, or by what destructive methods they procure their foul maintenance.

I wonder not at these: dead to shame, they are dead to virtue: but I wonder at those, who, placed in superior stations by the providence of God, are made the guardians of a people's liberty and virtue; who, dignified with the honour of magistracy, possess the highest and most sacred trust; a trust, which, certainly, as much respects the morals, as the properties of the people; and for their regard to, or neglect of the one no less than the other, they must certainly render an account to Him, whose vicegerents they are. And in the present instance, the laws have amply provided. But if the magistrates sleep, and the laws have no execution, who can wonder that the people trample on and despise them? Who can wonder that the morals of the people grow daily more and more defiled? Who can wonder that such a magistracy grows contemptible, while even royalty itself is not respected; and while such prints as we have hinted at, even make their vile obscenity a shameful vehicle for daring treason!

Turn we from the unpleasing prospect. Our hopes are in YOU, my young friends; our wish is to pre-

serve your virtue unpolluted, that so you may become public, as well as private blessings. For this purpose, let me exhort, let me advise, let me beseech you, never to contemplate, much less to purchase or possess any of those seducing and lascivious representations, which you will find the panders and patrons of vice so solicitous to recommend to your notice and attention. Keep in your view, as much as possible, the fair and spotless forms of virtue and religion, and you will hold obscenity and immorality, in their just degree of abhorrence; as monsters which, like Milton's Sin, however enchanting they may seem at the first view, are foul serpents in the end, full of poison, and the mothers of death.

There is a third species of writings which are, in some respects, as pernicious as either of the foregoing, and consequently as carefully to be avoided. I mean writings of the enthusiastic kind; which are frequently found as prejudicial to the mind's repose, and to the proper conduct of life, as books of irreligion, or immortality. But here you must take great care not to stigmatize with the name of Enthusiasm works of genuine piety and pure religion. 'Tis a common error in the present times: men sit so loose to religion, that whatever has an high appearance of it, in self-justification they brand with the name of enthusiasm. You will be wiser, my young friends; for I hope your conduct will be too blameless and exemplary to need any such poor and delusive evasions, such miserable self-deceit. Nevertheless, there is a real and a very essential difference between religion and enthusiasm.* The one as gentle, amible, and beneficial, as the other is wild, offensive, and hurtful. To avoid the latter, so far as reading is concerned, let me give you one rule: "make it

* See a Sermon, entitled, "Cautions against Methodism;" or, Unity recommended." Printed for FADEN.

your fixed practice never to read any books of piety and devotion, but such as are written by men of known and established characters; such as have the stamp of merit, and are of allowed reputation." You can run no hazard from the perusal of these; and it is very pleasing to think that we have a great variety of them. Our language abounds with a larger number of writings on all the branches and topics of religion, than perhaps any other; so that there is choice sufficient: and certainly, in this case, it would be very simple to waste your time in the perusal of writers of doubtful credit, and which perhaps may warp your sentiments, and do infinite prejudice to your minds, when you may employ that time much more to your emolument, in the perusal of authors well approved, capable of instructing, edifying, comforting; and by which, you will be sure neither to be deceived nor misled.

These then, my young friends, are the three kinds of books, which, anxious for your perseverance in virtue, I would earnestly wish you never to handle; —books of infidelity, immorality, and enthusiasm. Would to God that all of this kind, like the books of magic at Ephesus, were brought together and burned! We might then hope that the word of God would more grow and prevail: for, doubtless, to this growth they are amongst the strongest obstacles. However, as this is rather to be wished than expected; as books of this kind, in the present corrupt state of things, will continue to abound; it must be your care, your most cautious endeavour, to preserve your minds pure from their pollution, by never suffering them at all to engross your time and attention. It is with reading, my young friends, as with company; nothing more obnoxious than bad, nothing more advantageous than good: and as in the case of company we advised you to avoid the

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contagion of evil, by seeking as much as possible the happy protection of good; so, with respect to reading (which we have heretofore so largely recommended, and which affords so fine a fund of pleasure and profit) let it be your study to lay out your leisure hours in such as is useful and instructive, and you will have the less propensity for such as is trifling and hurtful.

The English language abounds with excellent writers, not in divinity only, but in every branch of useful and entertaining science: you will reap, from an attention to such authors, not only an increase of wisdom, but also of virtue, her fair companion; and by these will be introduced to an acquaintance with such happiness, as vice never knew, as all the gayest scenes of immorality could never afford.

Be assured, all your felicity in this life, as well as in the next, depends upon the purity and sanctity of your souls. Endeavour to preserve these most sacred: keep a guard upon your inmost thoughts, and suffer nothing to enter, or at least to dwell there, which may contaminate their whiteness; or cause that conscience to reproach you, whose minutest admonitions are most sacredly to be regarded; for they are faithful, and if duly heeded, will undoubtedly preserve you from evil. And in the last place, let me observe, that if in all your reading, as well as in all your actions, you make it your constant custom, before you enter upon them, sincerely to intreat God's blessing, and to request that he would prosper what you undertake to its proper and desired purpose; then will you never open a book, immoral or irreligious; never deliberately do anything impure or defiling; but, guided by this single rule, will persevere unblameable to the end, seeking constantly the glory of God, and in that search finding the eternal salvation of your own souls. Which, &c.

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ANECDOTES *on the pernicious tendency and effect of Bad Books.*

1. "Words," says Mr. Addison, "are the transcript of those ideas, which are in the mind of man: writing and printing are the transcript of words. As the supreme being has expressed, and, as it were, printed his ideas in the creation, men express their ideas in books; which, by this great invention of latter ages, may last as long as the sun and moon, and perish only in the general wreck of nature. Books are the legacies which a great genius leaves to mankind, and which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn. Now, if writings are thus durable, continues he, and may pass from age to age throughout the whole course of time, how careful should an author be of committing anything to print, that may corrupt posterity, and poison the minds of men with vice and error? Writers of great talents, who employ their parts in propagating immorality, and seasoning vicious sentiments with wit and humour, are to be looked upon as the pests of society, and the enemies of mankind. They leave books behind them (as it is said of those who die in distempers which breed an ill-will towards their own species) to scatter infection, and destroy their posterity. They act the counterparts of a Confucius, or a Socrates; and seem as it were sent into the world to deprave human nature, and sink it into the condition of brutality." See *Spectator*, No. 166.

2. Dr. Young (whose moral and poetic pen has been so well employed in the cause of truth and virtue) speaks with a noble resentment of this prostitution of genius.

The flowers of Eloquence, profusely pour'd
O'er spotted Vice, fill half the letter'd world;

As if to magic numbers' powerful charm
'Twas given to make a *civet* of their song
Obscene, and sweeten ordure to perfume.
Wit, a true pagan, deifies the brute,
And lifts our swine-enjoyments from the mire:
Can powers of genius exercise their page,
And consecrate enormities with song?

Art, cursed art! wipes off th' indebted blush
From Nature's cheek, and bronzes every shame.
Man smiles in ruin, glories in his guilt,
And Infamy stands candidate for praise.
Night Thoughts, 5.

3. The last mentioned sentiment of this fine writer is strikingly confirmed by the following story of an atheistical author. This man, at a time when he lay dangerously sick, and had desired the asistance of a neighbouring curate, confessed to him with great contrition, that nothing sat more heavy at his heart, than the sense of his having seduced the age by his writings, and that their evil influence was likely to continue even after his death. The curate, upon further examination, finding the penitent in the utmost agonies of despair, and being himself a man of learning, told him, that he hoped his case was not so desperate as he apprehended, since he found that he was so very sensible of his fault, and so sincerely repented of it. The pentient still urged the evil tendency of his book to subvert all religion, and the little ground of hope there could be for one, whose writings would continue to do mischief, when his body was laid in ashes. The curate finding no other way to comfort him, told him, "that he did well in being afflicted for the evil design with which he published his book, but that he ought to be very thankful that there was no danger of its doing any hurt: that his cause was so very bad, and his arguments so weak, that he did not apprehend any ill effects from it: in short, that he might rest satisfied, his performance could do no more mischief

after his death, than it had done whilst he was living. To which, he added for his farther satisfaction, that he did not believe any, besides the author's particular friends and acquaintance, had ever been at the pains of reading it, or that anybody, after his death, would ever inquire after it." But (see the vanity and inconsistency of the human mind!) the dying man had still so much the pride and frailty of an author in him, as to be cut to the heart with these consolations; and without answering the good man his confidant, asked those about him (with a peevishness too natural to a sick person) "where they had met with one so ignorant, and whether they thought him a proper person to attend one in his condition!" The curate finding that the author did not expect to be dealt with as a real and sincere penitent, but as a penitent of importance, after a short admonition withdrew; not questioning, but he should be again sent for, if the sickness grew desperate. The unhappy author, however, recovered for that time, and afterwards lived to write two or three other tracts, with the same spirit, and, very luckily for mankind, and his own reputation, with the same accceptance and success.

4. It deserves our serious remark, that as the atheistical writer Lucretius himself, is reported by two ancient authors to have run mad, and to have killed himself; so likewise two ingenious gentlemen of our own nation (Mr. Creech and Mr. Blount), who did no great service to their generation by turning his works into English prose and verse, found something sit so heavily upon their minds, though they were in no mean outward circumstances, that both of them followed their admired author in his dismal exit; putting an end to their lives with their own hands. The one hanged, and the other pistolled himself.

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5. What a blessing to mankind, in himself and in his writings, was the ingenious, humble and pious Mr. Boyle! what a common pest to society was the fallacious, proud and impious Hobbes! Accordingly we find the former bad adieu to this world with the utmost serenity, honour, and hope; while the other went out of it in the dark, with an odium on his name, as well as with terrible apprehensions of an unknown future. He had been an instrument of the prince of darkness, in poisoning many young gentlemen and others with his wicked principles, as the late Earl of Rochester (heretofore mentioned) confessed with extreme grief in the hours of affliction. It is remarked by those who criticaliy observed the author of "The Leviathan," that though in a humour of bravado, he would speak very strange and unbecoming things of God, yet, in his study, in the dark, and in his retired thoughts, he trembled before him. What could make this strange man awake in such terror and amazement, if his candle happened to go out in the night; but that he was unable to bear the dismal reflections of his dissolute and gloomy mind; and because he neither knew how quite to extinguish, nor yet how to bear the light of conscience, that "candle of the Lord," within him? Many, alas! appear like Atheists in their mirth, in wine and company, who are quite of other sentiments in sickness, and the gloom of solitude.

6. Amongst the many reasons why God, besides a private and personal judgment to every man at death, hath reserved and ordained men to another public and general trial;—a trial universal, manifest before all, and performed in full view of the world, of men and of angels;—amongst these, some have very rationally and awfully suggested the following, namely, "That the good and evil effects of what men have done here below, by their examples, their

instructions, their books, and the like, may also come into the account: which cannot so conveniently be reckoned or rewarded whilst this world continues; because those effects (of which they laid the foundations in their lifetime) may be perpetually increasing, so long as there are successions of men capable of profit or of prejudice by them." Hence it is inferred that even after death the effects of men's good or bad actions may add to their punishment, or increase their reward, according to the good or evil examples they have given; the useful or pernicious volumes, whether in prose or verse, which they have written; the foundations they have established to promote virtue or discourage vice; or the customs they have introduced to countenance profligacy and dissolution of manners. Thus some are of opinion that St. Paul, for instance, may be daily receiving addition to his glory and happiness, in proportion to the benefits derived to all ages, by his writings and holy life; while dissolute poets, profane writers and the other propagators of vice, have their reckoning inflamed and aggravated by all the debauchery, occasioned or held in countenance by those loose compositions they have left behind them. Surely, if there is any consideration capable to awaken reflection and touch the heart, this of all other merits the most serious attention! Who would coolly wish to hurt the souls of others? But who (still more dreadful) would deliberately, and for ever, study to destroy his own!

7. The oldest library of which we have any account, was that established among the Egyptians, by their King Osymandias; upon the front of which was this memorable inscription, ΨΥΧΗΣ ΙΑΤΡΕΙΟΝ. "Medicine for the mind." See Diod. Sic. lib. i.

8. The following is a piece of advice communicated by the late Dr. Doddridge, in a letter to a young man, formerly his pupil, on the subject of

unprofitable reading in his sphere, who was then entering into a merchant's counting-house: "Let it, says he, be your constant care, that study may not interfere with devotion, nor engross that valuable time, which should be consecrated to the service of your God. If we are abandoned by him, our genius must flag, and all our thoughts become languid and confused. It will be in vain that we seek the assistance of books; for when HE ceaseth to act by them, the most sprightly writers will appear dull, the most perspicuous, obscure, and the most judicious, trifling: whereas, if we maintain a continued regard to him in the constant exercises of lively devotion, we shall enjoy his assistance and blessing in our studies, and then the profiting will quickly appear to ourselves and others. And (which is still more desirable) when thus we are conversing with God, we are preparing for that world of light, where our capacities will be gloriously improved; where we shall be surrounded with the wisest and best of company, and new scenes of knowledge will be daily opening to our minds.* Let us be constant and jealous in the service of God, and "we shall be excellent scholars ten thousand years hence;" while those who have made the greatest improvements in human knowledge, yet have lived in neglect of God and religion, are forgotten upon earth, and consigned over to the gloom of everlasting darkness. Let us remember, that every hour which we take from God to give to our books, we forfeit some degree of future happiness, which might have been the reward of that hour, had we spent it aright. And, when we consider, that knowledge is a part of the happiness, of heaven, we shall certainly find, that,

* "The more our spirits are enlarged on earth,
The deeper draught shall they receive of heav'n."
YOUNG.

upon the whole, we lose a great deal more knowledge than we get, by such sacrilegious encroachments; even though our studies should succeed more prosperously than we have reason to expect they will." See his life, by Orton, p. 110.

9. The same excellent man, amongst other exemplary rules for the direction of his conduct while a student, has the following: "never let me trifle with a book, with which I have no present concern. In applying myself to any book, let me first recollect what I may learn by it, and then beg suitable assistance from God: thus let me endeavour to make all my studies subservient to practical religion and ministerial usefulness." How happy would it have proved for many a reader to have carried a rule like this constantly in his thoughts, as a proper embargo to the perusal of those many volumes, which, so far from improving, are evidently calculated only to fascinate and poison the unguarded mind!

10. How remarkably careful the ancients were of what books they let their children read, may be seen in that amiable writer, Mr. Rollin, vol. 3, p. 77, of his *Ancient History*, 12th edition. Valerius Maximus, in particular, informs us, that the Lacedemonians commanded the books of the poet Archilochus to be removed from their city, as judging the reading of them highly improper for their youth, and subversive of decency and good manners. Thus that wise nation held in little esteem the elegance and wit of his writings; which, however they might refine the imagination, were but too likely to hurt the mind, and contaminate the principles of their children.

11. On his death-bed, the penitent Earl of Rochester was touched with very strong compunction for the various indecencies he had diffused from his pen; accordingly, we have seen in the foregoing

discourse, how extremely solicitous he was, if it were possible, to suppress and stifle them, as suited only to serve the cause of vice and profaneness.* He ingenuously declared, "that that absurd and foolish philosophy which the world had so much admired, as propagated by the late Mr. Hobbes and others, had undone him, and many more, of the best parts in the nation:" while his sense of the past, and his hearty concern for the pious education of his children, made him wish, "That his son might never be a wit; that is (as he himself explained it), one of those wretched creatures who pride themselves in abusing God and religion, denying his being, or his providence; but rather that he might become an honest, and a religious man, which alone could render him the support and blessing of his family."

12. Above all he was remarkably hearty in his endeavours to be servicable to those about him. On which head, we cannot pass by that most fervent and passionate exclamation of his to a gentleman of some character, who visited him in his last illness. "O remember," said he, "that you contemn God no more! He is an avenging God, and will visit you for your sins! will, in mercy, I hope, touch your conscience sooner or latter, as he has done mine! You and I have been friends and sinners together a great while! therefore I am the more free with you. We all have been mistaken in our conceits and opinions: Our persuasions have been false and groundless; therefore God grant you repentance." And, seeing the same gentleman next day again, he said to him, "perhaps you were disobliged by my plainness to you yesterday: I spake the words of truth and soberness to you;" and (striking his hand upon his breast with great emotion) said, "I hope God will touch your heart."

* See p. 164.

13. There are perhaps few instances in all history that can parallel these keen convictions of an awakened mind. Dr. Young, in the celebrated work above quoted, observes,

> "A death-bed's a detecter of the heart;
> Truth is deposited with man's last hour,
> An honest hour, and faithful to her trust:
> Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die*."

We need go no further than the striking case before us. Here were parts so exalted by nature, and improved by study, and yet so corrupted and debased by irreligion and vice, that he who was made to be one of the glories of his age, became a proverb; and, if his repentance had not happily interposed, would have been one of the greatest reproaches of it. He well knew the small strength of that weak cause, whose arguments had so poisoned his mind; and as at first he despised, so afterwards he abhorred them: he felt the mischiefs, and saw the madness of their plan; and hence, though he lived indeed to the scandal of many, he died as much to the edification of all those who saw him; and because they were but a smaller number, he desired that, through the mouths and pens of his reverend friends, Dr. Burnett and Mr. Parson, even when dead he might still speak good instruction to all. Thus, though he lived in heart, in writing, and in life a heinous sinner, he died with every hopeful symptom of a sincere and most exemplary penitence.

Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die!*

SERMON IX.

ON RIDICULE.

PART I.

Fools make a mock at sin.—PROVERBS xiv. 9.

THE Christian religion is, with great force and propriety, stiled a warfare; and Christians are exhorted, as "good soldiers of Christ," continually to stand upon their defence, clothed with the whole armour of God, against the various attacks of their enemies. Indeed, so numerous are those enemies, and so diversified and subtle the methods by which the flesh and the spirit, the world and the devil, are continually labouring to sap the foundation, and overthrow the structure of a Christian's virtue, that there is no less need of the divine panoply, than of all the caution and attention, which the best prudence and wisdom can suggest.

Solicitous for your welfare, my young hearers, I have pointed out some of those perils, which will meet you in your Christian course; some of those snares, which lie in the way, to entangle your incautious feet: and particularly, when setting before you the dangers and evils of Bad Company, I touched slightly upon a topic, which, from its importance, certainly demands a more ample discussion*: for *Ridicule* is not only the choicest instrument of impious folly to decry religious truth and virtue; but its effect is frequently most fatal to that truth and virtue.

* See p. 135.

Surely, then, it is well worth our while to inquire into its nature and force; to examine this mighty Goliah of the Philistines; that we may learn wherein its strength lies, and wherefore it should strike such a terror into the armies of the living God. Some, indeed, have urged, that this is the alone potent spell, whereby to prove truth of every kind; and they triumphantly urge, "That whatever will not stand the test of ridicule, must unquestionably be branded with falsehood and contempt." We will try the force of this position, and see whether the assertion of the wise king of Israel deserves not an equal acceptation; namely, "That mockery at sin, and its consequences, is a proof, not of wisdom, but of the veriest folly."

Now, in order to treat this subject most for your improvement, and the better to guard you against the attacks of this strong weapon of fools, we will consider,

First, Who they are that use it.

Secondly, Against what, and why, they use it: And

Thirdly, We will show, what it is they use; or, in other words, what is the real force and genuine power of ridicule.

I. First then we are to consider, "Who they are that make use of ridicule;" strongly characterized by the sacred writer before us, under the appellation of "Fools." And if, indeed, they were fools only, in the strict sense of the word, who made use of it, it could never be worth while to employ a moment's thought upon the subject. But in the days of the wise man, a religious reverence to God and his laws was held in such high and just esteem, that "wisdom" was the term commonly applied to religion; and on the other hand, vice and profaneness were stigmatized by the contemptible name of *folly*.

So that in the language of revelation (how different from that of modern times!) religious men and wise men, are one and the same;* and by fools are meant, not those to whom nature hath denied an extensive reach of understanding; but those whom their own corrupt wills and inclinations have deprived of just thinking and acting. By fools, therefore, in the text, are meant "The wicked and irreligious;" men of corrupt principles and practice: such as those marked out by the apostle; who, "giving themselves up to all kinds of vice and lasciviousness, think it strange that others run not with them to the same excess of riot, and therefore speak evil of them."†

Now it is certainly well worth a serious man's while to inquire, how far it becomes him to be influenced by anything which men of this character can urge or advance. Whatever irrational enthusiasts may say,‡ it is an unquestionable truth, "That a desire to stand fair in the good opinion of our fellow-creatures, is a principle engrafted in our nature; in many respects beneficial to ourselves and others." And though it is equally unquestionable, that every hope and desire hereof, is to be given up, if at any time it comes in competition with the favour of God, whom it is a first maxim of Christian truth, that we are to please and obey, rather than men; yet, second to this important maxim we can never too carefully cultivate the esteem and love of those, with whom we are by any means connected in society.

But, if those with whom we are connected, not only break that first obligation to God themselves, but are desirous that we should do the same; if they not only run the greatest lengths of riot, but use

* See Clark's Sermons, vol. ii. Sermon 7.

† See 1 Pet. iv. 5, and Stillingfleet's Sermon on the Folly of mocking at Religion.

‡ See Wesley's first Journal.

every method of seduction to allure us to the like destructive course; we are certainly bound, not only to give up the desire of pleasing, but to oppose ourselves as much as may be, to their vicious examples and arguments. For no man can have any claim to our esteem, much less can he merit our imitation, who, void of those principles which lead to present and to future happiness, would shamefully incite us to make shipwreck of both. There is an attraction in virtue and goodness, which (separate from all private considerations) always draws to itself the mind's esteem; as is plainly proved, by the general attachment to those characters, in the most distant ages and remotest countries, who have made themselves immortal in the memories of men, by their virtuous and upright deeds. And this arises, not only from the universal idea of the beauty and loveliness of virtue; but from the opinion we have, that such virtue is the fruit of a just discernment, while it is always productive of happy consequences to those within the reach of its exertion. Just for the contrary reasons, vicious characters, equally indifferent to us as to their good or evil, are esteemed odious and abominable by us: we know them evil! we think them weak: we are assured that their bad practices were injurious and offensive.

Now, upon the foundation of this reasoning, and these feelings of our nature, we may surely learn to scorn and despise all the mockery and ridicule of vicious and irreligious characters amongst ourselves. The love and esteem of such characters can never be desired; for it would necessarily imply a similarity of disposition and manners: and the contempt or abuse of such characters can never be important, because it is certain they have not, they cannot have any just idea or estimate of things; they cannot have liberal or enlarged minds;—they cannot have that

which alone can make human applause of real weight and use: they cannot have an estimation for our religion and our virtue, or an extended view to that true glory, which all the lovers of God are seeking, as the object of their first and grand pursuit.

Like will ever follow like: and if you are convinced that a regard to God and his laws, that truth, virtue, holiness, are right and good; the infallible tests of a sound mind, and well informed understanding; that, in short, this is the only wisdom; you must not be at all surprised, that they who pursue a plan diametrically opposite, will charge you with absurdity and folly; for fools of this stamp, are always extremely "wise in their own conceit." You must not wonder, that, incapable through their ignorance, and deficiency in true wisdom, to reason and to argue, they shoot the bolt of folly; and apply to that mockery and Ridicule, which is the grand succedaneum, in little minds, to the want of true discernment and rational argumentation.

Nor, in this view, will you ever be moved; as perfectly satisfied, that good sense and right discernment are, and must be, the prerogative of those minds only, who (purifying themselves from all the gross and incumbering fogs of impiety and vice) see amidst the brightness of all-irradiating, divine light, the path in which they should go, and the end of the journey at which they should aim. The esteem and approbation of men like these, is just as valuable and important; (a kind of foretaste and anticipation of His esteem, whose judgment is unclouded brightness, no less than crowning happiness) their esteem is just as valuable, as the scorn and ridicule of the vicious and profane is despicable and every way unworthy a wise man's thought and attention.

II. But we shall see this more fully, by consider-

ing, in the Second place, "What it is, that men of this character ridicule.

The sacred writer before us calls it by the general name of Sin: by which we may well understand "Vice in general, with all its circumstances:" as if the wise man had said, "Foolish and impious men treat of vice, with all its odious and destructive consequences, in a light and mocking manner; ridiculing every thing serious and sacred, and speaking of their vicious and abominable ways with levity and laughter." And experience does but too much confirm the truth of the observation. Go out into the world and you will find this the precise and distinct character of the profane and irreligious. They ridicule things the most sacred; they treat with levity things the most serious. A religious man becomes the object of their sport and mockery; not because they have entered into the nature of his principles, or can prove them weak, erroneous and delusive; but because those principles are in immediate contradiction to their own, and throw a living and irresistible reproach on their minds and their manners. Hence they dare to call a conscientious fear and regard to the Deity, by the name of cowardice and pusillanimity; a strict and necessary attention to the great positive duties of religion, they are bold enough, in their mad mockery, to brand with the hateful name of hypocrisy: while an attachment to the moral duties, and a studious care to avoid all impropriety, indecency, and excess, is stigmatized with the scornful terms of moroseness, severity, and unsociableness;—reproaches these, which are of all others, felt most sharply by the human mind. And from hence it is, perhaps, (amongst other reasons) that the force of Ridicule is found to be so strong; insomuch that the human mind, in various instances, better supports persecution and punishment, and all

the pains and torments of the body, than the pointed shafts of keen and well-directed Ridicule.* Coward, hypocrite, unsociable, are terms reflecting upon that part of our character which we hold most dear, and from which we expect the highest esteem amongst our fellow creatures, and the truest satisfaction to ourselves; and therefore to become by the brand of these disgusting appellations, objects for the slow and moving finger of contempt, is frequently more than minds not endued with the greatest Christian fortitude, can support. But, as we have shown that the objects who throw this ridicule, are on every account beneath our regard, and can never move a reflecting man; so let us a little develope the charges here brought, and see whether they are more deserving that regard.

1. You are called "a coward," because you fear God Now, this is so far from being a true charge, that the only man of true courage is he who does fear God. For courage is not the bare insensibility of danger, or the brutal effort of ferocity and inconsideration. Were this the case, lions and tigers would deprive the less furious animal man of all applause from this virtue. True courage is "the calm and settled resolution of a virtuous mind; wise to foresee, cautious to prevent, firm to encounter dangers, and ready in all events, to acknowledge and submit to him, who is the Lord God Almighty:" who, with one volition, can crush into atoms the whole system of created nature, and before whom worlds are but as the fly that wantons in the summer's beam.

And can it be courage, with blind and brutal madness to oppose ourselves to a God thus irresistible in power and glory? Can it be courage, by the most

* Persecution and Hatred have Pity annexed to them; none is annexed to Ridicule and Contempt.

atrocious violation of his laws, to dare his justice, and arm his terrible vengeance against us? Can it be courage, to oppose our feeble strength to his thundering right hand, or to make him our implacable foe, who would exert his sovereign majesty, to clothe us as his friends, with righteousness and honour?—Yet, this is the courage, which the hardy veterans of impiety boast. O my young friends; let them triumph in such daring deeds of destruction: may it be your's, for ever to be cowards in such a cause! bold, and undaunted as lions in the cause of truth and of virtue (the shield of Omnipotence stretched over your heads) may you shrink with the most trembling timidity from the perpetration of all those actions, which disgrace the man, and dare his Maker! may you, like the virtuous patriarch of old, never be afraid to throw it in the face of vice itself, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!"

Fear is well defined by the preacher, "A betraying of the succours which reason offereth:" and if so, there can be no such cowards as those, who, in contempt of the succours which true reason supplies, rush headlong to the performance of deeds whose sure end is destruction. There can be no men so truly courageous as those, who fear only where reason withholds her succour; and who never fear where that reason gives the commanding word, "Be bold, and fear God!"

2. But the vicious attack religious men, not of cowardice only, but of "hypocrisy;" a heavy charge, it must be allowed, were it urged with truth, and could it be proved with certainty. For as no vice is no more justly odious both to God and man than hypocrisy; so they, who truly incur the censure of it, merit the utmost contempt, not of the vicious only, but of the virtuous also; nay, of virtue and

religion itself, upon whose cause, in general, they bring a reproach and scandal. However, it should be observed, that while serious and pious persons are ever liable to this imputation, and ever marked with this title by the vicious and profane, there is, and there ever will be, an eternal and immutable difference between real and dissembled piety: and though they may and must agree in many particulars, yet, the parting point between them is no less clear and determined, than it is, for the most part, the object of no human discernment. The truth and sincerity of a man's religion and virtue, is to be estimated by the principle which actuates his mind; by the uprightness and integrity of his intention; of which the great Judge of hearts only can be the adequate witness. And therefore, where appearances, in any man's conduct, are on the side of virtue, it betrays not only the greatest want of charity, but the height of impiety, to arrest the judgment of God, and sit in severe trial upon that intention of which the great God alone can determine. 'Tis true, there is a consistency in undissembled piety and religion, which will show itself in the general tenour of a man's life and conduct. But, so frail is human nature, so many are the infirmities of the best of men, so mixed are human characters; and, in consequence, of so doubtful a sort are many actions; that to a perverse and malignant temper (ever disposed to see things in the worst light) insinuations and reflections, with a seemly appearance,* may be thrown out, to asperse even the worthiest men. Against these there is no possibility of guarding; and consequently they require no other notice, than to make us still more heedful to preserve the uniformity of our conduct. But, for the general reproaches

* "Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike," &c. See the character of Atticus, in Pope's Epistles.

which the vicious and the giddy cast upon you, my young friends! as hypocrites and dissemblers, because you are conscientious observers of the great duties enjoined by your religion; because you dare not profane the sabbath, or neglect your attendance at the holy table; because you are not ashamed to read your Bibles, nor dare to begin or end the day, without a solemn devotion of yourselves to the God of your life: for such general reproaches, cast upon you for these and the like reasons,—satisfied of the propriety the indispensable necessity of these things, you will never be moved; you will never be shaken from your stedfastness; nor suffer a loud laugh. or a ridiculous jest to break off the regular and unwearied practice of duties, whose infallible issue is the approbation of conscience and of God.

On the contrary, stimulated by sarcasms of this kind to a more diligent investigation of your principles and practice; you will labour, under God's grace, to amend whatever may but seem deficient in your behaviour; to improve in every good word and work; and with the most minute attention to preserve, as much as possible, a consistency of life and manners: that so the enemy may have nothing justly to revile; and that you, from these "trials of cruel mocking," may become more firm and rooted, like the oak, which strikes deeper, the more it is shaken by winds and storms.

3. But if neither the charges of Cowardice or Hypocrisy can affect you, alas my young friends, how I tremble for the third! more powerful than each, and more to be dreaded than them both. The scoffers will hold you forth, with all the levity of ridiculous merriment, as a dull, morose, "Unsociable wretch;" fit only for the gloom of a convent; or, as they will tell you, the mad society of your brethren of the tabernacle! I feel the unpleasing

effect which a charge like this will have upon an ingenuous mind, disposed to receive, and to communicate satisfaction; fond of, perhaps, and desirous to share, that high and rational enjoyment, the intercommunity of pleasing and agreeable society. But, high and rational as is that enjoyment, agreeable as are the pleasures of that society, they may be bought too dear; and therefore, it much concerns you, to estimate in this case the gain and the loss. If you converse with the vicious, you must converse with them upon their own terms: be assured, the notion of their complying with your's, is romantic and absurd. And if you retain your principles of piety and virtue, they will never rest themselves, nor let you rest; till, having plied the whole battery of Ridicule, they have levelled to the ground all that fair structure of innocence and truth, which tender parents and good education have erected with so much solicitude and care!

"What then," you will ask me "is to be done in this case?—It is an observation not grounded on censure, but alas! on too general and palpable observation, that irreligion and impiety prevail over goodness and virtue in the world; that if we live in it, we must converse with persons of the former character: How then shall we act? How shall a young man so direct his ways, as to preserve at once his virtue, and, what seems so essentially necessary to his comfort and well-being in life,—the love and esteem of mankind."

There are two or three things indispensably requisite to these important ends. I would particularly recommend great prudence, great firmness, winning and condescending mildness; and especially an attachment to the company of the virtuous and the good. On this last head, I shall say the less, as having treated of it in a foregoing Sermon: I cannot

however help just observing, that though the world, 'tis true, be bad and depraved enough, there are, thank God! numbers yet remaining, who have a just sense of themselves and their duty. Persons of this character, in a due consideration of their common enemies, and common interest, should associate together; and if you, my young hearers, sensible of the excellence of a virtuous and religious course, would endeavour to strenghen each other, and to unite in friendships upon the footing of religion, you would find the joys of such friendships equalled by nothing but the utility of them. You would find that "as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." You would find such friendships the delight of your private hours, the support and solace of your public labours: you would find them (next to the religion you profess) the most substantial barrier against the Ridicule of fools. For most true is that declaration of David, that our lives and manners are ever tinctured by those with whom we converse: "With the holy, thou shalt be holy; with a perfect man thou shalt be perfect: with the clean, thou shalt be clean, and with the froward, thou shalt learn frowardness."*

However, to escape the contagion of the froward, much prudence and caution will be necessary. The religion of Christ is unquestionably a social religion: designed for the world, and calling forth its professors to the exertion of all moral and relative duties: you must not therefore think that anything can exempt you from the discharge of these; or that religious duties are of such obligation, as to allow or countenance a neglect of them. God, in his great goodness, hath so constituted our nature and our duty, that religion and morality are interwoven together in such a manner, as to be perfectly indis-

* Psal. xviii. 25, 26.

soluble, and as such, we may be sure, perfectly consistent. Here, then, will be a great exercise for your prudence to demonstrate that you thus consider them; never suffering them so to interfere, as to clash with each other; but, with the utmost circumspection, so honouring God, as to show that you love and honour your fellow-creatures, and so loving your fellow-creatures, as to show that the great principle of that affection is the knowledge, that we all have one God and father, one Saviour, and one hope.

But, while you walk with this prudence and circumspection, you must take especial heed, that it deviate not into worldly compliance and cunning. Wise to discern what is best, and willing to comply, far as conscience will permit; you must at the same time maintain the utmost firmness, and the most unshaken attachment to those religious and virtuous principles, which you have imbibed, and made, upon good reason, the standard of your conduct. These are never to be given up, let what will befall you: they are the very anchor of your hope, and if once you let that anchor slip, your vessel will drive at the mercy of all the opposing winds and waves, and most probably ere long be ingulphed in the quicksands of irreligion and folly, or split on the rocks of vice.

Be firm, therefore, and stedfast to the truth: and to break (if I may so say) in some measure the severity of this unrelenting principle, show in every other branch of your behaviour, an engaging mildness and condescension. Christian humility, while it will never suffer you to grovel and be abject, will lead you to the truest politeness of behaviour; instructing you to become, far as may be, all things to all men; while Christian love, that other great principle of a pleasing conduct, will incite you to a zealous, active readiness in the service of your fellow-creatures; and

both will tend to introduce such kind of manners, as, if there be any justice in men, will conciliate their favour and esteem; certainly will conciliate the favour and esteem of the reflecting part of mankind, and make fools and knaves themselves (whatever they may say) reverence you in their inmost minds; and by approving your conduct, condemn their own simple and pernicious ways. However, it matters little whether they shall approve or condemn: thus secure of the applause of God, and of your own conscience, and happily persevering in so prudent, firm, and engaging a conduct, you will assuredly find the end to be the perfect peace of that conscience, and the high reward of that God, who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.

Thus I have shown you, who they are that Ridicule,—namely *Fools*, men of profane and vicious principles; and what it is they ridicule,—namely, every thing serious and sacred. I should now proceed to the third head: and consider the force of Ridicule itself: but this must be omitted to the next Sermon.

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SERMON IX.

ON RIDICULE.

PART II.

Fools make a mock at Sin.—PROVERBS xiv. 9.

BECAUSE Ridicule is found to be so frequent amongst the vicious and profane, and because its influence is often most fatal to young and unexperienced minds, I have determined to examine the real state of the argument, and to show what force this boasted engine of the light and irreligious ought to have upon the mind. To this end, I proposed first to consider the character of those who use it,—strongly expressed by the wise king in the text, under the appellation of fools; that is, 'men devoid of religious wisdom;' fools in principle and practice; profane and vicious. These men (as one would expect) make religion, and its professors, the object of their Ridicule; which was the second thing intended to be shown, and shown at large in the last discourse. These two considerations, of the men, who make use of Ridicule, and of the important object which they ridicule, one would think should be entirely sufficient to strengthen us against all the artillery of their light and absurd mockery; for surely, in every argument, and in every investigation, the character of the opponent, and the causes of his opposition, ought to have no inconsiderable weight.

III. However, we do not intend to rest the matter here; but will proceed, in the third place, to take a nearer view of the topic in question; that we may

discover "what is the real force, and genuine power of Ridicule; and consequently what is the weight which it ought to have, in any question of importance."

Now, with respect to Ridicule, it has been urged, "that it is the alone test of truth: that whatever will not bear its poignant and searching trial, must of necessity give up all claim to our regard, and ought to be treated as false and contemptible." But I apprehend, this is so far from being the real state of the case, that it may be pronounced with the clearest certainty, that Ridicule never is, never can be the test of truth; that, on the contrary, it is commonly the strongest instrument of ignorance and error; and may indeed be applied on either side of the question, according to the dexterous management of him who shall think fit to use it.

1. *Ridicule*, in the first place, can never be the test of truth. There are but three ways, by which we attain the knowledge of truth of any kind: the first, the testimony of our senses; the second demonstration; the third, historical evidence. Now, it is palpable that Ridicule can in no single respect affect truth, acquired by any of these means: we can never be laughed out of what we have seen and heard ourselves; all the Ridicule in the world will be pointed in vain, to persuade us, that we did not see what our own eyes beheld, or did not hear what our own ears brought to our attention. With respect to demonstration, the force of Ridicule is no less inefficacious: another, and a far different power of the human mind, here alone can give us satisfaction. It is by the slow and serious operations of reason only, that we compare, connect, deduce, and take all those steps which lead to a complete satisfaction of the judgment. Nay, so far is Ridicule from having any concern in the business of demonstration, that demon-

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stration is utterly averse to the intrusion of this light and airy guest; serious and collected as it is, and depending upon the calm, partial, uninterrupted exertion of the reasoning faculties.

HISTORICAL truth also, utterly disclaims all connection with, all assistance from Ridicule. The methods which it pursues are of a very different kind: the arguments by which it establisheth its testimony are plain facts, proved and confirmed by plain REASON, which in this case, as in every other, is the only judge and arbiter of truth amongst men. It is evident that we can arrive at truth by no other methods than these; and I have employed, I fear, more words that are necessary, to show, that Ridicule is perfectly insignificant, with respect to truth, attained either by sense, demonstration, or testimony. Indeed, as Ridicule is founded upon preconceived opinion, or prejudice, upon truth real or supposed; it is not possible, that it can either be the investigator, or the test of truth. For, it is made use of only by men, who, having already formed their own notions, labour in consequence of such notions, to throw contempt upon those of others, as disagreeing with, and different from their own. Ridicule, therefore, in this view, has not, cannot have the least concern with the discovery or the trial of truth.

It may be said, however, that its force is seen and tried in the case of moral conduct; or in regard to the truth and propriety of human actions: but this, again, is a position no less false than the former. Our moral conduct must be regulated by a very different rule; the truth and propriety of our actions must be tried by a very different test. Indeed, were there no rule of action more settled than the laughter of mankind, no test of propriety more determined than the Ridicule of others, it would be extremely difficult to fix any standard for acting at all; since that would

be very grave and commendable conduct at Japan, which would raise continual smiles in Turkey, or in France. The truth is, that Ridicule has in this case also no kind of concern. Common and indifferent actions, are to be regulated by the customs of the country in which we live; political ones by the laws of our society; moral and relative duties by the general and established rules of morality, where there is no revelation; and where there is, that revelation unquestionably supersedes every other rule, and is to be, with every believer of that revelation, the single and sole rule and test of his life and manners. If therefore Ridicule at any time presumes to lay her unequal level to those matters, we may disclaim the rule, as inadequate to the trial, and with justice appeal to the law, and to the testimony: and if our manners, squared by these, are found right and even, we may, with a just scorn, neglect every other pretence to examination.

2. Hence then we see, "that Ridicule can be no proper test of truth or propriety in manners, as we before saw, that it could be no test of the truth of fact." We may venture to assert further, "that it is the greatest instrument of ignorance and error." Consider from whence it springs, and see how unlikely it is to promote conviction in the mind. Its evident and undeniable source is contempt: men never use Ridicule upon topics, or against persons, which they value and esteem. Those who deal in it, having an utter contempt for that against which they employ it; and superciliously supposing their own knowledge more enlightened and enlarged, they attack their opponents with this weapon, which soothes their vanity, at the same time that it screens their ignorance. For certainly a light sally of ridiculous mirth, a pointed repartee, or a little wild, unexpensive wit, is much more easy than a well-connected

chain of good argumentation, of right and serious reasoning. And hence it is, that the dealers in this small ware, are, for the most part, what Solomon characterises Fools; men of little minds, and little thought; who pursuing schemes far different from those which truth and reason recommend, have neither desire or leisure to cultivate and improve the powers of an enlarged understanding, and being thus of contracted minds, abound in the use of Ridicule: for it is an aphorism of established authority, that the most ignorant are always the most contemptuous.

And as the pursuits of men of this character are in every view prejudicial to the enlargement of the mind; so does that Ridicule, in the use of which they are so free, well assort with their pursuits to prejudice such enlargement. For nothing more incapacitates the mind for right and serious inquiry, than the indulgence of it in vain and trifling levity; and the accustoming it, in degradation of its highest prerogative reason, to substitute in the stead of that reason, frothy laughter, and inconsiderate jesting. Indeed, it is an observation no less true than common, that not to the improvement of the intellect only, but to all mental and moral improvement, the strongest possible impediments are levity and inconsideration.

Thus Ridicule is not only the instrument, but the source of ignorance; and, as proceeding from contempt, ill adapted indeed to convince and persuade men of the truth: for we shall be but little inclined to embrace their opinions, who show a sovereign contempt for ours, and who give an edge to that contempt, by the raillery wherewith they treat us. Such a mode of proceeding, it must be acknowledged, is much more likely to inspire mutual hatred than mutual charity; and consequently, though it may tend to render us ridiculous in the sight of those with

whom we converse, and sufficiently uneasy and dissatisfied; yet it can never tend to pour rational conviction into the reflecting mind.

Hence then, I think we may clearly see, what is the true power of *Ridicule:* it is not, it never can be the test of truth of any kind: it may be, and frequently is, the source and instrument of error, ignorance, and mutual hatred. On these accounts, it is certainly dangerous, obnoxious, and despicable, and therefore, by wise men, will be used very sparingly: for, while those above-suggested are its evil effects, the only use which can be made of it, is to expose known and allowed follies; to laugh at affectations, which are too light to admit a serious reproof; and now and then to cast a contempt upon those vices, which fashion hath in some measure placed beyond the reach* of sober and deliberate conviction.

However, certain it is, that Ridicule is much more subservient to the cause of falsehood than of truth.† Truth, sufficiently illuminated by her own glory, wants not the feeble light of this glimmering taper: falsehood, standing in need of all assistance to support her cause, is glad to call in the succour of every ally; and therefore readily enlists Ridicule, with her light and irregular troops, to scour the enemy, and, like the Parthians, to throw their flying arrows at random amongst them. Hence it is, that there hath been scarce any truth so sacred, or any man so good, as to escape the shafts of Ridicule. Even that immortal Socrates, whom some modern friends of Ridicule are so desirous to exalt, could not avoid its

* See Brown's excellent Essays on the Characteristics, p. 106, and Anecdote 5 of this Sermon.

† It is very fairly and justly observed by *Quintilian*, that "Ridicule is of great force in oratory, because it draws off the mind from attending to the real nature of things:" Quia animum ab intentione rerum frequenter avertit.—See Pope's Essay on Criticism.

envenomed malice; but levelled and traduced by the impure wit of a licentious scoffer, he gave a strong proof indeed what a test of truth this same Ridicule is, when he drank the cup of poison in consequence of its power.*

A much greater than Socrates, proved by every mode of affliction, did not escape the contemptuous trial of Ridicule. Clothed in mock purple, blindfolded, spit upon, he heard from the contemptuous scoffers, "Prophesy, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Nay, and in a moment when one would have thought the keenest malice must have been satiated, and the proudest contempt softened into pity; in that dreadful moment, when He, who had lived dispensing blessings, hung tormented on the cross; even then insulting Ridicule must have its triumph: "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads; while the chief-priests, with the scribes and elders, mocking him said, He saved others, himself he cannot save!" Is not this a recommendation of Ridicule to your practice? Is not this an high proof of its power and excellence? Were there no other argument to urge against it, it would surely be sufficient to make every man cautious in the use of it, when he reflects, that its parent is contempt; and that its genuine offspring is hatred, cruelty, and murder. For those who accustom themselves to that Ridicule, which proceeds from a contempt of others, will unquestionably so gradually feed the selfish, and destroy the social affections, as to make the mind callous to the latter, while the former predominate, to the utter subversion of all that is gentle and generous in the soul.

It would be easy to go on, and show, by a large detail, how commonly this instrument of vice and irreligion hath been employed to promote their

* See Anecdote 4 of this Sermon.

cause. The followers of Christ, ordained in all things to be like their master, have felt the severity of it; they have had trials of cruel mockings, no less than of scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment. "Many a brave martyr has offered up his prayers to heaven, that he might be released by death from the contempt of his enemies; and after being baited in the bear-skin, found a refuge in the faggot, or the pitch-barrel." The trial, indeed, hath so far turned out for the advantage of Christianity, that it still retains its credit, and consequently the friends of Ridicule, if they are steady to their own principles, must acknowledge its truth and divine authority: at least it must be allowed fair, thus to turn their own arguments upon them. We lay however no stress upon this reasoning; assured that Christianity hath far better, and very different support.

But there are good reasons, why some professed unbelievers may choose to try our religion in this way: for while there is nothing more difficult, than to pursue with impartial unremitting attention, the investigation of truth, and the deductions of deep and thoughtful reason; there is nothing more easy than by light jests, and ridiculous turns to discountenance that investigation; to render the mind averse to it, and to induce a trifling and inconsiderate disposition. It is on these accounts that the enemies of revelation choose to proceed in this way—a kind of flying hussars in the field of truth—rather than to determine concerning that truth by fair reasoning and just argument. These require knowledge and attention; for the former, nothing is necessary but a small share of wit, with a large proportion of ignorance and presumption: commodities in which *he** is found to deal very largely, who has with an impiety unparalleled in any times, dared like the soldiers, the priest

* See Voltaire's 4th vol. of Miscellanies.

and scribes amongst the jews, to insult with his mad mockery the crucified Saviour, and almost every article of his holy faith; though he himself well knows that all those articles which he so insultingly reviles, have been again and again irrefragably defended and supported; and that, however with their blessed master they may be scouted and scorned, they can never be confuted or disproved!*

But, enough of scoffers like these; unworthy to be mentioned on any other account, but as they rise up in proof of the truth of that important argument which we would assert, and of the wise man's observation in the text, that "Fools make a mock at sin."

From all that has been said, you well estimate, my young friends, what weight this mockery ought to have with you; and, whenever it is levelled against you, will not fail to consider the characters of the persons who use it; against what objects, and for what ends they use it; and what is the real force and genuine power, of the Ridicule which they use.

1. For the first; there surely can be no doubt, that the approbation of the virtuous and the good, will be a sufficient counterbalance to the scorn and Ridicule of the vicious and profane. We have before shown, how little attention or concern men of such a stamp deserve from you; but, insignificant

* It is well observed by a fine writer, "That there can be no true wit, which has not reason for the foundation of it: that ridiculing what is in itself good, useful and venerable, fixes a certain reproach upon him who attempts it, either upon his understanding or his morals: that jesting with things of the highest conquence is folly and madness. That it is an easy matter by misrepresenting to make anything appear ridiculous: and consequently, that this talent is as far from being a demonstration, that the person who possesses it is a wit, as it is from being an evidence of his good-breeding, that in violation of all the rules of decency he banters and treats with scurrility the established religion of his country, and that for which all around him have a high value." Foster's Sermons, Vol. 1. p. 155.

and useless (to say no more) as their notice may be; valuable, important, and delightful is the friendship of the good: and you will think the scoffs and contempt of those who run every length of riot, amply repaid by the delight of that friendship, no less than by the many and striking advantages which you will derive by escaping the fatal consequence of that riot.

2. For the second; convinced that religion and virtue are of indispensable necessity to the present and future happiness of man; you will find them under this just prepossession, no way lessened in your esteem by the scoffs of those who are strangers to them both. Convinced that such scoffs, unsupported by reason, can never make any alteration in the nature of these things, you will still remain equally attached to them, and to truth. Men may be bold, may be absurd, may be wicked enough, profanely to mock the great God himself, and all his divine and benevolent dispensations; they may ridicule that virtue, which all ages and people have agreed to hold venerable; the best men, and the best things may be (as they have been) the objects of their contemptuous scorning. But who sees not that God and virtue are by no means changed, or in any respect depreciated by such a treatment? If they once were, they still continue, deserving your utmost veneration. And when you compare them, but for a moment compare the objects of your pursuit and of the reviler's scorn, with those objects and those pursuits, which they would recommend; how must you be settled, how firmly must you be rooted in the happy choice you have made! For, how mighty the difference, not only with repect to future life, but to our present well-being, between a rational and steady adherence to piety, sobriety, justice and benevolence; and a wild, lawless neglect of duty to God, and a desperate plunge into the practice of vice! which destroys all self-govern-

ment, all internal peace; which shatters the constitution, ruins the circumstances, and makes the man not more the contempt of himself, than of all who know him.

Stedfast therefore in your attachment to religion and virtue, you will want (upon a comparison like this) no motives to persuade you of the wisdom of your own choice, and of the daring folly of such men as are hardy and simple enough, to treat with Ridicule those things which confessedly are, and have always been thought by the wise and rational, the best, the greatest; most meriting our constant and highest attention, as most infallibly productive of our truest good.

Nor will vice lose any of its horror in your view, or seem a whit the less hateful and destructive, when those who dare to ridicule their maker, religion, virtue and goodness, at the same time, treat with levity and unconcern those foul crimes and pernicious practices, to whose deformity they have unhappily familiarized themselves. It is one of the subtlest delusions of vice to cheat its votaries by false and palliating names; a custom, alas! but too prevalent. Names, however, you will at all times remember, can never alter the nature of things; murder will still be murder: adultery will still be adultery; drunkenness will still be drunkenness; call them by what titles you may. And though honour and duels, gallantry and pleasure, good-fellowship and sociableness, may be substituted in the stead of juster appellations, truth and conscience subscribe not to this language; and God, the great judge of all, will not admit it in his last court of awful inquisition.

Suffer not yourselves therefore, my young friends, to be deluded and abused by the specious and softening language of the vicious: but remember, that

vice, palliated by what softening appellations it may, remains for ever unaltered, and the same; ever alike odious to God; ever alike opposite to his holy laws; ever alike contrary to the interests and the happiness of man.

3. All the power of the best-directed Ridicule upon earth, is feeble and inefficacious to divert a mind, thus clearly satisfied of the eternal difference between virtue and vice, from that steady course which truth and religion recommend and approve; and a consciousness of the real force of Ridicule, (the third thing spoken of) its inadequacy to the discovery or the proof of truth, will render its attacks less formidable; while, with regard to moral conduct, under a right knowledge of its equal inadequacy, when applied thereto, you will boldly contemn its impotent assaults, and appeal with cheerfulness to that sole test of moral behaviour, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Tell the scorners, my young friends, with undaunted fortitude, that you will thankfully acknowledge the propriety of their censure, and the justice of their mockery, if they can point out the inconsistency of your actions with the laws of your great master: but with equal fortitude tell them, that while your actions are, through God's grace, consistent with those laws, you can well bear to have your life accounted madness by men of their character; as perfectly assured, that your end shall not be without honour.*

Let me, however, caution you, in this best and noblest of all combats, to avoid with the utmost care all singularity in conduct and behaviour, which may give a plausible pretence for Ridicule, and too justly expose you to the mockery of illiberal scorners. For though it is most true, that religion, virtue, and goodness, are things in themselves so really excel-

* Ecclesiasticus v. 4.

lent, and, considered in the abstract, so universally respectable, that it is utterly impossible for Ridicule to fix upon them; yet, as displayed in the human conduct and character (which are generally mixed and imperfect), they often contract a kind of peculiarity which gives their enemies a fair occasion, as they think, to throw out their unseemly scoffs. And unhappily, superstitious and enthusiastic men, hurried on by blind and irrational zeal, have by their absurd, and in many respects pernicious behaviour, given but too much ground for the most pointed Ridicule.

Let it therefore be remembered, that if Ridicule in these respects hath any power, it is certainly not over religion and virtue; but over the weaknesses and follies, the singularity and affectation of those men, who have not had sufficient discernment to separate their own absurdities from the cause they meant to promote; and upon which, in consequence, those absurdities have brought a reproach.

Be it your care then, by a close adherence to that prudence, which was heretofore recommended, to avoid, in your religious conduct more especially, all such absurdities as may afford just matter of mockery to those, who are always no less ready than quick to remark it. Singularity of every kind is blameable; and affectation is always the mark of a mean and undiscerning mind: they have no concern with the cause of truth and virtue which every man may well pursue, in a sober, prudent, and serious manner, without affectation, without singularity, except vice indeed be so generally in fashion, as to render singularity in virtue almost unavoidable.

There is however one method, by which you may point the shafts of Ridicule more keenly, than by singularity or affectation; I mean, by inconsistency and impropriety of conduct. This would be giving

the adversary just cause indeed of triumphant mockery over you: and therefore, let me conjure, let me earnestly entreat you, my young friends—happily engaged on the side of piety and goodness,—to keep an especial watch over your conduct of every kind, that you may preserve the uniformity and regularity of it, and thus defy the sons of scorn to fix a real brand of contempt upon you. True it is, human nature is frail, and we are all liable to many temptations and many errors; but be not you discouraged, amidst this imperfection of your state and nature, if, sincere and upright in your intentions, you preserve as carefully as you can the even and blameless tenour of your way. Though you cannot hope to be free from those many infirmities "to which flesh is heir;" yet, maintaining a general habit of piety, your God will approve, his divine Spirit will assist your well-meant endeavours, and your Saviour will perfect your redemption. And while no character will, or ought more justly to meet with the contempt both of God and of man, than that of those, who, under large pretences to religion and virtue, are found notoriously deficient in both; while Ridicule (if it ever can be applied with propriety) can never be applied with greater propriety than on inconsistent and hypocritical professors like these; yet that Ridicule, be assured, will never reach, can never affect you. For, safe from its shafts, and secure from all its power, shall that man pass, who, deeply grounded in the love of God, holds up before his breast the adamantine shield of living faith; thus repelling all the fiery darts of the enemy; and enlightened on his way by the steady and unclouded glory of the Sun of righteousness, perseveres with unshaken courage and fortitude in that sure and unerring path to life which HE hath pointed out; who, made perfect through sufferings of every kind, goeth before us—the great

captain of our salvation,—bearing on his crimson banner, this animating inscription, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

ANECDOTES *on the foregoing subject of Ridicule.*

1. A young gentleman of moderate understanding, but of great vivacity, by dipping into many authors of the modish and freethinking turn, had acquired a little smattering of knowledge, just enough to make an atheist or a freethinker, but not a philosopher or a man of sense. With these accomplishments, he went into the country to visit his father, who was a plain, rough, honest man, and wise, though not learned. The son, who took all opportunities to show his learning, began to establish a new religion in the family, and to enlarge the narrowness of their country notions; in which he succeeded so well, that he seduced the butler by his table-talk, and staggered his eldest sister. The old gentleman began to be alarmed at the schisms that arose among his children, but did not yet believe his son's doctrine to be so pernicious as it really was; till one day talking of his setting dog, the son said he did not question but Carlo was as immortal as any one of the family, and in the heat of the argument told his father that, for his part, he expected to die like a dog. Upon which the old man, starting up in a passion, cried out, "Then, sirrah, you shall live like one!" and taking his cane in his hand, cudgelled him out of his system, and brought him to more serious reflections and better studies. "I do not," continues Sir Richard Steele, from whom this is taken, "mention the cudgelling part of the story with a design to engage the secular arm in matters of this nature: but certainly if it ever exerts itself in affairs of opinion and speculation, it ought to do it on such shallow and despicable pretenders to knowledge, who

endeavour to give a man dark and uncomfortable prospects of his being, and to destroy those principles which are the support, happiness, and glory of all public societies, as well as of private persons." See *Tatler*, No. 108.

2. "If the talent of Ridicule," says Mr. Addison, "were employed to laugh men out of vice and folly, it might be of some use in the world; but instead of this, we find that it is generally make use of to laugh men out of virtue and good sense, by attacking every thing that is serious and solemn, decent and praise-worthy in human life." We have a remarkable example in the case of the Lord Chancellor Clarendon; concering whom (among other measures taken to prejudice and ruin him with King Charles the Second) we are told, that mockery and Ridicule were two of the most notable weapons employed by his adversaries,—and almost all his adversaries were the vicious and the profane. The Duke of Buckingham in particular, and Eleanor Gwynn the king's mistress, were chief among these; the latter being often allowed to entertain the king and some of his courtiers, with mocking at the age and infirmities of the good Lord Chancellor, and imitating his lameness of gait, and gravity of aspect; while the former upon every occasion pleased himself and the company, in acting all the persons who spoke even at the council board, in their looks and motions; a piece of mimicry in which he had an especial faculty; and in his exercise of which the Chancellor had a full part. Thus, in the height of mirth, if the king said, "he would go such a journey, or do such a trivial thing to-morrow;" a wager would be laid with him that he would not do it; and when the king asked why, it was answered, "that the Chancellor would not let him;" and another would protest "that he thought there was

no ground for that imputation; however he could not deny that it was generally believed abroad, that his Majesty was entirely and implicitly governed by the Chancellor:" and when by these means they had often put the king in a passion, it was instantly reported with great joy in other companies. By such petty, low, and most illiberal arts was a great and good man insulted, and at length degraded from all his comforts, his honours, and his good name.

3. Nor was this all: the merry monarch himself suffered most essentially by the like shafts of Ridicule and buffoonery; had it not been for which, there seems no room to doubt that in many instances he had proved a much better king and a more happy man. This is particularly noted by the noble lord abovementioned, who one day told the king, "that it was observed abroad to be a faculty very much improved of late in his court, to laugh at those arguments which they could not refute: and though," says he, "the king did not then, nor a good while after, appear to dislike the liberty I presumed to take with him; yet I found every day that some arguments grew less acceptable to him, and that the constant conversation he held with men of great profaneness, whose wit consisted in abusing scripture, and in repeating and acting what preachers said in their sermons, and turning it into Ridicule (a science in which the Duke of Buckingham excelled) did much lessen the natural esteem and reverence he had for the clergy; and inclined him to consider them as a rank of men, who compounded a religion for their own advantage, and to serve their own turns; nor was all that I could say to him of weight enough to make any impression to the contrary.*

* See "Continuation of Lord Clarendon's Life," written by himself, vol. ii. p. 467, and vol. iii. p. 682.

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4. Dr. Delaney, in the second volume of his *Life of David*, p. 61, judiciously observes, that the dignity of the most excellent things and persons greatly suffers by being once seen in a ludicrous light, that is, in their most opposite extreme; because ideas are then associated in the minds of the spectators, which perhaps can never afterwards be wholly parted. I am astonished, therefore, says he, how any man of humanity—to throw reason and virtue out of the question—could make that Ridicule a test of true excellence, which murdered the best man of the Heathen world; which first debased the dignity of Socrates in the eyes of the vulgar, and then brought him to the bar and to the hemlock! For, if Aristophanes had not been suffered to ape his person and dress, and to Ridicule him in "the clouds," Anytus and Melitus would never have dared to have called him to the bar as a malefactor.

5. The Earl of C——d being at Brussels, was waited on by the celebrated Voltaire, who politely invited him to sup with him and Madame C——. His lordship accepted the invitation; the conversation happening to turn upon the affairs of England, "I think, my Lord, said Madame C——, that the parliament of England consists of five or six hundred of the best informed and most sensible men in the kingdom?"—"True, madam, they are generally supposed to be so."—"What then, my Lord, can be the reason that they tolerate so great an absurdity as the Christian religion?"—"I suppose, madam, (replied his lordship) it is because they have not been able to substitute anything better in its stead: when that is the case, I don't doubt but in their wisdom they will readily accept it." Surely so well-turned a piece of raillery was more forcible than a thousand arguments; and in cases like these, it is that the true use of Ridicule is seen.

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6. An ancient author relates that a company of vain and profligate persons having been drinking and inflaming their blood in a tavern at Boston in New England, upon seeing the reverend Mr. Cotton, a pious and amiable minister, coming along the street, one of them told his companions, "I'll go, and put a trick upon old Cotton." Accordingly he approached him, and crossing his way, whispered in his ear, "Cotton, thou art an old fool."—"True, replied Mr. Cotton, I confess I am so; the Lord make both me and thee wiser than we are; even wise to salvation!" Struck with his answer, the man related it to his associates, and notwithstanding their then situation, it failed not to cast a great damp upon their spirits, in the midst of their frolics.

7. The retirement and usual pensiveness of Sir Francis Walsingham, prime minister to Queen Elizabeth, being looked upon by his friends at court as a fit of melancholy, some of them came to him, on purpose to amuse and divert him from it. Sir Francis however soon repressed their jocularity, by telling them, "Ah my friends! while we laugh, all things are serious round about us. GOD is serious, who exerciseth such patience towards us; Christ is serious, who shed his blood for us; the Holy Ghost is serious, who striveth against the obstinacy of our hearts: the sacred scriptures bring to our ears the most serious and important things in the world; the holy sacraments represent to us the most serious and awful matters: the whole creation is serious in serving God and us; all that are in heaven and hell are serious. How then can man, that hath one foot in the grave, jest and laugh?" What an antidote to scoffing and mockery are obvious reflections like these!

8. If ever a vein of Ridicule be useful in conversation, as sometimes is the case, it seems peculiarly so, where just and solid argument can have no effect;

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for, as a late very elegant writer observes, "When a man is steeled and hardened against conviction, we may warrantably, like Hannibal, after other expedients have been tried in vain, cut through the rock with vinegar." The following is a memorable instance. Several Jesuits being one day in company with the celebrated Monsieur Boileau, roundly asserted, according to the principles of that society, that attrition for sin only was necessary, and that they were not obliged to love God: withal insisting, that those who advanced the contrary were in an error, and imposed an insupportable yoke upon the Christians, whom God had made free by a new law. It was to no purpose to unravel their fallacies, the dispute began to grow warm: when Mr. Boileau, who had hitherto kept a profound silence, starting up, cried, "Oh how prettily will it sound in the final day of judgment, when our Lord shall say to his elect, Come, ye well-beloved of my Father; for ye have never loved me in your life, but have always forbidden that I should be loved, and constantly and bravely opposed those heretics who were for obliging Christians to love me.—And you, on the contrary, Go ye to the devil and his angels; you, the accursed of my Father: for ye have loved me with your whole heart, and have solicited and importuned the whole world beside to love me." This raillery struck his opponents dumb, and more effectually enforced the necessity of divine love, than all the solid and cogent arguments before urged had been able to do.

———Ridiculum acri
Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque secat Res.

9. The lines in the character of Atticus, mentioned in p. 181, present us with a proper occasion to justify Mr. Addison from the application which many have made of them to him; and which indeed seems to have been invidiously intended by the author

himself. Nothing that may tend to remove a single suspicion from a character so amiable as that of the writer of the Spectators, can fail of a welcome reception with a candid public; and so far is the above-mentioned artful description of Atticus, from being in the least applicable to Mr. Addison, that we have the undoubted authority of a noble lord, one of his intimate friends, for asserting, that often as he has been in Mr. Addison's company, yet, in the whole course of his lordship's acquaintance with him, he never remembers to have heard him throw out an oblique imitation, that had the appearance of ill-nature; nor make a single remark upon any man, but what was perfectly worthy the gentleman and man of honour, and consistent with a candid, humane, and ingenuous mind. We cannot give a better demonstration of this truth, than by referring the reader to the *Spectator*, no. 256, and particularly to no. 445, which that celebrated writer thus concludes: "I am not so vain as to think that the general approbation of these papers is so much due to the performance, as to the design. There is and ever will be justice enough in the world, to afford patronage and protection for those, who endeavour to advance truth and virtue, without regard to the passions and prejudices of any particular cause or faction. If I have any other merit in me, it is that I have new-pointed all the batteries of Ridicule: they have been generally planted against persons who have appeared serious rather than absurd; or at best, have aimed rather at what is unfashionable than what is vicious. For my own part, I have endeavoured to make nothing ridiculous, that is not in some measure criminal: I have set up the immoral man as the object of derision. In short, if I have not formed a new weapon against vice and irreligion, I have at least shown how that weapon may be put to

a right use, which has so often fought the battles of impiety and profaneness."

10. "Indeed, Neander," said Eusebius to his young friend, "a Christian behaviour among gentlemen is so unusual, that you must venture to be out of fashion; you must stand the shock of raillery, and perchance the stroke of a lampoon: but these weapons stick only in the skin, and, though they are pushed on with all the violence of malice and profaneness, are not able to draw blood, or to touch the reputation. I have often been astonished at some gentlemen, who practised virtue at home, and vice in company; who betray their conscience—to avoid a blush! This, said I, is to fall into the wretched blindness of some savage Indians, who adore the devil, that he may do them no harm. If libertines glory in evil, why should you be ashamed at good? That carries along with it its own condemnation, and this its justification. Surely shame sits more naturally on guilt, than on innocence!—But, Neander, could we dive into the wicked man's heart, could we pierce into his soul, we should there read the most visible traces of shame and confusion, every moment he casts an eye on his own vices, and the virtues of his happier neighbour. For, let me tell you, piety has an amiable aspect: it charms its very persecutors; and even those who stigmatize it in practice, admire its beauty. So that though sometimes they led fly a raillery, or shoot a jest, these petty arrows flit at random, and never come near your honour. Nay, take it for a general rule, that those libertines who sneer at a Christian demeanor have themselves a secret esteem for it. But, let debauchees burlesque your piety, must you therefore abandon it? Will you abjure Christianity, because such men sport with religion; or commence Atheist, to humour the fool, who saith "there is no God?"

Is it honourable, in spite of Ridicule, to acknowledge a God, and yet a disgrace to serve him? Is it a credit to be a Christian, and a shame to be a good and sincere one? No, certainly. Let us then put things together, and act accordingly. Let us call in reason to govern fancy. We have been seeing indeed how hard it is for a young man to withstand

"The world's dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm Philosopher can scorn;"

But, let us only consider, who are those men that awe us?—Perhaps a set of beings who have more wealth than wisdom, and more quality than conscience; cowards in the face of truth, yet bravoes against God: men who live ill, and judge worse; who are pitied by some, and scorned by others; and whose very panegyrics are satires. Praise out of such mouths is scandal, and their blame is true glory. O Neander! suffer not yourself to be laughed out of heaven, nor rallied into hell. If you cannot now bear the loud laughter or taunting smiles of a man; how will you one day endure the frowns of an angry Deity?—If the lash of a petulant tongue be so sensible, can you suppose that the pains of Almighty vengeance will be more tolerable? Virtue in a dungeon is preferable to sin on the throne; and innocence in the pillory more honourable than guilt on the bench: for a day is coming, and we know not how soon, when "the wise only shall inherit glory; but shame shall be the promotion of fools."

SERMON X.

ON PLEASURE.

PART I.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth: and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.—Ecclesiasties xi. 9.

There never was a man, my young friends, who enjoyed more ample power to gratify his passions, and indulge himself in every earthly pleasure, than Solomon: and there seems never to have existed a man, who had either a greater relish for, or drank larger draughts from pleasure's intoxicating cup. You must acknowledge therefore, that his testimony is decisive on this head; and in the book of Ecclesiasties he gives us that testimony. After having informed us, that "whatsoever his eyes desired he kept not from them; that he withheld not his heart from any joy;" he adds, as the result and sad close of the final account, that "all was vanity and vexation of spirit!" The gratification afforded no solid and substantial joy; and the consequences were bitter and distressful to the reflecting mind.

In this view, with a nervous and affecting sarcasm, he applies to youth, eager in the pursuit of pleasure, as he himself once was: "Rejoice, says he, O young man, if you think proper to give up the pursuits of

wisdom; rejoice in your youth: and let your heart cheer you, in this thoughtless giddy period of life, with the things wherein it delighteth: walk in the ways of your corrupt heart, and in the sight of your deceitful eyes: listen to your passions, and follow the bent of your depraved imagination: *but*, know —consider well the price that you must pay for these transitory gratifications; know, as an eternal truth, that for all these things, God will bring you into judgment! Your soul and body will feel, even in this life, the beginnings of that fearful account, which remains inevitably to be made; and which must be made before that just and awful judge, who will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil."*

Yes, my young friends, a fearful account remains to be made in this world, as well as in the next, for the unrestrained pursuit of earthly pleasures and sensual gratifications: and, willing to warn you from every peril which may threaten you in your course through life, I would now lead you to a serious review of that *pleasure*, which is no less the wish, than the eager pursuit of your age; too much, alas! the eager pursuit of all mankind. Certain, however, it is, that nothing can be more contrary to the end of our existence, nothing more unworthy the nature of man, than to live for pleasure only; nor can a more mean, and at the same time a more wicked character be drawn, than that of a "lover of pleasure more than a lover of God!"

Yet, mistake me not, as if I meant so to decry Pleasure, as to wish to withhold every species and appearance of it, either from our nature in general, or from your sprightly age in particular: mistake me not, as if with stoical apathy, or monkish austerity, I would deny to youth the natural and pleasing

* See Desvoeux's Comment on the Book of Ecclesiastes.

indulgences of that pleasing period of their life. So far from it, my wish and my intention is, not only to secure true pleasures to your age, but to improve and heighten those pleasures. Clearly satisfied, that the great Author of our being, hath, for the wisest and best ends, interwoven, as it were, in the very texture of our nature, a desire after pleasure; I am not less clearly satisfied that he hath amply provided for the perfect completion of that desire. But, strong as it is in itself, and attractive as are the objects of it, there is the utmost danger, lest it carry us beyond the bounds, or fix upon other objects, than those ordained by God and by nature to gratify it. It is therefore of the utmost importance, if we would reap all the comforts and high satisfactions, which the benevolent Author of our being hath attached to true Pleasure, that we carefully consider its nature and its boundaries; that we wisely inform ourselves of the nature and ill effects of false Pleasure, and determine by God's grace, invariably to pursue the former; while we fly from the latter, as that which, however sweet in the taste, will be found bitter and painful in the stomach; which, however, it may exhilarate for a passing moment, will infallibly bring us into judgment!

And if, in the handling of this copious topic, I shall be enabled, my young friends, to present you with any arguments sufficient to guard you against the allurements of that deceitful and pernicious syren "False Pleasure;" if I shall be enabled to preserve your youthful feet in the blessed paths of that virtue and religion, which infallibly lead to true Pleasure; if, by anything here urged, your present existence shall be made more comfortable, and your future happiness, through Christ, secured; what infinite cause of mutual satisfaction shall we receive, and how much will it behove us to give glory together to the

God of heaven who hath so blessed your attention, and my labours! And I persuade myself, that these good effects will follow; and that I shall not only have your attention now, but hereafter your diligent compliance with what shall be urged; because my heart witnesses to me, that the most sincere and affectionate zeal for your welfare dictates what I utter; because I address you, not with the rigour of authority, but with the tender love, even of parental admonition; because, God is my witness, one of the greatest satisfactions I could enjoy on this side heaven, would be to see you (my dear young friends) rise up to bless God in your generation; scorning all the base and pernicious allurements of vice; enjoying all the just and honourable Pleasures whereof your nature is capable.

To this purpose, then, let us in the first place consider "The nature and the boundaries of true Pleasure." With regard to the former, we may well define it to be "That which is agreeable to the whole of our being, and inconsistent with none of our moral or religious obligations:" for, in our estimate of virtue and vice, of pleasure and pain, we must always, to avoid any deception, take in the whole of what we are: the great Author of our being having in so wise and wonderful a manner, united the distinct parts of our nature, having so combined our soul and body, that not only their effects each upon the other, but their offices and operations are reciprocal, and in the closest manner connected. Hence, while some pleasures are peculiar to the animal nature, and in a high degree satisfactory to that nature; yet, when indulged beyond the proper bounds, the soul instantly reverts, and claims her portion, or denies her tribute. We must therefore, in our Pleasure, consult our whole nature; and remember that we are not animals only, but rationals

also; and not only rationals, but social; and not only social, but immortal; ordained to fill up certain offices in this life, and for the life to come accountable to a Being, who for all these things will bring us into judgment.

That then, alone, is true Pleasure, which will bear to be estimated according to this true state of our nature; and for the boundaries of Pleasures in the general, we may further observe, "That no Pleasure can be true, or pursued with propriety and wisdom, which makes too large inroads on our time, our fortune, our health, our character, or our duty."

Of all the deposits in the hands of men, time is certainly one of the most precious; and upon the wise and right improvement of it, much of your happiness, and much of your success too, in this life, depend. The season of youth is the great season for improvement of every kind; and if you lose its important moments, you lose not only the moments themselves, but absolutely preclude yourselves from those advantages which you will never obtain in any other period. This, therefore, is a strong argument to convince you of the criminality of all pleasure, which makes you unthrifty and wasteful prodigals of that time, which, once lost, is redeemable no more; which, once lost, the opportunity of improving in knowledge and virtue within that period, is also lost, and probably lost for ever! But, let it be observed, that this, though a reason peculiarly applicable to youth, is by no means the only one that renders the Pleasure criminal, which wastes our time. Consider only the great end for which time is given us; consider the shortness of that time, at the best, and the fearful uncertainty of its continuance: consider the many great and important duties, which man hath to perform in this short and uncertain

period; consider the inestimable prize, for which he is to improve this time, and the glorious eternity which is to reward that improvement; and can you have a more convincing, a more affecting view, of the unworthiness, of the baseness, of the criminality of that Pleasure, which dissipates, in its wretched and unthinking round, the moments given us for purposes so important.

Pleasure, again, becomes excessive and criminal, when it injures our fortune. You (my young friends) are either born to an inheritance, or ordained to procure your subsistance by your own industry: in the former case, your inheritance is as much a talent intrusted to you by God, as any other endowment of mind or body; and, if you would approve yourself to him, you are under the highest obligations so to employ your fortune, as that it may stand the scrutiny, when the inquisition concerning it shall be brought into judgment. To this end, after the just and rational demands of your own state and exigence are answered; after your family and dependents have their equitable supplies from you, you have no more right to squander away in profusion what remains, than you would have to refuse to your distressed fellow-creatures who wanted them, eyes, or arms, or feet, if you had a number of them in your power to dispose of. Whenever therefore the pursuit of Pleasure leads you to a dissipation of your substance, that Pleasure is highly criminal, as it leads you to the abuse of a talent entrusted with you by God, and to the extreme injury of those, whom that God hath made your brethren; and hath given their wants and distresses a draft and demand, as it were, on your superfluities.

I dwell not further on the criminality of that Pleasure which injures your inheritance, as involving your mind in distress, as harming your just creditors, as

injuring, in a peculiar manner, your posterity, and those who have a right to expect from you that patrimony, which you received from your progenitors. Let me only observe, that the arguments hold with double force, with respect to those of you (my young friends) who are "ordained by God, to procure subsistence by your own industry." Whatever you may think of it, you will not perhaps find this lot so unhappy as it may seem. A comfortable inheritance derived from parents, when properly improved, is unquestionably a singular blessing; but it becomes as great a curse, when, as it is too often the case, it leads to the dissipations of false Pleasure, and stops the springs of that industry, which is the honour, and the happiness of man; a virtue no less adapted to the perfection of his moral nature, than to the improvement of his temporal estate. And, take it from me (my young friends) as a certain truth, that if blessed with this patrimony of industry, you relax not from its rules, but vigorously and honestly pursue the duties of your station; you will find, not only your fortune improved, but your mind ever in a state of self-possession, which they know nothing of who are the wretched slaves of enervating, ruinous idleness. But, in proportion as this industry is necessary to the gain and the improvement of fortune, that Pleasure must be criminal in itself, and destructive to you, which, while it wastes the substance springing from your industry, necessarily unnerves that industry itself, and thus doubly destroys you. For, let it at all times be remembered, that the Pleasure, which injures the fortune, is a many-headed monster, and cannot do the former without devouring also the time and the industry ordained to procure or to preserve that fortune.

Should it go further, and prejudice the health also, you have another criterion that it is false and sinful:

for, as the enjoyment of health is one of the greatest temporal blessings, one which gives zest and relish to all the rest; so is due attention to the preservation of it, one of the prime laws of nature; and consequently, whatever tends to destroy it is not only criminal in itself, but must of necessity defeat the end at which it aims. For, it is a maxim, which requires no proof, "That without health there can be no substantial Pleasure.

How many positive evils, how many miseries and disquietudes accompany the loss of health, and surround the man whose constitution hath been broken by indulgences in his youth, it would take up too much time even to enumerate. I dwell not therefore on these; but remark further, that those Pleasures which fix a brand upon the character, are ever to be shunned, as deceitful and destructive. Character, my young friends, is a jewel of such inestimable price, that it can never be rated too high, or preserved too cautiously: it is a sort of current coin, which enables a man to pass through life easily and happily; and it is a possession which stamps a value upon all you are and have beside; insomuch that confidence with men, and honour from them, are its natural and almost necessary result. Nor is there any sphere or station of life, however exalted, or however depressed, which renders character a matter of indifference, or can sink its worth. Easily then may you conceive, how ruinous that Pleasure must be which mars the beauty of your fair reputation in youth, and renders either equivocal or despicable that character, which is, or ought to be your best pasport through the journey of life.

Once more: that Pleasure must be in a high degree criminal, which interferes with your duty, civil; or religious; which either prevents you from dis-

charging the proper offices of your station in life which makes you a bad son, a bad brother, a bad friend, a bad neighbour, a bad servant, or a bad subject; which renders your example pernicious and prejudicial to society; or, which incapacitates dou for the right exercise of those high duties to your God, which are no less indispensable in their obligation, than they are fraught with comfort in the performance.

These are points so universally allowed, and so self-evident, that they can require no proof; however, the instances I propose to give in the following discourses, of those false Pleasures which men so greedily pursue, will abundantly evince that they are no less injurious to time, to fortune, to health, to reputation, than they are in every respect contradictory to those duties which we owe to God and our neighbour.

There is one other particular which serves strongly to characterise false Pleasure; and that is, "the raising and warming the passions." Whatever Pleasure is found to have this effect, though not absolutely criminal in itself, may justly be dreaded, as dangerous in its consequences; and ought by all means to be shunned on that account. But I shall refer what I have to say more concerning it to the next discourse, when I shall consider it more especially, as introductory to what I have to urge, concerning the gratification of the passions; or, with regard to indulgence in those Pleasures which are merely sensual.

You have however, my young friends, thus far, clear directions whereby to guide yourselves; and if you are sincerely desirous to approve yourselves before God and man, you will put a check upon your pleasurable pursuits; and examine yourselves, with regard

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to those pursuits, by the plain and intelligible marks which have been here laid down: nor will you ever think yourselves justified in any indulgence which is "inconsistent with the whole of your nature; which injures either your time or your health, your fortune or your character; or which incapacitates you in any degree, from performing the duties of indispensable obligation to God and to man."

Think not that while your Pleasures are under these restraints, you will be debarred from all satisfactions and amusements; think not that thus bound by the laws of reason and religion, you must for ever bid adieu to cheerfulness and delight. Believe me, you will find quite the contrary on experience; and I shall hope to point out to you in the sequel, such a fund of true and substantial Pleasure, as will not only infinitely counter-balance the loss of all which vice in its gayest moments can boast, but such as will show you the emptiness of all that boasting; and satisfy you fully, that the nearest, surest road to the mansion of true Pleasure, is through the temple of persevering virtue. Yes, my young friends, Pleasure, as under the guidance of virtue, is man's greatest good; as virtue is the only unerring guide to true Pleasure and to real happiness. The plainest arguments of reason fully prove that it must be so; God hath so constituted man, that he can arrive at happiness no other way, and the blessed religion, which he hath instituted with such labour of love, fully declares to us, that piety and goodness alone can either make us happy in ourselves, or recommend us to the favour of our Redeemer. To come to him is to come to *life*. And with what reason, nature, God and revelation uniformly declare, the experience of man, in all places and in all ages, combines its evidence; pronouncing, with the wise king of Israel, of all merely animal

and earthly pursuits, "that they are vanity and vexation of spirit; and that to fear God and keep his commandments, as it is the whole duty, so it is the unquestionable happiness of man."

You would not be wiser (my young friends) than the whole race of men who have gone before you; you would not act counter to reason, nature, God, and revelation! Think, if you should unhappily so act, how utterly without excuse you will be before men, before God! how bitterly, how grievously self-condemned in the end, and what keen reproaches you must feel in the awful forum of impartial conscience!

SERMON X.

ON PLEASURE.

PART II.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but, know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.— ECCLESIASTES xi. 9.

IT has been advanced by some, "That Pleasure is not only the great end, but the main principle of human actions:" a position, which, if Pleasure be rightly understood, may, doubtless, well be allowed: for, there cannot be a higher testimony to the goodness and love of the great Author of our being, than the certain assurance we have, that in all his dispensations towards us, he means our happiness only; and desires us, with parental affection, to walk diligently in the way of duty, because it is the sure way to pleasantness and peace. On the other hand, nothing can be more false and destructive than this position, if Pleasure be ill-understood, and as such immoderately pursued. It is of such pleasure that Solomon speaks in the text, and of which he pronounces from his own fatal experience, That the end of it in this life is vanity; the consequence in the next, judgment!

Willing, therefore, my young friends, to guard you from the delusion of the latter, to secure to you the happy and the full possession of the former; I

proposed to consider pleasure in the general; and, to this end, the nature, and the boundaries of true Pleasure, were laid down in the last discourse: where it was shown, that no Pleasure can be true, or worthy of a wise man's pursuit, which is not agreeable to the whole of our nature, or which is not consistent with our moral and religious obligations: particularly if it interferes with, or prejudices our time, our fortune, our health, our character, or, in one word, any of the duties which we owe to God, our neighbour, or ourselves: it is a Pleasure highly unworthy a rational being, and that which will most certainly defeat the end at which it aims.

Let me just observe further, that it is very possible, the pleasure may be extremely dangerous, and cautiously to be shunned, which is not immediately attended with any of the ill effects just enumerated; for though it may injure us in none of these particulars, yet it may possibly tend to raise and inflame the passions; more easily kept in subjection, God knows, than reduced into obedience, when they have once risen up in rebellion and tyranny.

There is nothing to which a wise or a good man will, and indeed must attend more, if he would preserve the character of wisdom and goodness, than the subjection of his passions; than the constant and steady government of his inferior appetites and desires: for he is well convinced how predominant they are, if once indulged, and how difficult to be restrained, if the reins of gratification are once thrown on their necks. Besides, he will at all times consider, that though human laws, it is true, take cognisance only of the outward act, the laws of Jesus Christ, the great legislator of the heart, go much farther; and estimate, with strict propriety of justice, the secret intention, and the inward desire. Consequently, the man anxious to approve himself before

the tribunal of this soul-discerning Judge, will be no less cautious to preserve the purity, and integrity of the heart, the absolute and entire government of the passions, than he will to abstain from the overt-act, and the criminal indulgence.

On this account, he will by no means judge that Pleasure innocent or lawful, which, however indifferent or harmless it may be to others, raises a tumult in his soul; sets on fire his passions, and endangers the peace and tranquillity of his future life, by the probability it affords, that the tyrant appetites may dethrone and captivate the lawful monarch reason.

In this case, it is true, every person must in a great measure judge for himself; natures, tempers, and dispositions vary: the flegmatic, the cold, and the dull may walk with safety, where the rapid, the warm and the lively would fall into destruction. However, as the passions of youth in general, are warm and inflammable enough, it may be a caution well deserving their serious attention, to avoid all those pleasures which are likely to enkindle their passions; well ascertained that in their state of life, such Pleasures must be peculiarly dangerous, when reason hath not yet attained its perfect state, and the passions are in full strength and power; willing, as it were, to tyrannize the more, during the minority of reason their sovereign.

An additional argument to enforce this caution, may be drawn from the meanness, and the misfortune of a subjection to the passions; of a life spent in the mere gratifications of sense. This is an argument upon which I would expatiate a little; proposing to show from various reasons, how unworthy, how much beneath man's dignity and his character, and how short of the end at which he aims, is the indulgence in sensual Pleasures. To say that God

has not annexed high satisfaction to the indulgence of the animal appetites, would be to contradict nature and fact: he has annexed high satisfactions, and that for the wisest and best reasons; and it is a striking instance of his paternal care and goodness, that these satisfactions are always received in the highest degree, when, in subserviency to their proper ends, the appetites are kept under due dominion; excess in any of them, naturally and necessarily defeating their purpose, and occasioning pain and trouble, instead of real gratification.

This is wisely ordained by the great God of our being, as if it were to remind us of the dignity of our nature, and to call us to assert that dignity: for, certainly, the pursuit of those sensual Pleasures, which are entirely animal, which belong to us in common with the animal world, which are designed merely to keep up and continue animal existence, and in the enjoyment of which, the animals, probably, have very much the superiority over man; certainly, the pursuit of such Pleasures is infinitely beneath the character and the dignity of a creature, whose animal and inferior part is but the prison of a divine and immortal soul; ordained to share the inheritance of angels, while the body moulders in corruption, and returns to its original dust.

Lives there a man who would wish to give up this glorious birth-right? To be, and to be esteemed an animal only?—All body and no soul? Born to breathe out a short miserable existence in this world, and then to rot and be lost for ever, amidst worms and corruption? Let such a man indulge his sensual appetites; let him eat and drink, for to-morrow he dies! But you (my young friends) triumphant in the possession of an immortal soul, labour continually to assert and maintain the dominion of that soul. Your high, your true dignity is, that you are made

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in the image and similitude of GOD ; sons of reason, of holiness, of immortality. Yours are the glorious, the rational hopes of an eternity, gratified with all the blessings of knowledge, purity and love ! Can you then conceive a meaner or more despicable choice than that, which gives up these inestimable hopes, for the sordid gratifications of appetite and sense ? Wretched Esau ! what a figure does he make in the annals of time, and the estimate of wisdom, who, for a miserable mess of pottage, tranfered the benefits of his birthright to his brother !—Ye far more wretched Esaus, who sell your heavenly birthright for the poor and paltry indulgences of the flesh; ye thoughtless and unhappy men, who live merely to gratify those appetites, in which your fellow commoners of the plains so much excel you ! O think what you will appear in the estimate of eternal wisdom, exchanging immortality and glory for sense and sorrow ! Enjoy the good things that are present, fill yourselves with costly wine and ointments ; let none of you go without his part of your voluptuousness ; for this is your portion, and this is your lot :*—But know, that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

Indeed, there is almost no necessity for a divine judgment with respect to these things ; so despicably miserable are they in themselves, so fraught with poison and stings of their own, to punish and destroy ! Consider only how short, at the best, how transitory and passing is the moment of actual enjoyment in every sensual gratification ; and how small a portion of time,—compared with that employed in preparation, in planning and devising schemes of iniquitous voluptuousness, and in sad and painful reflections upon those schemes, when completed even to the utmost wish of the unhappy deviser,—how small a portion

* Wisd. ii. 7—9.

compared with the past, and the future, remains, a poor pittance for the actual indulgence. Call to the bar of reason and reflection the epicure, the drunkard, or the libertine; and let them, in the sober moments of calm retrospection, declare, how very small a portion of time those pleasures have engrossed, which have engaged so much solicitude in pursuit, and which are attended with so many and tedious distresses in consequence: which, so far from refreshing, cheering, and comforting the mind on review, will either bear no reflection at all, or obtrude reflections of the most painful sort. This is another striking particular to show us the vanity and the evil of sensual Pleasures, "they will not bear reflection!" And when half the satisfaction of human life consists in reflection, pleasing reflection on the past,—sweet and soothing introducer of comfortable hopes and expectations for the future,—what vain and thoughtless prodigals must they be who pursue such Pleasures as will at once destroy the power of reflection on the past, and damp every hope of delight from the future!

But, the truth is, merely sensual Pleasures have consequences more affecting than these; and it would be well indeed, if their worst evil was, that they would bear no reflection! Happy indeed would it be for the devotee to those Pleasures, if a total annihilation of thought could take place; if, after the short, the momentary indulgence, a perfect oblivion could shroud the foul deeds in eternal darkness! How alarming a consideration! for must not those deeds be worthy Pleasures, whose utmost praise, whose utmost merit is, that to be forgotten soon as enjoyed, would give to man the most substantial comfort?

But, alas! this negative felicity can never be allowed to the pursuits of passion. They cannot be

forgotten; they will bear no cheering reflection, no retrospect delightful to the human thought; but, they will force upon that thought a thousand keen remonstrances, sufficient to murder all repose, and mar all the felicity which they have so fondly proffered to their deluded votaries. The reason is obvious: God and nature have desined that man's true Pleasure should proceed from his nobler part, the soul; that soul is utterly passive at least, in merely sensual indulgences; it is the animal only, it is the earthly body, which predominates and directs in these The soul, superior in her views, sits as a captive, indignant in her chains, refusing her concurrence, and continually upbraiding her tyrant for the servitude she suffers. Hence those keen reflections, hence those pangs of conscience, that torment of the mind, which the guilty sensual suffer; and which every human creature must suffer, who would make his animal and inferior nature a slave to that godlike principle of reason and immortality which he has derived from God, and which, properly improved, will advance him even to the throne of that God himself. "For he that overcometh," says the great inspirer of our hopes, "shall sit down with me upon my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne."

It almost degrades our reason, to think that arguments are necessary to prove the criminality, the absurdity, the baseness of merely sensual pursuits: alas! that the too general conduct of mankind should prove those arguments neither improper or unecessary. But if those already urged are not sufficient, let us still go further, and remark, that these Pleasures, like the poor bodies which are the seat of them, will not only perish and leave us; but (which is a circumstance peculiarly grievous) they are often found to leave the bodies themselves even

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in this life; it being nothing uncommon for the power of gratifying the sensual appetites utterly to be withdrawn, while, horrible curse! the fierce and impotent desire still remains only to torture and to punish!

For, herein again, as in every particular, we may note the wise and providential disposition of God; who hath so constituted our nature, that while the regular and allowed gratification of its inferior passions, is attended with great and ample satisfaction, and never is known to occasion either pain or decay; the unallowed gratification of those passions not only falls short of its end, by introducing numberless evils and disquietudes both to body and mind, but very frequently enfeebles, or totally destroys the very power of gratification.

And, of all pitiable objects beneath the sun, imagination surely cannot picture forth to itself an object so pitiable as the man, who, ignorant of every Pleasure but the sordid ones of sense, hath run so fast his mad career, in the vile service of those Pleasures that he hath outstripped, as it were, and left lagging behind, the enfeebled powers of his nature and constitution; and burnt up with fierce desire, looks with the keen torment of bitter reflection, on the sensualist once wallowing in the mire of foul indulgence, the miserable sensualist which he once was!

Oh, my young friends, would you escape the horrors of such a despicable state, learn in early youth to keep the rein upon you inferior desires: resolve to give reason the rule, and firmly establish the dominion of the soul over appetite and sense. For, though it is scarce to be conceived that there can be an object more miserable, than the man incapacitated to gratify his passions, while still cursed with the desire to do so; yet, this misery is frequented augmented by many severe and aggravating circum-

stances: some of them arising from the poignancy of that reflection, and the scorpion stings of that conscience which we spoke of before; circumstances, edged no doubt with a peculiar keenness by the just vengeance of heaven, in order to convince the man, so long a mere slave to his body, that he has not a body only: these torments prove feelingly that he has a soul.

But, besides these, even the body itself, that poor perishing system of clay, which he hath so pampered, fed and nourished; which he hath so indulged, with all the desires of its kindred brutes; that body, which he hath made the instrument of all his unworthy pursuits and desires; even that very body, as if reverting against its abuse, as if, in combination with the soul, to teach man better wisdom, and to assert the high prerogative of his nature; even that very body will, by severest diseases and acutest pains, convict the man, that the unrestrained gratification of sensual Pleasures, was never designed for him; and that the certain consequence of such Pleasure is no less the debilitation and destruction of the animal, than it is the disgrace, and will be the eternal punishment of the rational nature!

For, it has been well, and very reasonably presumed, that the passions which men encourage, and the principles which they have imbibed, and made the ruling ones of their lives, will not only continue with them in a state of future existence, but continue in that state, if evil, to be their chief tormentors. For the foundation of hell is certainly laid even here, in men's own depraved dispositions and habits: it is not to be supposed that a miraculous change should be wrought upon them at death: such as they depart out of this world, such must they enter into the next: and in this view, how easy is it to conceive the horrible, the inexpressible torture men must suffer from the tyranny and dominion of those pas-

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sions, which, for ever incapable of gratification, must remain, like vultures gnawing at the heart!

It may perhaps be said, that this reasoning holds with less force in regard to merely sensual appetites and passions, than any other; for, as they owe their existence to the body, so with the death of that body it may be presumed that they will also die and be done away: but this reasoning will not hold, on many accounts, since the subjection of the soul to the body, in the first place, tends greatly to sensualize the soul itself; to degrade its ideas, and to render it earthly, mean, and base: since, again, no man can so pursue merely animal propensities, as not to engage the soul, and at length totally to immerge and defile it with them; for so close is the union of our natures, that however the one may awhile oppose the other, yet, so painful and dissatisfactory is the struggle, that it will certainly at length subside; and the nature, whether animal or rational, to which we give the preference, will assuredly bring the other to a consent and concurrence with it. Besides, sensual Pleasures, and the indulgence of the animal passions, have so natural and necessary a tendency to absorb every noble faculty and sentiment in the soul, that it is easy to conceive the powers of that soul not only absorbed in brutish sensuality, but lost at once to everything great and good, while everything worthless and abominable springs up in the rank, uncultivated soil.

For, such is the nature of man, that as the studious and diligent culture even of one virtue necessarily improves and meliorates the rest; so, with respect to vice, suffer but one to grow rampant and luxuriant in the soul, and, like a baneful weed, it will shed its poisonous influence around, destroy the growth of every thing salutary near it, and suffer only weeds and poison, like itself, to spread and flourish.

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The truth is, you may as well expect the man of religion and virtue to allow himself in the most vicious practices, as the sensualist, the slave to his passions, to cultivate virtue in his heart; or, while he indulges his appetites, to improve his rational and divine nature: so that, to the other evils attending the indulgence of the passions, this may be added, that were not this indulgence criminal in itself, contrary to the laws, and most certainly subjecting us to the just judgment of our Redeemer; yet would it assuredly subject us to that judgment, yet would it assuredly be criminal, and attended with the most fatal consequences to our eternal welfare, in that it utterly precludes all moral improvement, and incapacitates for that purification and holiness of heart, without which, we are informed, no man shall see God!

More than this need not be offered to convince you, my young friends, of the meanness, the sinfulness, the many and certain ill consequences to your present and future peace, which must follow an indulgence in sensual Pleasures; Pleasures which belong to one part of your nature only, and that infinitely the lowest; Pleasures common to you with the animals, and perhaps (as they are animals only) such as they enjoy much more than man, whose rational nature places him far above these sensual sordid gratifications. And yet—what a reproach to reason!—man even in these low and beastial pursuits, runs riot in a scandalous excess, unknown to the animals themselves.

But further than this, these Pleasures are short and passing; bear no reflection or review; are accompanied with the severest reproaches of mind, often with the acutest pains and torments, of body; and the sad total of the whole account at the end is, a soul alienated for ever from its God, and destined

to pass an eternity of despair amidst all the horrors of self condemnation.*

Are not all these arguments sufficient to raise in your souls, my young friends, a thorough indignation at, and a firm resolve to guard against the tyranny of those sensual passions, which will work such woe, and bring down such destruction upon their deluded and abandoned devotees?

You cannot have so little taste for genuine Pleasure, you cannot have so little sentiment for true honour, you cannot have so little prudence for your own interests, your own most important interests in time and eternity, as to enslave yourselves to this vile tyranny; as to degrade your rational and immortal nature beneath that of the beasts which perish; as to leave the food of angels, and to feed upon husks with swine; as to destroy all your own precious hopes and expectations in this life, as to destroy all the fond hopes and expectations of those who are solicitous for your welfare, as to destroy all those hopes in future life, which are the peculiar prerogative and distinguishing glory of man: as, in short, to live the life of animals on earth, and to become the companions of devils hereafter: and this, all this for the poor, passing, ruinous indulgence of appetites, which, however they may sparkle in the glass, in the end, bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder.

Our next discourses will verify these general remarks; for we will give instances of some sensual Pleasures, which, however commonly pursued, will appear to be fatally productive of every evil consequence we have here enumerated.

And when this shall be found to be the case, let me earnestly entreat that you will carefully store up these considerations in your minds: man, in gene-

* See by all means the fine passages of Cicero, on Pleasure in his Treatise on old age. Sect. 12, &c. Edit. Olivet.

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ral, but youth in particular, hath no enemy so great, as the enemy within; the depraved and strong passions of his fallen nature. Nor hath religion any work more important, and perhaps more difficult, than the duly regulating, and properly governing those passions. It will certainly tend to facilitate this important work, if you are justly sensible of its difficulties, and of the imminent dangers which attend its neglect; and nothing can make you more sensible hereof, than a right knowledge and constant remembrance of the innumerable and destructive evils which attend the indulgence of your passions.

Keep this ever in view, and I dare pronounce, that through the grace of God, you will sail clear, my young friends, nor be shipwrecked on those rocks, where so many of the hopeful and amiable have unhappily been lost. And though the violent gales of domineering passion may chance to blow you transverse; though your vessel may be endangered, or even suffer something in the storm; yet fear not: a constant eye to your principles will guide you aright; nor will it be possible that reason and virtue should ever totally sink and be lost in your hearts, if once clearly convinced, you ever retain a just and feeling remembrance of this truth; "That the passions, however good servants, are cruel and tyrannical lords; which never fail to keep their slaves in miserable, painful, and distressful captivity, and in the end to plunge them into the black and horrible dungeons of remorse and despair.

Anecdotes *respecting Pleasure.*

1. The following portrait of vicious Pleasure, is given by an ingenious writer, after the manner of Plato. "Pleasure," says he, "is a beautiful harlot sitting in her chariot, whose four wheels are pride, gluttony, lust, and idleness. The two horses are pro-

sperity and abundance; the two drivers are indolence and security: her attendants and followers are guilt, grief, late repentance (if any) and often death and ruin. Many great men, many strong men, many rich men, many hopeful men, and many young men, have come to their end by her, but never any enjoyed full and true content by means of her."

2. The excellence of the noble allegory subjoined is such, as to afford hopes that it may stand as an apology for its length; it was originally written by an old author, named Prodicus, but recommended and embellished by Socrates; and has lately been honoured by elegant translations into English verse*. It is a description of Virtue and Pleasure making their court to Hercules, under the appearance of two beautiful women. "When Hercules," says the venerable moralist, "was in that part of his youth, in which it was natural for him to consider what course of life he ought to pursue, he one day retired into a desert, where the silence and solitude of the place very much favoured his meditations. As he was musing on his present condition, and very much perplexed in himself on the state of life he should choose, he saw two women of a larger stature than ordinary, approaching towards him. One of them had a very noble air, and graceful deportment; her beauty was natural and easy, her person clean and unspotted, her eyes cast toward the ground, full of modesty, and her raiment white as snow. The other had a great deal of health and floridness in her countenance, which she had helped with an artificial colouring, and endeavoured to appear more than ordinarily graceful in her mien, by a mixture of affectation in all her gestures. She had a wonderful confidence and assurance in her looks, and all the variety of colours in her dress, that she thought

* See Sermon xi. part 2, at the beginning.

were the most proper to show her complexion to an advantage. She cast her eyes upon herself, then turned them on those who were present, to see how they liked her, and often eyed the figure she made in her own shadow. Upon her nearer approach to Hercules, she stepped before the other lady, (who came forward with a regular composed carriage) and running up to him, accosted him after the following manner: "My dear Hercules, I find you are very much divided in your own thoughts upon the way of life which you ought to choose. Be my friend and follow me. I'll lead you into the possession of pleasure, out of the reach of pain, and remove you from all the noise and disquietude of business. The affairs either of war or peace shall have no power to disturb you. Your whole employment shall be to make your life easy, and to entertain every sense with its proper gratification. Sumptuous tables, beds of roses, clouds of perfumes, concerts of music, crowds of beauties, are all in a readiness to receive you: come along with me into this region of delights, this world of Pleasure, and bid farewell for ever to care, to pain, to business." Hercules hearing the fair inviter talk after this manner, interrupted her a moment to inquire her name; to which she answered, "My friends, and those who are well acquainted with me, call me *Happiness;* but my enemies, and those who would injure my reputation, have given me the name of *Pleasure.*" By this time the other lady was come up, who addressed herself to the young hero in a very different manner. "Hercules," said she, "I offer myself to you, because I know you are descended from the gods, and give proofs of that descent by your love to virtue, and application to the studies proper for your age. This makes me hope you will gain both for yourself and me an immortal reputation. But before I in-

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vite you into my society and friendship, I will be open and sincere with you, and must lay down this as an established truth, that there is nothing truly valuable which can be purchased without pains or labour. The gods have set a price upon every real and noble Pleasure. If you would gain the favour of the Deity, you must be at the pains of worshipping him; if the friendship of good men, you must study to oblige them; if you would be honoured by your country, you must take care to serve it: in short, if you would be eminent in war or peace, you must become master of all the qualifications that can make you so. These are the only terms and conditions upon which I can propose happiness." Here (continues the fabulist) the goddess of *pleasure* broke in upon the discourse, "You see, Hercules, by her own confession, that the way to pleasure is long and difficult; whereas that which I propose is short and easy." "Alas!" rsturned the other amiable figure," (whose visage glowed with a passion made up of scorn and pity) "what are the pleasures you propose? To eat before you are hungry; to drink before you are athirst; to sleep before you are tired; to gratify appetites before they are raised, and to raise such appetites as nature never planted! You never heard the most delicious music, which is, the praise of one's self; nor saw the most beautiful object, which is, the work of one's own hands. Your votaries pass away their youth in a dream of mistaken Pleasure, while they are hoarding up anguish, torment, and remorse for old age. As for me, I am the friend of gods, and of good men; an agreeable companion to the artisan, an houshold guardian to the fathers of families, a patron and protector of servants, an associate in all true and generous friendships. The banquets of my votaries are never costly, but always delicious;

for none eat or drink at them who are not invited by hunger and thirst: their slumbers are sound, and their walking hours are cheerful. My young men have the pleasure of hearing themselves praised by those who are in years; and they who are in years of being honoured by those who are young. In a word, my followers are favoured by the gods, beloved by their acquaintances, esteemed by their country, and, after the close of their labours, honoured by posterity, and received up into heaven." Here, says the Mythologist, they ended: we know by the account we have of the life of this memorable hero in ancient story, to which of these two fair advocates he gave up his heart. And, I believe every one who reads this will do him the justice to approve his choice of virtue, in preference to voluptuousness and vicious indulgence.

3. "There is not," says Mr. Addison, "a common saying which has a better turn of sense in it, than what we often hear in the mouths of the vulgar, That custom is a second nature." Dr. Plot, in his History of Staffordshire, tells us of an idiot who chancing to live within the sound of a clock, and always amusing himself with counting the hour of the day whenever it struck, the clock being spoiled by some accident, the idiot continued to strike and count the hour without the help of it, in the same manner as he had done when it was entire. Though I dare not vouch for the truth of this story, it is very certain that custom has a mechanical effect upon the body, at the same time that it has a very extraordinary influence on the mind, and a wonderful efficacy in making every thing pleasant to us. It is very observable, for instance, how our delight in any particular study, art or science, rises and improves in proportion to the application which we bestow upon it. Thus what was at first an exercise, becomes

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at length an entertainment; our employments are changed into our diversion: the mind grows fond of those actions she is accustomed to, and is drawn with reluctancy from those paths in which she has used to walk. Now, if we consider attentively this property of human nature, it may instruct us in very fine moralities. In particular I would recommend to everyone that admirable precept which Pythagoras is said to have given to his disciples, and which that philosopher must have drawn from the observation I have enlarged upon: *Optimum vitæ genus elegito nam consuetudo faciet jucundissimum:* "Pitch upon that course of life which is the most excellent, and custom will render it the most delightful." Men whose circumstances will permit them to choose their own way of life, are inexcusable if they do not pursue that which their judgment must tell them is the most laudable. The voice of reason is more to be regarded than the bent of any present inclination, since by the rule above-mentioned, inclination will at length come over to reason, though we can never force reason to comply with inclination. This observation may also teach us to take particular care, when we are once settled in a regular course of life, how we too frequently indulge ourselves even in the most innocent diversions and entertainments; since the mind may insensibly fall off from the relish of virtuous actions, and by degrees exchange that pleasure which it takes in the performance of its duty, for delights of a much more inferior and unprofitable nature. Besides this, every the most sensual and irreligious man may hence be taught to overlook those hardships and difficulties, which are apt to discourage him from the prosecution of a virtuous life. "The gods," said Hesiod, "have placed labour before virtue: the way to her is at first rough and difficult, but grows more smooth and easy the further you

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advance in it." The man who proceeds in it with steadiness and resolution, will in a little time find that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace: in short, the practice of religion will not only be attended with that pleasure, which naturally accompanies those actions to which we are habituated, but also with those supernumerary joys of heart, which arise from the consciousness of such a pleasure; from the satisfaction of acting up to the dictates of reason, and from the prospect of an happy immortality." See *Spectator*, no. 447.

4. A gentleman lately deceased, in a letter to his only son, has this just idea of the subject. "The Pleasure, says he, of being good, will alone bear the test of the question," what is Pleasure? "Every other temporary gratification, however beautiful, and in its appearance alluring, like the sensitive plant fades away at the approach of rational reflection, and discovering its deceit, imbitters the recollection. Goodness is ever the same; subject to no change; lovely in its aspect, charming in enjoyment, and at each review, with the most pleasing complacency heightens the remembrance."

5. Dr. Young's is a noble idea of true, rational and Christian Pleasure, and must please the reader on a subject of this critical importance: in his 8th Night he says,

"Who can resist her charms? Or should, Lorenzo!
What mortals shall resist, where angels yield?
Pleasure's the mistress of ethereal powers;
For her contend the rival gods above:
Pleasure's the mistress of the world below,
And well it is for man, that pleasure charms:
How would all stagnate, but for pleasure's ray!
How would the frozen stream of action cease!
What is the pulse of this so busy world?—
The love of pleasure: that through every vein
Throws motion, warmth; and shuts out death from life.

And as her empire wide, her praise is just.

Patron of pleasure! doater on delight!
I am thy rival; pleasure I profess;
Pleasure, the purpose of my gloomy song.
Pleasure, is nought but Virtue's gayer name;
I wrong her still, I rate her worth too low;
Virtue the root, and pleasure is the flower.—
* * * * * *
Brought forth by wisdom, nursed in discipline,
By patience taught, by perseverance crown'd,
She rears her head majestic: round her throne,
(Erected in the bosom of the just,)
Each virtue lifted, forms her manly guard.
Great Legislator! scarce so great, as kind!
If men are rational, and love delight,
Thy gracious law but flatters human choice:
In the transgression lies the penalty:
And they the most indulge, who most obey.

Not to turn human brutal, but to build
Divine on human, pleasure came from heaven.
Pleasure first succours virtue; in return
Virtue gives pleasure an eternal reign.
Glide then for ever, pleasure's sacred stream!
Through Eden as Euphrates ran, it runs,
And fosters every growth of human life;
Makes a new Eden where it flows:—but such,
As must be lost, Lorenzo! by thy fall.

Her glories ends, by kind, or by degree
When pleasure violates, 'tis then a vice,
And vengeance too; it hastens into pain.
From due refreshment, life, health, reason, joy;
From wild excess, pain, grief, distraction, death;
Heaven's justice this proclaims, and that his love.
What greater evil can I wish my foe,
Than this full draught of pleasure from a cask
Unbroach'd by just authority, ungauged
By temperance, by reason unrefined?
A thousand demons lurk within the Lee.
Heav'n, others, and ourselves! uninjured these,
Drink deep, the deeper then, the more divine.
Angels are angels from indulgence there:
'Tis unrepenting pleasure makes a God.
—But, without breathing, man as well might hope
For life, as without piety for peace."

6. Sir Matthew Hale, in his excellent Contemplations, has the following remark respecting temporal

delights, if destitute of true religion. "They are trimmed up with report and expectation; but in reality and in themselves, they are like the apples of Sodom, beautiful to the eye, but when touched vanishing into dust. Solomon was certainly the wisest, and externally-happiest king that the world ever knew. He had the greatest opportunity that ever man had, to take a full estimate of the world, in its choicest enjoyments, by reason of his wealth and peace, his power and interest. He had a vast judgment and understanding of all things in nature, and could with exquisite skill and relish search into and attain all that was extremely good and desirable in this world: and this he did, neither brutishly, as led thereto by sensuality, nor superficially, or barely by speculation; but he made it his business not only strictly to inquire into it by his reason and judgment, but also really to experience and try the matter after which he thus sought. And at length what was the result? After having thus climbed as it were to the summit of all worldly enjoyment, and beheld the rest of mankind, as well they were able, reaching and clambering towards this precipice of temporal felicity,

(——Dum monte potitus
Spectat anhelantem dura ad fastigia turbam)

From this high mountain he bespeaks mankind in his Book of Ecclesiastes, as it were in this manner: "Ye children of men, I see you are full of great expections, and by means of worldly gratification; and you take much pains for the acquisition of them. Listen a while to what I shall say. I have had the opportunities of making a full discovery of the best that this world can afford; wealth, honour, pleasure of every sort and kind; and such opportunities as none of you ever had, or can expect, in order to the like discovery. I have denied myself in nothing that this world can administer to give me content; I have

had the most exquisite taste and enjoyment of all;- and I have now arrived at the very fastigium, the very highest point of this mountain of pleasure and worldly fruition. But I find myself wholly deceived in what I expected: I looked indeed for as high gratification as you do; but now, that I have tasted of every dish, I find them all to be but vanity and vexation of spirit. Nay, I have not only been disappointed in what I expected from them, but instead thereof, I have reaped nothing but sorrow, anxiety, vexation. You do therefore deceive yourselves in all the pains you take, while ye think that from these sublunary enjoyments ye shall acquire happiness, yea, or obtain real gratification in them. Be wise then, and take warning by me, the greatest example that ever the world knew of this kind: give up these laborious, busy and vain pursuits of yours; and take with you only this concluding lesson of mine, which I have learned by infallible experience: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

7. How glorious a share of true pleasure must Pliny the younger have enjoyed, when, having determined to gratify the public with 50,000 livres, he charged his estate with 3000 per annum, and ordered the sum to be employed for the subsistence of the poor of both sexes; thus by his self-denial, diffusing joy through many a worthy heart! One of his friends, however, reproved him for so doing, observing how absurd it was to have thus stripped himself of his possessions, by the imposing upon himself such a law: to which he replied, "And is it not right to give the preference to public, rather than to private utility; to eternity rather than to time; and to take more care about doing well, than the possessing much?"

8. Apicius was a great epicure according to the

low and vulgar sense of the word; but Apicius was not a Pliny; and yet Apicius had his pleasures. He had eaten, it seems, of a certain fish at Minturna in Campania, where he was told that the species was much larger in Africa. Upon this he immediately equips a vessel, and sets sail for that coast. The navigation was difficult and dangerous: but what will not hunger do? Apicius is a man of pleasure, and appetite, every league he travels, increases the necessity of gratification. When they arrived on the coast of Africa, several fishing boats, already apprized of his voyage, came to him, and brought him some of the fishes in question; when, how great was his surprise and chagrin, to find that they were not at all bigger than those of Minturna! Instantly therefore, without being touched with the rational curiosity of seeing a country he had never visited before; without any regard to the prayers of the people in his train, who wanted the refreshments of the shore; Apicius ordered his pilots to return to Italy, and thus ended his memorable adventure.

9. It is with great satisfaction that we can quote the following, in honour of a living and exemplary character; and not unsuitably to the subject before us. Mr. Boswell, in his account of General Paoli, observes, that his notions of morality are high and refined; such as become the father of a nation. "He told me one day, that his father had brought him up with great strictness, and that he had very seldom deviated from the paths of virtue: that this was not from a defect of feeling and passion; but that his mind being filled with important objects, his passions were employed in more noble pursuits than those of licentious pleasure."—"I saw," continues the author, from "Paoli's example, the great art of preserving young men of spirit from the contagion of vice, in which there is often a species of sentiment,

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ingenuity and enterprise nearly allied to virtuous qualities. Show a young man that there is more real spirit in virtue than in vice, and you have a surer hold of him during his years of impetuosity and passion, than by convincing his judgment of all the rectitude of ethics.

10. "Descartes," says a pleasant writer in the *Guardian* "was the first who discovered a certain part of the brain, called by anatomists the Pineal Gland, to be the immediate receptacle of the soul, where she is affected with all sorts of perceptions, and exerts all her operations by the intercourse of the animal spirits, which run through the nerves that are thence extended to all parts of the body. On the strength of this hypothesis the writer (assuming the character of an invisible investigator of the mind) founds the following ingenious and important remarks, whose moral is strikingly obvious and worthy of attention. "I one day," says he, "entered into the pineal gland of a certain person, who seemed very fit to give me an insight into all that which constitutes the happiness of him who is called "A man of Pleasure." But I found myself not a little disappointed in my notions of the pleasures which attend a voluptuary, who has shaken off the restraints of reason. His intellectuals, I observed, were grown unserviceable by too little use, and his senses were decayed and worn out by too much. That perfect inaction of the higher powers prevented appetite, in prompting him to sensual gratifications, and the outrunning of natural appetite produced a loathing instead of Pleasure. I there beheld the intemperate cravings of youth without the enjoyments of it, and the weakness of old age, without its tranquillity. When the passions were teized and aroused by some powerful object, the effect was, not to delight or sooth the mind, but to torture it between the return-

ing extremes of appetite and satiety. I saw the wretch racked, at the same time, with a painful remembrance of past miscarriages, a distaste of the present objects that solicit his senses, and a secret dread of futurity; and I could see no manner of relief or comfort in the soul of this miserable man, but what consisted in preventing his cure by inflaming his passions, and suppressing his reason. But though it must be owned, he had almost quenched that light which his Creator had set up in his soul; yet, in spite of all his efforts, I observed at certain seasons frequent flashes of remorse strike through the gloom, and interrupt that satisfaction he enjoyed in hiding his own deformities from himself." See *Guardian*, no. 35.

SERMON XI.

ON IMPURITY.

PART I.

Hearken now therefore unto me, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways; go not astray in her paths: for she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.—PROVERBS vii. 24, &c.

CICERO has well observed, "That there is not a more pernicious evil to man, than the lust of sensual pleasure; the fertile source of every detestable crime, and the peculiar enemy of the divine and immortal soul."* This remark was fully verified in the last discourse, wherein the baseness and criminality of sensual pleasures were shown at large; where they were proved not only to be unworthy a man, but destructive even of the end at which they aim; in that they are merely animal, common to us with the beasts that perish; in that they are of short continuance, cloy upon repetition, bear no reflection, and bring no satisfaction to the thinking mind; but on the contrary, sting that mind with severest pangs while afflicting the body with terrible disease; and while depriving of the best joys, and most genuine

* Nullam capitaliorem pestem, quam corporis voluptatem, hominibus a natura datam: Hinc patriæ proditiones, &c. &c.—See de Senectute, and the last Discourse, p. 229.

pleasures of this life, incapacitating the immortal soul for any of the pure and refined joys of that which is to come.

This is true of all sensual pleasures immoderately pursued, and gratified beyond the demands of reason and of nature. For full proof hereof, let us call to the bar of examination, First, the pleasures of "*Impurity*," and then those of "*Intemperance*:" Let us develope their boasted claims, drag them to the full light of impartial truth, and show, that what has been observed of sensual pleasures in the general, belong to each of them with a strong and peculiar propriety.

Solomon here again* leads us the way; and in that chapter of his admirable and instructive Proverbs, whence the text is taken, describes in a beautiful and affecting manner, "A young man void of understanding," as all young men, in such circumstances, may well be judged: a young man, deluded, captivated, and undone, by the fair speeches and flattering hypocrisy of the subtle and pernicious harlot. His painting is excellent; "I beheld," says he, "among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the streets, near her corner; and he went the way to her house; in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. And behold there met him a woman, with the attire of a harlot, and subtle of heart: she is loud and stubborn: her feet abide not in her house: now is she without; now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner: with her much fair speech she caused this simple one to yield; with the flattering of her lips she forced him: he goeth after her immediately, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or a fool to the correction of the stocks: till a dart strike through his

* See the text of the foregoing Sermon.

liver! as a bird hasteth to the snare; and knoweth not that it is for his life."

Having thus painted in strong and lively colours the affecting truth, the wise man addresses himself to youth in general; and I could wish, my young friends, to bespeak you in his persuasive and instructive words, which I propose to make the foundation of what I shall deliver to you on this subject; nice and delicate, I well know in itself, and demanding much prudence and caution in the discussion; but at the same time peculiarly needful, and never more so, than at a period, when the vice of "Impurity" is spoken of with levity and smiles; and scarce deemed sinful, though it be in truth most abominable to God, most injurious to society, and most destructive of personal comfort and satisfaction.

With a view therefore to your preservation from its ruinous consequences, with a view to your purity and peace, "Hearken to me, now, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth:" while, with the sincerest purpose to keep you from thence, I point out to you the mischiefs and the miseries of "her house" the subtle harlot, Impurity; her house, which "is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

I said the "mischiefs" and the "miseries" of her house: and can that be worthy to be pursued as a pleasure, as the chief and ruling pleasure of our lives, which will certainly repay our pursuit with mischiefs, and with miseries?—Yet such, my young friends, such unquestionably and invariably are the wretched wages, which the servants of Imprnity receive.

I. In full proof hereof, consider First, how contradictory this vice is to the great laws of nature and of reason, of society and religion.

1. It is in immediate opposition to the first law

of our nature, which enjoins the due subordination and subjection of our inferior appetites and passions to the superior and ruling principle of the soul; that principle which distinguishes man from the animal creation; and which, as it is our noblest prerogative, so it is our highest duty, and our best happiness to cultivate and improve. What then can be so degrading to our nature, so contrary to the great purpose of our creation, as to reverse this first and important law, by giving the reins of dominion to an inferior and merely animal appetite, implanted in us, as a slave, to serve the purposes of our temporal existence; but then to cease for ever? An appetite which, however well and wisely calculated by the great Author of our being, for the ends of this life, is an appetite wholly of sense, with which, abstractedly considered, the mind has no concern; but which, if indulged beyond the due bounds, tends above every sensual gratification to darken that mind, and to absorb all its noblest faculties; for "Wine and women take away the heart." What then can be so contradictory to our nature, as to suffer a passion like this to usurp the dominion; as to sink ourselves down to a level with, nay, and even beneath the animal world; when, by a due improvement of that godlike principle thus degraded, we might rise to a rank in the intelligent creation, equal perhaps, if not superior to that of angels!

2. Impurity, thus degrading our nature, no less opposes the laws of reason; whose peculiar office it is to direct our conduct and form our manners, in such a way, as becomes the rank and station we bear in the universe. And while we boast of that reason what perverseness and folly is it to indulge a vice, and pursue a conduct, which is at once most opposite to, and most derogatory form the honour and the dictates of reason? And can anything be more so

than the unrestrained gratification of impure desires, with which reason is so far from concurring, that men are obliged to lull its keen remonstrances in the tumult of passion, and the hurry of sensual pursuits! Spite of all which, in full proof of its prevalence and power, it will often, in a silent moment, be heard: with severe truth it will upbraid if not convince the man of the utter contrariety of his conduct to the great laws and purposes of his existence in this world. Hence Solomon, with much justice, calls all those *simple ones*, and *void of understanding*, who suffer themselves to be deluded and undone by the flattering enticements of the harlot Impurity.

3. And, in further testimony of their want of understanding, or at least of their acting in direct opposition to its dictates, let such consider again, that the vices of Impurity are in immediate contradiction to the laws of *society;* those universal laws of justice, honour and virtue, upon which all society is founded, and upon the due observation whereof the happiness and the permanence of that society depends. Nothing, it is certain, conduces more to corrupt the morals and deprave the minds of youth, than the unrestrained gratification of impure and lustful desires: nothing conduces more to spread a general corruption of manners; nothing more affects and harms the nearest and dearest interests of men; nothing introduces more distressful injuries; and nothing is a greater prejudice or discouragement to just and honourable marriage; that state of highest felicity, ordained by God himself; productive of the truest and most substantial comforts of the human race, and the only sure and infallible source of population! Can anything then be conceived more pernicious and destructive to society than a vice which is pregnant with so many evils, and which, considered in whatever view, is contrary to all its interests, and subversive of all its best foundations.

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4. The laws of nature, of reason, of society calculated, in every respect, to produce and to secure the happiness of man) are but transcripts, if I may so say, of the Divine laws; which, communicated to us by reason and revelation, give us the fairest ideas of his bright perfections, who is the God, the father, and the benefactor of the human race; and who never prescribed or enjoined one precept, but with a gracious view to the good, the present and eternal good of his creatures. Hence all his injunctions in the divine revelation which he hath made of his will, with uniform beauty and excellence, tend to instruct man in the true state of his nature; to inform him of its original dignity and unhappy fall; and particularly of its capability to assert again, through the mercies of Christ, all the privileges and the blessings of that native dignity. Called hereto by every most powerful and persuasive motive, man is informed that his triumph is sure, and his reward inestimable, if, superior to sense and to appetite, he improves the godlike principle of reason and virtue within him, and purifies himself, even as his God, his great pattern and exemplar, is pure. Hence, when the divine Redeemer delivered his instructive sermon on the mount, one amongst the first of his blessed aphorisms was, "Happy are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!" see him now, on the elevated height of a contemplative mind, defecated from all the defilements of sin, and of sense; see him hereafter, in the pure vision of perfect intellectual pleasure. And, in conformity with this beatitude, we find our Lord not only discountenancing every external act of Impurity and concupiscence; but even levelling his heart-searching laws against that concupiscence itself; assuring mankind, that in the estimate of all discerning wisdom, the impure intention, if cherished in the heart, would as certainly constitute guilt, as the impure act and perpetration itself:

"whosoever looketh upon a woman, to lust after her,"—with this view and design—"hath already committed Impurity with her in his heart."*

No further proof need be brought, to show how contradictory to the law of God is the practice of Impurity. Indeed, it is so utterly and diametrically opposite to the whole spirit of the Christain revelation, that whoever lives in the gratification of impure desires, must of necessity give up all hopes from the mercy of that Redeemer, the great business of whose life and death it was to redeem and purify his people from all iniquity, and to perfect them in holiness; that they might be fit to enjoy that kingdom, where nothing defiling can ever enter.

There are, however, one or two considerations peculiar to the Christian religion, which ought never to be omitted on this subject, as they are no less forcible in themselves, than they are adapted to work upon every thinking and ingenuous mind. These are drawn from the "Inhabitation of God's Holy Spirit in the bodies of believers, as his temples;" and "from their being incorporated by faith, as living members, into the pure and immaculate body of Jesus Christ." St. Paul urges them both in the sixth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. Concerning the latter he speaks thus, reasoning against every species and degree of Impurity; "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?—Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?"—Shall I, when enjoying the highest and most honourable privileges that a human creature can enjoy, incorporated by faith into Christ, and made by baptism a member of his pure and precious body; shall I, in contempt of that privilege, in vile abuse of my Saviour, and to the utter disgrace and ruin of myself; shall I be so weak, and so wicked, as to indulge a mean, moment-

* Matt. v. 28.

ary, debasing, and merely sensual appetite?—St. Paul disclaims the thought with an indignant "God forbid!" And may that God grant that we may all be enabled, with equal indignation, for ever to disclaim it!

But, he goes further, to mark in the strongest colours possible, the opprobrium, and the extreme sinfulness of this vice: "what, know ye not (says he) that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you,—which we have of God; and ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price, &c." Can you then be so senseless, and so desperate in your guilt, as to defile and desecrate this holy temple, honoured with so divine and so pure an inhabitant? to desecrate it by the gratification of lusts, which are unworthy of your character, and common to you with the lowest of the herd; which degrade your nature, darken your reason, pollute your soul, destroy your peace, and alienate you from a God of purity for ever?—Oh, my young friends, ever bear in mind that, consecrated as you are to the service of Christ, that best of masters; dedicated to him, when the cross was marked upon your innocent and infant brows; ever bear in mind the high obligations under which your baptismal covenant lays you; ever remember the inestimable privileges of that covenant, whereby you are made "members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven;" whereby the inhabitation of the blessed Spirit is promised and secured to you; and let no temptations of defiling passion allure you to renounce these privileges, the noble charter of your birth, and the firm foundation of all your future hopes and happiness! Well consider, what the gratification of youthful lusts and desires can bestow, adequate to the loss, to the misery which it will assuredly occasion; and while a just sense of what you are through Christ; while a just gratitude for all the unspeakable blessings and

honours arising from your union with him; while an ingenuous shame lest you should forfeit or disgrace that union; and while a lively and generous ardour to improve and walk worthy of it;—while these considerations influence, animate and direct you, take a view with me farther, of "the mischiefs and the miseries" which infallibly arise from the practice of Impurity; take a view of its necessary and natural ill-consequences, as well to others as to yourselves.

For, neither the laws of God or of man are founded in fancy or caprice: it is not to be supposed that the all-wise and all-bounteous Father of mankind would ever impose a precept upon his creatures with a view to command or to prohibit aught that was unessential to their real well-being. Consummate in felicity as in glory, our God has not, cannot be supposed to have, any end either in creating or governing us, but the great, the benevolent end of our happiness; and consequently, we may be assured that whatever he prohibits with paternal care and love, is destructive of that happiness. And like the laws of God, those of society also, founded on the basis of right reason and the mutual advantage of mankind, are, and ever ought to be highly respectable in our sight; their observance tends not only to our own, but to the general peace and security.

Having therefore seen how contradictory to these laws the practice of Impurity is, we will enter a little into the spirit and the reason of them, and show that they prohibit, with strict severity, this vice, because it is no less injurious to our neighbour, than it is in every respect injurious to ourselves. But copious as this topic is, and not possibly to be treated of as it ought in what remains of the present discourse, I will postpone it to the next: when, if it shall fully appear, as I persuade myself it will, that the unbridled and unlawful gratification of impure and unchaste desires is prejudicial to society in the highest degree, inflicts

the severest injuries, and brings the most complicated miseries upon our fellow-creatures; while at the same time it is in a peculiar manner destructive of personal peace and satisfaction; ruinous to the soul, the body, the reputation, the fortune: if these evils shall appear to be the natural and almost necessary consequences of this foul and pernicious vice; certainly, my young friends, I shall not need many arguments to dissuade you from the practice and the pursuit of that, which so far from giving pleasure, will pierce your souls with severest pain!

I have before observed to you,* and I cannot repeat the observation too often, how much and how fatally men are apt to deceive both themselves and others, through false names, and palliating appellations; by which vice is taught to assume a specious garb, and under that garb often gains admission, where, in her own native and deformed appearance, she would be seen with detestation, and rejected with horror. It is peculiarly the case with respect to the destructive crime we would develope and decry, because fully ascertained, my young friends, of its malignant and fatal influence to all your best and most important interests. Mark how, to palliate its guilt—mark how, to hide its foul deformity, the subtle enemy of souls not only induces its abandoned votaries to treat it with the most unseemly and unbecoming lightness, and to speak of it even with all the boasting of detestable indecency; but to call by the very name of *Men of pleasure*, those miserable profligates, who are in every respect as undeserving of the name, as they are ignorant of the nature of true pleasure. Men who, unrestrained by principle, uncontrolled by law, human or divine, make no scruple of breaking through the most sacred ties, the most solemn obligations; hesitate not to wound

* Sermon on RIDICULE. p. 197.

with the keenest anguish, and to injure in the most irreparable manner, so they can but gratify those foul lusts and impure desires, which they dignify with the name of pleasures. Oh my young friends, God forbid that, captivated by the specious name, you should ever commence *Men of pleasure*, to the degradation of your nature, the disgrace of your reason, the destruction of your present and eternal peace!—God forbid that you should ever act by so low a principle, as mere sense and appetite; and so far forget the dignity, the true honour, and great design of your present existence, as to suppose it possible that man can either attain true pleasure or true glory, by acting inconsistently with the laws of nature and of God! Be assured, whatever the libertine may boast, whatever the sons of sense and of passion may dare to avow, that pursuits like theirs can never be attended with the least solid satisfaction, can never bring real pleasure to rational and reflecting men;—can never advance his true happiness in this life, and much less in the next: because (and reason alone is sufficient to convince and satisfy every intelligent mind) those pursuits are in direct contradiction to his nature, to reason, to the laws of man, and to the laws of God.

And surely, were it not possible or easy to trace out and fully discover the rational and solid foundation on which those laws are laid; surely, my young friends, it would discover no small share of self-sufficiency and arrogance, to imagine that by a conduct diametrically opposite to all these, we could attain satisfaction and peace. The supposition implies an idea of wisdom superior to that, not only of the wisest lawgivers before us, but even of the great God himself. Yet, fully to trace out, and to show in the strongest colours, the inexpressible folly and weakness of the sensual and impure; of the *Men of plea-*

sure (well denominated by Solomon in the text, "Men void of understanding"); these men continually proclaim by their lives and conduct this glaring absurdity; and profess themselves in deeds, if not in words, wiser than the God who made them; wiser than all the wise of every age; nay, wiser even than nature and reason themselves! And shall these be denominated by a term of honourable import? Rather call them by their true appellation, "Slaves of sense, slaves of sin, and of sorrow; enemies to God, to themselves, and to society;" men who plunge their own souls and bodies, as well as those of their deluded fellow-creatures, into the bitterest distress and horror! those fellow-creatures who, seduced by their insidious arts, despoiled of innocence and reputation, are at length introduced into a mode of life, shocking to human nature in general, but to the female nature doubtless most peculiarly shocking! And then, as if in horrid mockery of their ruin and their woe, these poor abandoned wretches, victims of unrelenting lust, are, like the seducers, branded with the name of Pleasure also! "Women of Pleasure!" Oh shame to language and to sense! Call them too by their just appellation, "Women of infamy and woe; miserable fallen women; robbed of all which adorns and dignifies the sex; the most pitiable, as the most distressful, of all our sinful and suffering fellow-creatures!"

No, my young friends; you have, and will I trust, retain too much ingenuity and generous delicacy of soul, to sport with the miseries of poor profligates like these; or to suppose that they, whose hearts are almost bursting with anguish and distress, can administer the blessed cup of full and real delight to the hearts of others! It is as impossible, as for night and darkness to gladden and glorify with the mid-day brightness of the sun! from other sources, and from

other sentiments must flow those liberal and heart-felt joys, which vice can never share, and which misery and prostitution can never impart. Oh may the God, who is merciful to his creatures, who delighteth peculiarly in the service of those who early devote themselves to him, may he preserve you, my young friends, from the snares and delusious, peculiarly dangerous and peculiarly destructive, of unhappy ruined creatures like these! God almighty shield you by the spirit of grace and of purity, from the "house of the harlot, which is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death!"

Oh, my God! hear me for the young ones of the flock: for thy own honour's sake, for the sake of their present and future peace, for the sake of their parents, who, with aching anxious hearts tremble for the perils and temptations which on all sides surround them; nay, for the sake of virtue, religion, and our country, guard them, I beseech thee, from the flattering lips, and delusive enticements of the strange and evil woman! let not their hearts decline to her ways; let them not go astray in her paths: convince them of the shipwreck they must make, the loss, the miseries they must sustain from connections pernicious and fatal as these! Preserve them, by thy Holy Spirit, pure in mind and chaste in life; enable them to flee from and triumph over all youthful lusts; teach them continually to say with the faithful youth of old, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against my God?" And, like that youth, triumphant in virtue, may they be triumphant in its full and certain rewards; even in the invaluable satisfaction of a good and approving conscience; in the honour and reputation of this world: and in the present and eternal applause of Him, who hath pronounced the pure in heart blessed; because they shall see God! To whom, &c. Amen.

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SERMON XI.

ON IMPURITY.

PART II.

Hearken now therefore unto me, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways; go not astray in her paths: for she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.—PROVERBS vii. 24, &c.

WE are told, in an ancient fable, "That when Hercules, having arrived at maturity, was about to set forward in his career of glory; he was put to the trial by Virtue and by Pleasure: the latter endeavouring to win him by all the arts of seduction and flattery, while the other strove to counterwork by every means possible, the subtle and delusive arguments of her dangerous adversary. The youth happily made a prudent choice; for, rejecting the syren songs of Pleasure, he gave himself up to the guidance and direction of Virtue, and thus attained the immortality he sought.*

The fable, my young friends, is fraught with instruction to you especially; and the great moral which it means to inculcate is, "That whatever youth would wish to arrive at true honour and true happiness, must scorn with a noble fortitude, the

* See Ridley's "Choice of Hercules." Dodsley's Miscellanies, vol. iii. p. 6, Shenstone's, Works, vol. i. p. 235, 3d edit. and p. 215, foregoing.

allurements of the harlot Pleasure, and implicitly follow the counsels of true virtue."

It is this important lesson which I am endeavouring to impress upon your minds: and, while an evil nature, and an evil world, while allurements and temptations of various kinds are unhappily crowding around you; fain would I discharge the office of a faithful friend, and useful instructor, to caution you from the delusions of pleasure, to preserve you in the paths of virtue. And though perhaps, amidst the din and tumult of clamorous and importunate passions, the "still small voice" of friendly admonition may not be always heard with sufficient attention; yet, I am not without my hopes, that the truth, the reasonableness, the importance of what I urge, will have its due weight in a moment of reflection; and avail, through God's grace, to direct your choice so happily, that you will scorn the ruinous sophistry of false *pleasure;* that you will pursue, with unremitted ardour and diligence, the call of virtue; which is, indeed, the call of public and of private felicity.

Can there be wanting any further arguments in proof hereof, than the certain assurance we have had from the last discourse, "That the unrestrained indulgence to sensual pleasures in general, and to those of Impurity in particular, is in direct opposition to the laws of nature, of reason, of society, and of God?" For surely it is the height of folly and presumption to suppose, that man shall ever be able to reap the fruits of happiness from that soil, which God and nature have accursed with barrenness, and ordained to bring forth only thorns and briars!

Indeed, the practice of Impurity never can, never did or will produce aught but thorns and briars: *mischiefs* and miseries to others, and to ourselves! An additional argument to dissuade us from the practice: and one upon which I am now to enlarge, not

only in proof of the rectitude, wisdom, and propriety of those laws, human and divine, which prohibit this vice; but as an undeniable testimony, that they who pursue it are in truth, what Solomon has pronounced them, "Men utterly void of understanding;" men, who act in direct contradiction to the distinguishing principles and genuine characteristics of their nature; giving themselves up to the service of Impurity, so injurious to others, so debasing and pernicious to themselves.

Were I reasoning on the vice in general, or were not these Discourses, as intended for your benefit, particularly directed to you, my young friends, there are a variety of instances (some of them just hinted in the former sermons) wherein I should exemplify the injurious effects of this vice upon society; wherein I should show how prejudicial and offensive it is to many of the best and dearest interests of our fellow-creatures.* But, waving these, I would in the present case only appeal to your sensibility, to your ingenuity of heart. Youth is the season of generous sensibility; and the heart commonly feels, and speaks aright, before it is made callous by a vicious intercourse with the men, and the things of the world. To that heart then, would I appeal in behalf of the partner of your guilt. For, herein consists—and let it be noted well—one peculiar and aggravating circumstance of malignity in this vice, "that the perpetration of it involves the ruin of two souls!" You cannot be singly guilty! While then you are expecting criminal pleasure from the object of your passion, oh think that you are not only endangering your own salvation, but, with strange perverseness, subjecting to the same fearful hazard

* See the former Sermon, p. 254. In a set of Sermons on Concupiscence, I have treated this subject at large; and perhaps they may hereafter appear before the public.

that object also; and all for a momentary delight! Is this consistent with reason?—Is this agreeable to the genuine feelings of the human heart?

But, this object of your passion is either a poor profligate of the town; an innocent, seduced from virtue of your deceit; or, the wife of another. If the former, should she be, what many of these wretched ruined women become, a thorough profligate in heart and manners; should she be perfectly abandoned in principle, as in practice; oh, my young friends, can you be so devoid of delicacy, and of feeling, as to hope for satisfaction from any commerce with an object like this: who, having abjured all the peculiar and engaging excellencies of her sex, has nothing but rapine and plunder in view; and whose debauched and depraved mind is scarce less filthy and contagious than her miserably degraded and contaminated body?

But, if not one of these, if not thus depraved and utterly fallen, must not all the generous sentiments of your soul be affected, if haply you find amongst these daughters of distress, one that still retains some traces of native honour and of innocence? one in whose mind all the female grace is not utterly obliterated? one who feels the misery of her state, and would rejoice if it were possible to extricate herself from the destructive labyrinth? Must not her wretched case melt your bosom with commiseration? can your passions be so blind and so infatuated, as to expect gratification and delight from the arms of wretchedness and sorrow?—can your passions be so cruel and injurious, as to wish to plunge this poor unfortunate deeper and deeper in distress? You find her standing as it were on the fearful edge of a precipice into which, if she plunges, the fall is inevitable perdition: and have you, can you have so little humanity, as not only to refuse your helping hand to guide her

safely down from the danger; but even to lend that hand to precipitate her into utter ruin!* I appeal, my young friends, to your hearts; and while you preserve those hearts ingenuous, it is, it must be impossible, that either the abandoned or the pitable profligate should entice or engage you.

But, detesting connections with the very dregs of vice and of wretchedness, you pursue another plan, and make virtue and innocence your prey; Alas, my young friends (I speak as a man, and as one conscious of all the infirmities of our nature), alas! what a miserable pursuit, nay, and what a miserable triumph is this! Not to enlarge upon the extreme malediction which the ruin of innocence brings upon your own souls, of the scandalous breaches of promise, the repeated perjuries, and all the base and abominable arts which seduction employs; only reflect with yourselves what cruel injuries you are providing for the hapless object of your guilty passion, whom, for the short and sordid indulgence of a sensual appetite, you are not only depriving of virtue and reputation, the brightest jewels in the female crown; but, probably introducing, when that unrelenting appetite is satiated, into a life big with the most ruinous and distressful evils! You are preparing tortures and punishments greater than the most brutal persecution can devise, for her, whose greatest fault perhaps, assuredly whose greatest misfortune is, to have a heart most tenderly devoted to you! a heart whose affection and attachment (with a barbarity unknown to savages) you turn even to its own destruction, and are content to pierce with the severest anguish, can you but gratify your imperious and lustful desires! And is it possible—let reflection a moment stand still, and take a silent review,—is it

* See my account of the Rise, &c. of the Magdalen Charity, with the Sermons annexed.

possible that the soul can find repose and satisfaction in the contemplation of a deed like this? Rather, the guilty remembrance will for ever haunt and harrow up the soul: the wretched object, reduced to all the complicated miseries of prostitution, will surely, like a spectre, for ever be present to, and murder all repose of the mind! while her ruined innocence and virtue, her polluted body and defiled soul will continually plead, in the forum of conscience, "like angels, trumpet-tongued, against the deep damnation of the deed!" *

I dwell not, in this case, on the many accidental circumstances of distress which may, and do generally accompany it; particularly, the distracting anguish of the parents, for the ruin of their beloved child. But I would here again, my young friends, appeal to the sensibility of your souls, and ask whether it can be possible to reap from any gratification of sensual appetite, a sufficient reward for the remorse and the pangs of conscience, which must accompany the ruin of an innocent? of a virtuous and amiable fellow-creature; whom, even if you do not abandon to all the miseries of prostitution, yet, despoiled of honour, blasted in character, you have shut out from the virtuous and social intercourse of her sex. You have relaxed her principles; you have subjected her to the slow and pointing finger of infamy and scorn: you have made her days bitter;—nay, and most probably, have thus embittered all your own. For if the fatal connection prove burdensome and irksome to you, what miseries and uneasiness must attend its dissolution! But if otherwise, what acute and piercing anxieties, what painful reflections will you endure, on having reduced so low, dishonoured so much, distressed in so tender and irreparable a manner, an object amiable in herself,

* See Dodwell, vol. i. p. 243, &c.

and whom you find as truly deserving, as she is thoroughly possessed of your affection!

Thus considered in every view, the seductions of innocence can never be adequate to the end proposed: and highly injurious as it is, God almighty grant, my young friends, that you may for ever be preserved from its complicated guilt! a guilt, which as it is without remedy, so must its remorse perpetually distract the mind; and before we can be free from its pangs, we must either lull in stupefaction the voice of conscience, or in painful repentance mourn over the ruin we have wrought!

"But, hating the stews, and an enemy to seduction, your object of vicious pursuit is the married woman, the wife of another." Not, surely, because you think the crime of adultery less culpable than the former, less injurious to others, or more likely to answer your wishes; for of all the crimes whereof man can be guilty, adultery, in the esteem of every age and every place, has stood foremost; as a crime most noxious to the interests of society, most pregnant with dire and destructive consequences; and productive often of evils, even greater and more oppressive than murder itself. Hence, not only the laws of God, but those of men, in almost every kingdom of the world, have adjudged in many cases death, and in all cases the severest penalties to it. But I enlarge not on the guilt and atrociousness of his crime; meaning, as in the former instances, to apply to your hearts, my young friends, and to wish an answer from their sensibility, in testimony of the injury arising to others, and the little satisfaction to be expected for yourselves, from any adulterous connection!

Can there be a more equitable rule, or one which more immediately approves itself to our judgment, than that golden one, 'Of doing to others as we

wish they should do unto us!" Put the case then, that you was an husband, rich in the affection of a wife very dear and very valuable to you; and that a cruel invader came, stole away the affection of that wife, and alienated her from her love and her duty. Can you have any conception of a greater injury, or a severer misfortune? could you devise by any means more cruelly and horribly to torture and distress your neighbour? Nay, besides, the consequence will prove to distress even her also, whom you have thus seduced from duty and from peace, and whose mind must never more expect to enjoy the sweet serenity flowing from conscious virtue, and harmonious affections. Nor will your mind be less injured, or your end more amply attained; for what confidence can you have in a woman drawn aside from the plainest path of duty, and who has broken through the most solemn, and the most sacred of all ties? what security can you have of her future fidelity to you? and what unpleasing, if not destructive consequences, may you not reasonably expect from the injured and indignant husband; for, "jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance;"*

Thus it appears, that whatever mode of gratifying lustful passions men pursue, while they act in contradiction to the regular and appointed laws of nature, of society, and of God, they are, and ever must be, in a high degree injurious to their fellow-creatures, and particularly to the unhappy partners in their guilt!

Yet, not to others only; the vice of Impurity is peculiarly noxious and prejudicial to ourselves, to the mind, body, estate and reputation. There cannot be any need to expatiate much upon this subject; for, who knows not how much this vice degrades

* Prov. vi. 34.

the human soul, how much it extinguishes the light of truth and virtue, and sensualizes every rational faculty? Who knows not what inquietude, dissatisfaction, and restlessness of mind ever dwell with those who practise it? Who knows not how much it distresses the conscience, while it keeps the sinner in perpetual anxiety, and in a constant, uneasy, feverish state of concupiscence? Who knows not how many and pernicious vices it is necessarily connected with, or naturally leads to? Idleness, and the grossest intemperance are its never-failing attendants; pride and luxury dwell with it; broils and contentions, nay, and often murder itself (murder of little hapless innocents, sometimes before, often after their birth) together with perjury, falsehood, lying, dissembling, and filthy conversation of all kinds accompany it; a total annihilation of social and domestic affection is too often fatally connected with it; lust, predominant lust, frequently extinguishes the love of wife, of husband, of children, of friends, and of all things good and honourable: nay, and, what one would least expect, it is no uncommon thing to see avarice in company with uncleanness: the lustful can often spare, and even deny almost necessaries to their families and dependants; can wring from the poor, can filch from their neighbours, that they may have to lavish on the objects of their vice, and maintain their expensive wickedness!

But, besides its connection with this odious and enormous train of evils, who knows not, what fatal mischiefs it brings upon the reputation? Often utterly and irretrievably lost by it; and with that loss, commonly, every other evil is involved! Solomon, speaking of the impure man, remarks, that by his vicious pursuits, "A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away." Again, who knows not what immediate destruction this vice often

brings upon the estate, leading men to expences, which they are not able to answer; for "by means of an abandoned woman, says Solomon, a man is brought to a piece of bread;" and thus, too often, God knows, excited to illicit methods of procuring that, whereby he may answer the demands of his lusts; methods, which in numberless instances have proved the destruction of life: in the more exalted stations, by gloomy suicide and desperation, and in the lower by a public and ignominious death! as but too many of those parents with bleeding hearts can testify, who have cause to date the ruin of their sons, and their shameful ends, from the fatal intercourse they have had with those, whose house "is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death!"

Again, besides its sad effects on the mind, the reputation, the estate, and the life, who knows not with what horrid effects to the body this crime is attended? Evils, which God and nature have, as it were in just punishment, annexed to this flagrant transgression of their laws; evils, which frequently sap the foundation of the best constitutions; and, either in early youth consume the strength, and send the fading flowers devoted victims to the grave: or lay up a miserable store of disease and pain for the few and suffering days of future life; and evils, which, however severe, it would be well if the offenders only felt; but which, alas! are dreadfully communicated to the innocent and virtuous; and for which, full often, late posterity may curse the sinful indulgences of their contaminated progenitors!

But, though these consequences are injurious and fatal enough, yet what are they, what are all earthly and corporeal punishments, compared to the anguish which arises from an uneasy and distressed conscience? A conscience assured, that by a continuance in these vices all hopes of heaven are forfeited; that

God and his blessed Son are armed in judgment against the sinner; and that every attribute, as well of power as of mercy, is not only offended, but engaged to punish and condemn? And oh, how dismal the close of life! how miserable old age, but above all, how shocking and tremendous the death bed, to a conscience harrassed and oppressed like this! But, of the death of the profligate, we shall hereafter have a fearful view, when we have considered the vice of Gaming, another of the "false pleasures" which men pursue, and one attended with consequences no less pernicious than the vice of Impurity: with respect to which we observe, that however, in particular cases, station and fortune may enable men to avoid some of the evils before enumerated; yet these,—the uneasy conscience, the offended God, the future punishment—are consequences no man upon earth can avoid, if he be guilty of this crime; which, as it totally precludes all the means of moral improvement, degrading and debasing the mind, so does it wholly incapacitate for all the duties of religion.

For who will have the hardiness to pray to a God of purity, while openly transgressing his pure and holy laws? Who can read his word, which in every page flashes conviction and condemnation against all such offenders? Who in such a state can attend that holy communion, which is the commemoration of a spotless Saviour shedding his precious blood to redeem from all sin? and in what state must that soul be. Let those consider, who find it difficult enough to preserve the happy equipoise even with the strictest care, and in the most regular use of the means of grace! Let such consider in what state that soul must be, which, utterly neglectful of God and of all the means of grace, lives in the foul practice of a crime injurious to others, ruinous to ourselves,

in immediate contradiction to the laws of nature, of reason, of society, and of that great and just Judge of all mankind, who hath declared, that he "will render unto every man according to his works!"

I have surely said enough, my young friends! to engage not only your passions, but your reason, on the side of purity: and to make you more than ordinarily watchful, that you fall not into the delusions and deceits of the opposite vice. Indeed, all your vigilance and attention will be necessary, not only to combat its strong temptations from without, but its violent propensities from within. For as there is no vice perhaps to which our corrupt nature is more prone, so is there none which hath wrought greater ruin and distress amongst our fellow-creatures: "it hath cast down many mighty; yea, many strong men have been destroyed by it." Many (otherwise amiable and excellent) have through its fatal seduction, not only sunk their reputation, but involved their whole succeeding lives in the severest and most afflicting calamities;* an additional motive for caution and watchfulness, my young friends, with respect to yourselves. But surely, at the same time, my beloved, a motive, as strong on your parts, who, as parents or guardians, are interested in the welfare of youth, not to treat with too harsh severity accidental transgression in this kind. Consider human nature, consider yourselves; consider the strength and violence of human passions, and the force of temptations; and with a lenient mildness reprove and exhort, in order to guard and preserve from future deviations as much as you may. But do not, by an ill-timed austerity, drive the offender to extremes, which a judicious and affectionate treatment may probably prevent.

While conscious of the weakness of our common

* See the Anecdotes.

nature, I would thus urge one word in behalf of mutual forbearance, and Christian lenity one towards another; while I would wish to plead, frail and erring as we all are, for a little charity towards the frailties and errors of each other; mistake me not, my young friends, as if I was either apologizing for those transgressions, or thought them by any means unavoidable, and therefore to be excused. I am well assured—for we have had sufficient examples—that no necessity of sinning in this respect is laid upon our nature: Christ hath promised blessedness to the pure in heart, and pure in heart we may therefore certainly be. And though I would by no means treat accidental offence with severity, yet, believe me (my young friends) you will find it not only infinitely more happy, but more easy to yourselves, to persevere perfectly unblameable, and pure from this vice, than, having once broken the bounds of chastity to return again within them. Truth it is, through the grace of Jesus Christ, the grossest offenders may, on sincere repentance, find mercy and pardon: we have upon record, for the comfort of all those who have deviated from purity, examples of abundant mercy and forgiveness vouchsafed by the God of our hope, to the greatest sinners in this way; and it would ill become me more especially, to speak with severity on this head, who have been so far blest by the goodness of God, as to be instrumental in opening a house of mercy for, and in preaching continually the benign and comfortable doctrines of pardon and peace to those who truly repent, and utterly forsake the Impurities of their former life.*—Yet this, notwithstanding, I must be allowed to repeat and urge in the strongest manner, that as it is far more easy to prevent, than to cure, so is it far more eligible and happy: and on this account,

* See the note, p. 263.

ever solicitous for your best welfare, my young friends, and fully ascertained that by due care and discipline, a strict and inviolable chastity may be maintained (till it shall please God to grant you the full completion of your just and reasonable desires in honourable marriage); allow me in conclusion, just to suggest a few particulars, which, under the all-sufficient grace of God, will certainly enable you the better to combat, and to conquer.

To this end, the most important rule is, ever to maintain the most lively sense of religion on your souls; and particularly, a constant regard to the presence and all-seeing eye of the pure and holy God; a tender remembrance of the death and crucifixion of your Redeemer for the sinful pollutions of our nature; of your union with him, of the inhabitation of his Holy Spirit in your bodies as his temples; the many and striking passages in his holy word, declarative of his hatred to this vice, and of the certain punishment it will find, when the whoremonger, and adulterer, and all the unclean and defiled, shall be not only excluded from heaven, but cast into the lake, the smoke of whose torment ascendeth for ever and ever!

A lively sense of religion upon the soul, is scarce to be maintained without a regular and constant use of the means of grace; you will therefore be fervent and frequent in prayer; diligent in reading the sacred scriptures, and uniform in your attendance on the holy table of the Lord; which, you will find, from the necessary previous preparation, from the solemnity of the act, from the cautious sobriety of future conduct, and above all, from the plenteous supply of divine grace, of all the means most powerful to preserve you pure in heart and life!

To these religious means, the great moral ones, of strict and universal sobriety, of constant and in-

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dustrious employment, and of an habitual watchfulness and government over the outward senses, must necessarily be joined. The eye or ear must never be suffered, much less be habituated, to see or hear anything, which may be contrary to the laws of virtue, or tend to weaken its sacred and reverential restraints. You cannot preserve too cautiously that native modesty, which is, if not corrupted, congenial with us; and a strong barrier against vice: particularly, if it be aided by an improved delicacy of sentiment, a refinement of taste and manners, which will always render gross vice so unpleasing and painful, that we shall never suffer it to gain the ascendancy over us.

But temperance, industry, self-government, and the like, will be fruitless, and every rule and every caution frustrated, if you do not take especial heed, to avoid all those persons, places, and occasions of temptation, which are either calculated to seduce, or in your case likely to seduce and destroy your virtue. Wherever but a probability of so unhappy an effect may appear, it is your immediate duty, and your highest wisdom to retire: your greatest safety is in retreat, and your greatest danger consists in parlying with temptations. Fly them with precipitation, cautious and fearful of beginnings; and making it your study to avoid, as much as may be, all the occasions of evil. The cockatrice which may easily be crushed in the egg, will, if suffered to hatch and grow up, prove a poisonous serpent, hard to be destroyed.

Besides these rules, your own prudence and discretion will suggest more, and such as are immediately adapted to your peculiar state and circumstances. The discourses too, which I have before delivered to you, will suggest some others, and those of no small importance: and, if you conduct yourselves

by these, and rules like these, there is no doubt, my young friends, but you will escape the contagion of youthful lusts, and keep yourselves pure.

Happy shall I think myself, if any endeavours of mine shall conduce to this most important end; and let me entreat you most seriously and affectionately, to consider, that as no motive, but an earnest wish for your present and eternal well-being, can influence my heart in what I deliver to you; so you can never acquit yourselves to your own consciences, if you respect and despise what I offer. Nay more,—if you neglect and despise it, and act in contrariety to what I have advised, you never can be happy in this life, or happy in the next. For, take it, my young friends, as a closing truth on this occasion; "Purity and virtue are their own rewards;" and, were there neither a God, nor a future state, they would be the surest means of rendering us happy in ourselves, useful and honourable to the community, and a blessing to all those most nearly and tenderly interested in our welfare!—But, when there is a God, when there is a future state, the blessedness of which we can never share without this purity and holiness of heart and life; how are our obligations of duty and of interest heightened! and how can we expect to escape condemnation, if we neglect to cultivate and improve it!

God almighty grant, that you, and all of us, may labour so to purify our souls from all defilement, to act in such consistence with the laws of nature, of reason, of society, and of God; to be so cautious of injuring our neighbour in the slightest, much more in the most atrocious degree; and to maintain such self-reverence, such a wise and constant regard to the dignity and purity of our nature; that we may pass through this world in peace, and with the pleasing testimony of a good conscience, and be

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ready to receive our call to the next, with an humble but firm persuasion, that we shall see and enjoy the beatific vision of that God, in whole presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore! Amen.

ANECDOTES *on the foregoing subject.*

1. It has been remarked of Augustus Cæsar, that chastity was by no means his virtue; but if he cast his eye on a beautiful woman, though her husband were of the first quality in Rome, he would immediately send his officers to bring her to him, either by fair means or by force. The philosopher Athenodorus, who had formerly been preceptor to Tiberius, and was very intimate with Augustus, took the following method to reform this vice of the great man. For, when the emperor one day had sent a litter for a certain noble lady, of the house of the Camilli, the philosopher, fearing some disaster might ensue (her family being very popular, and highly respected at Rome), went before to the lady's palace; and acquainting the parties concerned with it, the husband boiling with rage, threatened to stab the messengers of the emperor, when they came. The prudent philosopher however appeased his resentment, and only desired a suit of the lady's apparel, which was granted him. He then put it on, and hiding his sword under his robes, entered the litter, personating the lady. The messenger knew no other, and carried him instantly to the emperor's apartment; who, heightened with desire, made haste to open the litter himself: when Athenodorus, suddenly drawing his sword, leaped forth upon him; saying, "Thus, mightest thou have been murdered. Wilt thou never leave a vice, attended so evidently with much danger? Jealousy and rage might have armed an husband, or substituted an assassin thus

disguised, instead of thy faithful friend; who might have laid hold of this opportunity to deprive the republic of so gracious a prince.—But I have taken care of thy life; do thou henceforth take warning." The emperor, equally frightened and surprised, testified himself pleased with the philosopher's stratagem; gave him ten talents of gold, thanking him for so seasonable a correction; and it is said that from that time he began to restrain his unlawful pleasures, and cultivate a life more decent, and suitable to his exalted character.

2. A young Italian nobleman fell in love with a duchess of singular beauty, but knew not how to make her sensible of it; at length chance gave him an opportunity beyond his expectation. One evening as he returned from hawking, he passed through the fields of the lady in question, bordering on the palace. The duke her husband and she were walking together as the young lord came by. The duke seeing his train, and what game they had been pursuing, asked him some questions concerning their sport, and being of an hospitable disposition, invited him into his palace to partake of a collation. He accepted the offer; and here commenced an acquaintance, which in time made way for an assignation between the duchess and him. Accordingly he was let into the gardens one night, and conducted privately to her chamber, where she was before-hand ready to receive him. After some compliments, "My lord," said the duchess, "you are obliged to my husband for this favour; who, as soon as you were gone from our house, the first time we saw you, gave you such commendations as made me conceive an immediate passion for you."—"And is it true, Madam?" replied the young Nobleman in astonishment? "then far be it from me to be so ungrateful to my friend." With that he resumed his

garments which he had begun to throw by, and instantly took his leave.

3. When a young fellow, who was just come from the play of Cleomenes, or the Spartan Hero, told Mr. Dryden the author, in raillery against the continency of his principal character, "If I had been alone with a lady, I should not have passed my time like your Spartan:"—"That may be, answered the bard with a very grave face; but, give me leave to tell you, sir, you are no hero."

4. But of all the instances we can meet with in reading or in life, where shall we find one so generous and honest, so noble and divine, as that of Joseph in holy writ? When his master had entrusted him so unreservedly, that (to speak in the emphatical manner of the scripture) "He knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat," the amiable youth was so unhappy as to appear irresistably beautiful to his mistress: but when this shameless woman proceeds to solicit him, how gallant, how glorious is his answer! "Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand: there is none greater in his house than I, neither hath he kept back anything from me, but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The same arguments which a base mind would have made to itself for perpetrating the evil; namely, free trust, full power, and immediate temptation, were to this brave, this gallant man, the greatest motives for his forbearing it. He could do it with Impunity from man; but he could not affront and presumptuously offend a just, a holy, and an avenging God.

5. When men of rank and figure pass away their lives in criminal pursuits and practices; in perpetually seeking the ruin of innocence, and distress,

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of unguarded virtue; they ought to consider, that thereby they render themselves far more vile and despicable than any innocent man can be, however low his birth, his station, or his fortunes. Title and ancestry render a good man more illustrious, but an ill one more contemptible;

> Thy father's merit sets thee up to view,
> And plants thee in the fairest point of light,
> To make thy Virtues or thy Faults conspicuous.
>
> CATO.

It is surely matter of wonder that these destroyers of innocence, though dead to all the higher sentiments of virtue and honour, are not restrained by compassion and humanity. To bring sorrow, confusion and infamy into a family; to wound the heart of a tender parent, and stain the life of a poor deluded young woman with a dishonour which can never be wiped off, are circumstances, one would think, sufficient to check the most violent passion, in a heart which has the least tincture of pity and good-nature. To enforce these general reflections, we add the following anecdote, taken from a French author, and which refers to the chevalier Bayard; a man of great valour, high reputation, and distinguished amongst his cotemporaries by the appellation of "The Knight without fear, and without reproach." Our knight, says he, was pretty much addicted to that most fashionable of all faults. One morning as he was dressing, he ordered his lacquey to bring him home in the evening some other victim of lawless passion. The fellow, wise and prompt to do evil, had, it seems, for some time addressed himself to an old gentlewoman of decayed fortune, who had a young maiden to her daughter, of very great beauty, and not yet sixteen years of age. The mother's extreme poverty, and the insinuations of this artful pander concerning the soft disposition and generosity of his

master, made her at length consent to deliver up her daughter. But many were the entreaties and representations of the mother, to gain her child's consent to an action, which she said she abhorred, even while she exhorted her to it: "But, my child, says she, can you see your mother die for hunger?" The virgin argued no longer, but bursting into tears, declared she would go anywhere. The lacquey conveyed her with great obsequiousness and secrecy to his master's lodgings, and placed her in a commodious apartment till he came home. The knight, at his return, was met by his lacquey (with that saucy familiarity, which vice never fails to inspire between ranks however unequal), who told him with a diabolical exultation, "She is as handsome as an angel, but the fool has wept, till her eyes are swelled and bloated; for she is a maiden and a gentlewoman." With that he conducted his master to the room where she was, and retired. The knight, when he saw her bathed in tears, said, in some surprise, "Don't you know, young woman, why you were brought hither?—The unhappy maid instantly fell on her knees, and with many interruptions of sighs and tears said to him, "Yes, sir, too well, alas! I know why I am brought hither: my mother, to get bread for her and myself has sent me: but would it might please heaven I could die, before I am added to the number of those miserable wretches who live without honour!" With this reflection, she wept anew, and beat her bosom. The knight, stepping from her, said, "I am not so abandoned, as to hurt your innocence against your will."—The novelty of the accident surprised him into virtue, and covering the young maid with a cloke, he led her to a relation's house, to whose care he recommended her for that night. The next morning he sent for her mother, and asked her if her daughter was the virtuous

creature she so amiably appeared to be; the mother assured him of her spotless purity, till at least the late period, when she delivered her up to his servant. "And are not you then, cried the knight, a wicked woman, to contrive the debauchery of your own child!" She held down her face with fear and shame, and in her confusion uttered some broken words concerning her poverty. "Far be it," said the Chevalier, "that you should relieve yourself from want by a much greater evil! Your daughter is a fine young creature; do you know of none that ever spoke of her for a wife?" The mother answered, "There is an honest man in our neighbourhood that loves her, who has often said he would marry her with £200." The knight ordered his man to reckon out that sum, with an addition of fifty to buy the bride clothes, and fifty more as an help to the mother. I appeal to all the libertines in town, whether the possession of mercenary beauty could give half the pleasure that this young gentleman enjoyed, in the reflection of having relieved a miserable parent from guilt and poverty, an innocent virgin from public shame and ruin, and bestowing a virtuous wife upon an honest man.* How noble an example is this to every generous mind, and how consonant to the character of that "pure religion," which we are told "consists in visiting the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."

6. A Lacedemonian, whose affairs obliged him to go out of Greece, fell into some company, who were very inquisitive about the constitution of Sparta. One of them, among other particulars, desired to know what was the punishment for adulterers? The Spartan readily replied, That they had no adulterers

* For some fine remarks suited to the subject, see the *Guardian*, no, 17.

in Lacedemon. But upon the querist persisting to know in what manner he believed an adulterer would be punished, who should happen to be detected, "I believe," says the Spartan, "our Senate would order the criminal to give the person he had injured a bull, with a neck long enough to stand upon the continent of Greece, and drink out of a river in Peloponnesus." Upon the inquisitive gentleman's seeming to apprehend, that it was absolutely impossible to find such a bull. "Sir," says the Spartan, "give me leave to tell you, that it is full as impossible to find an adulterer in Lacedemon."

7. Henry the IVth of France was unquestionably one of the greatest characters ancient or modern which history produces, whether we consider the quallities of his body or mind; yet an attachment to women, and an insatiable indulgence of his passions, not only led him into a thousand actions, which tarnished his glory, but entirely marred all the peace of his life. It would be endless to quote instances. The admirable memoirs of his great friend and minister Sully, are full of them; they are indeed one continued admonition to the reflecting mind against the vices of Impurity; and nothing can be more melancholy than to think, that a man, whose humanity, generosity, and courage were unequalled; who, in the words of Sully, "loved his subjects as a father, and the whole state, as the head of a family;" who was candid, sincere, grateful, compassionate, generous, wise, penetrating; and in short, endowed with every great and amiable quality, should be so attached to women and to lust, as to render himself despicable, his wife and family miserable, and as it seems most probable, his latter end horribly fearful.*

* He was stabbed in his coach by Ravaillac, who, as there were strong reasons to suspect, was instigated to the horrid deed by one of the king's mistresses.

8. The learned Selden, some few days before his death, sent for Archbishop Usher and Dr. Langbraine. Amongst other matters he told them, that he had surveyed most of the learning that was amongst the sons of men; that his study was filled with books and manuscripts, on various subjects; yet he could not at that time recollect any passage, out of infinite books and papers, whereon he could rest his soul, save out of the sacred scriptures; wherein the most remarkable passage which lay most upon his spirits was this—"The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." See *Titus* ii. 11—14.

9. The story which is told of the foundation of the Monastery of La Trappe, is remarkable and well attested: the order is one of the most austere and self-denying imaginable. Its founder was M. Bouthillier de Rance, a man of pleasure and gallantry, who was converted into the deepest gloom of devotion by the following shocking incident. His affairs had obliged him to absent himself for some time from a lady, with whom he had lived in the connections of unbridled and successful passion. At his return to Paris, he purposed to surprise her agreeably, and at the same time to satisfy his own impatient desire of seeing her, by going directly and without ceremony to her apartment by a back stair, with which he was but too well acquainted. But, think of the spectacle which presented itself to him on his entrance into the chamber!—his mistress dead! dead of the

small-pox! disfigured beyond expression! a loathsome mass of putrefied matter; and the surgeon standing by, separating the head from the body, because the coffin had been made too short!—He stood for a moment motionless in amazement, and filled with horror; then retired from the world, and shut himself up in the Convent of La Trappe; where he passed the sad residue of his days, in the most cruelly severe and disconsolate devotion.

10. We will close these anecdotes with a part of a letter inserted in the *Guardian* (no. 123) written in the character of a mother to one in high rank, who had seduced and abused her daughter, and which gives a very lively idea of the affliction which a good parent must suffer on so melancholy an occasion.

"My Lord,

Last night I discovered the injury you have done to my daughter. Heaven knows how long and piercing a torment that short-lived shameful Pleasure of yours must bring upon me! upon me, from whom you never received any offence! This considerration alone should have deterred a noble mind from so base and ungenerous an act. But alas! what is all the grief that must be my share, in comparison of that, with which you have requited her, by whom you have been obliged? Loss of a good name, anguish of heart, shame and infamy, must inevitably fall upon her, unless she gets over them by what is much worse open impudence, professed lewdness and abandoned prostitution! These are the returns you have made to her, for putting in your power all her livelihood and dependance, her virtue and reputation. O my Lord, should my son have practised the like on one of your daughters!—I know you swell with indignation at the very mention of it, and would think he deserved a thousand deaths,

should he make such an attempt upon the honour of your family. It is well, my lord:—and is then the the honour of your daughter (whom still, though it had been violated, you might have maintained in plenty, and even luxury) of greater moment to her, than to my daughter hers, whose only sustenance it was? And must my son, void of all the advantages of a generous education, must he, I say, consider; and may your lordship be excused from all reflection?—Eternal contumely attend that guilty title, which claims exemption from thought, and arrogates to its wearer the prerogative of brutes! Ever cursed be its false lustre, which could dazzle my poor daughter to her undoing! Was it for this, that the exalted merits and godlike virtues of your great ancestor were honoured with a coronet, that it might be a pander to his posterity, and confer a privilege of dishonouring the innocent and defenceless? At this rate, the laws of rewards should be inverted, and he who is generous and good should be made a beggar and a slave; that industry and honest diligence may keep his posterity unspotted, and preserve them from ruining virgins, and making whole families unhappy. Wrechedness is now become my never-failing portion, &c. Thus have I given some vent to my sorrow, nor fear I to awaken you to repentance, so that your sin may be forgiven.

My Lord,

Your conscience will help you to my name."

SERMON XII.

ON INTEMPERANCE.

PART I.

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.—1 CORINTHIANS ix. 25.

YOUR enemies from without, my young friends, are not the only ones you have to dread: you carry those within, from which far the greatest danger is to be suspected, and against which, consequently, the strictest guard is to be kept. Everything is to be feared from a corrupt nature, continually prompting strong and evil passions to illicit gratifications. If, by divine grace, you can maintain the due government over these; if you can support reason in her empire, and preserve to the soul its due dominion over the body; you will more easily persevere in a course of virtue; you will more easily resist the outward seductions of the world and the devil. In this government of the passions; by maintaining this superiority of the soul over the body, you will conquer that despicable and destructive vice of *Intemperance*, the next of those "false pleasures," which I am to delevope; and which will be best done by stating at large the nature of the contrary virtue, so essentially necessary to your right conduct, so immediately productive of your true felicity. For, if you "strive for the mastery," if you wish to attain the great end of life; if you wish to depart hence with self-applause, and to obtain the future crown, you

must be "*temperate* in all things*;" carefully abstaining from the improper use of everything which tends to diminish or destroy the due government of yourself, and to weaken that dominion over your passions, which every wise man should endeavour to maintain.

This is the general notion of temperance: but it may be proper to show more largely, wherein temperance is more especially placed; what are the particulars wherein it is generally transgressed; what are the bad consequences of such transgression; and what are the proper rules to be observed in order to avoid such transgression.

Now, as *temperance* in general consists, "in maintaining the dominion of reason our sense, of soul over body;" so is it particularly conversant in regulating and duly proportioning the measure of sleep, foot, meat and drink, and the other corporeal and merely animal gratifications.† With respect to the measure of these, it is not easy, indeed it is not possible, to lay down any certain and universal rule; since men's constitutions differ so much from each other, and from themselves at different times, that what would be excess in one, might perhaps be abstinence in another; and what would be abstinence in one, might be excess in another. But though this be the case, there are criterions enough whereby you may be enabled to judge sufficiently in your own case, and to determine clearly concerning the degree of excess or defect in any of the above particulars.

In the first place, a general reflection on the end for which these bodily gaatifications are designed, will serve as an invariable rule to direct your conduct: when you consider that they are designed only to

* Εγκρατη

† ——— Γαστρος υπνω, λαγνειηατε,
Και Θυμω. See the *Golden Verses* of Pythagoras.

support and refresh the body, to keep it in due tone and harmony, that it may properly obey the commands of the soul, and as a faithful servant, well discharge those offices which reason enjoins; you will easily see that every excess, incapacitating for this end, and destroying this regular subordination, is wrong and criminal. But when you consider more particularly the things above specified, whereby temperance is exceeded, you will more easily judge concerning that proportion of each which you are to allow yourself.

And first with respect to sleep; when you reflect that it is an immediate demand of animal nature absolutely necessary, it is true, to the support of that nature, but at the same reducing it to a state of perfect inactivity, to an entire deprivation of all the functions of reason, the lowest of all animal gratifications, and one which absolutely strikes out from the short span of our life, all the moments which are consumed in it; when you consider sleep in this true light, you will never indulge to it more than you find necessary from your constitution, to the support and refreshment of your body.

As the time of youth is the only time for improvement, every precious hour of this short period should be husbanded with the most sacred care. But how many of those precious hours will you lose, if, indulging to this mean gratification, you waste the early and most important part of the day in indolence and slumber, nor rise on the first occasion to apply with renewed vigour of mind to those studies or occupations which you have in pursuit? Be assured, you will find, my young friends, that early rising is one of the surest methods to improve your minds, your virtue, and your health: your minds, as in those prime hours of silence and retirement, you will not only forestall the business of the day; but

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gaining many hours, which others indolently consume in bed, will be enabled to lay up a treasure of knowledge for your future lives: your virtue; as the animal powers will thus be weakened; as from increase of knowledge, increase of goodness will naturally spring; and as the grace of heaven will certainly fall upon, and bless your well-meant endeavours, as well as hear those petitions which I suppose you, my dear young friends, to put up to him in the stillness of the morning, before you enter on any worldly occupations: a practice, which, I trust, you will never omit; for, believe me, that practice will be found in a wonderful manner to bless and succeed your undertakings, and to render your minds serene and cheerful through the following day. Nor will early rising be found less conducive to your health: it is with sleep as with all other animal enjoyments; where one is hurt by taking too little, thousands are hurt by taking too much: where one man is hurt by abstinence, thousands are slain by excess. A much less quantity of sleep than is genenerally supposed, suffices to support and refresh nature; and the taking too much of this, as in the case of food, not only overloads the body, but of consequence dulls and flattens the mind; and renders a man, if I may so say, half asleep all the time he is awake. Take a moderate proportion sufficient to your refreshment, and you will rise cheerful, vigorous, and alive; alert and active, fit for business, and well inclined to it. It is unquestionable in this, as in all other bodily gratifications, that the more we indulge it, the more we may; that it gains a dominion over us, in proportion to the power we give it; till at length, if we are so wretched as to submit ourselves to such a drowsy master, it will not only rule over us for the night, but bury us in its oblivious infatuation a great part of the day. Hence that va-

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cancy and stupor, discernible in some, especially after full feeding; that luxurious indulgence in sleep after such meals;—a practice as prejudicial to health, as it is contrary to temperance; the consequence, certainly, of ill custom and downright indolence, which can have nothing to plead or urge in its defence. Beware, my young friends, of ill customs, not of this only, but of every kind; they creep upon us insidiously by slow degrees; and having once gained a power over us, are with the extremest difficulty broken and conquered. Make it your rule therefore, with respect to sleep to indulge in it no more than is absolutely requisite for your support and refreshment: consider, while you give way to the stealing softness, the thief of your time and pleasure, you sacrifice both the duties and enjoyments of your being. Make it your fixed practice to rise early in the morning, and when arisen, to employ yourself actively and industriously; to be awake and alive; not drowsy and indolent throughout the day: always remembering that this is the way to the greatest improvements and advantages; while the sluggard, who cries, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." shall be clothed with rags: his poverty shall come upon him as one that travelleth, his want as an armed man.

It is with virtues as with vices; as one vice generally brings on, and leads to another, so the right discharge of one virtue capacitates for, and introduces the practice of another. He who is moderate in his use of *sleep*, will certainly be so in his use of *food*; because excess in the latter will render it impossible to be abstemious in the former.

The great and good Creator of the world, who has given us an infinite variety of meats and drinks, to support our frail bodies, has been pleased to an-

nex to the use of those meats and drinks a certain degree of satisfaction: what is necessary to our support, he has rendered pleasing in the use; from whence we are evidently taught, that we may certainly consult a degree of satisfaction in our food, and are not bound by the laws of strictest temperance to deny ourselves all kinds of gratification in it. But though this be the case, temperance by all means enjoins the strictest watchfulness, lest we exceed this allowed satisfaction: continually reminding us of the great and chief end for which we are called to eat and drink; namely, the support and refreshment of our body, in order to maintain the just dominion of our souls. Whenever we eat or drink more than is sufficient to this end,—to the heating our bodies, the endangering our health, the inflaming our passions, and the losing the strict and sober government of ourselves; let the quantity be what it may, more or less, we then are guilty of the vice of *Intemperance.* A vice, my young friends, which you are peculiarly to avoid: the very slightest indulgences in it are dangerous; the least temptations to it are cautiously to be guarded against; for it is most destructive; pregnant with the direst consequences to health, fortune, reputation, purity, peace and felicity of every kind.

Need you be told how prejudicial it is to health, when you reflect that almost all the diseases, or at least those of the most dangerous and painful kind, which afflict the human race, arise from Intemperance; either our own, or that of our parents entailed upon us? See in the horrid train of this pernicious monster, burning fever, joint-torturing gout, half-dead palsy, swollen dropsy, panting asthma, full-gorged apoplexy, and a thousand other disorders of fearful name! disorders, sufficient to render the least approach to Intemperance formidable; sufficient

to recommend the contrary virtue: whose perpetual attendants are self-possession, cheerfulness and health; which, for the most part, extends life to the longest span; but which, if life (amidst the thousand and ten thousand evils that surround it) cannot be extended to the longest span, yet enables men truly to enjoy life while they exist, and preserves them from its greatest evils. It is, however, remarkable, and a great argument on the side of temperance, that those who have most excelled in this virtue have generally attained the greatest age; and we are told of Socrates, as a further argument for temperance, that notwithstanding he resided in Athens, during the great and devouring plague there, yet he never caught the least infection: an event unanimously ascribed to that uninterrupted temperance for which he was remarkable.

Again, how fatal are the effects of Intemperance to men's fortune! They who are slaves to this vice, not only give the knavish and the crafty the most dangerous advantages over them in their temporal affairs, but are absolutely incapacitated from a right management of those affairs. Too often, indeed, they grow wholly neglectful of them; little regarding anything beside, if they can dissipate their hours in the wretched company of those who are trifling, worthless, and inconsiderate as themselves: while thus their unhappy families are suffered to languish in poverty and distress, and are often with them brought to the lowest misery. "For the drunkard and the glutton," says the wise man, "shall come to poverty."

What a brand too doth this vice fix upon the reputation! Have you not, my young friends, the utmost abhorrence of a man, whose known character is that of a glutton or a drunkard? A character like this must necessarily be despised: for who will, who

can repose any confidence in such persons, especially where secrecy is concerned? Who knows not that they who are guilty of this vice are disposed to various crimes, and preparing for the greatest; for when men's reason is lost, of what are they not capable? Who knows not, that they who practise the vilest crimes,—robbers, murderers, and other such public offenders, generally heat and prepare themselves by excess of drinking, for the perpetration of their guilt? finding it often necessary to make themselves mad, before they can have hardiness to commit their flagitious enormities; to a fellowship wherein the unwary are but too frequently drawn by a fellowship with them in their intemperate drinkings and excess. But further, where persons are not led to such gross evils, who knows not how despicable men become by this vice, in the sight of all sober people? who knows not what a wretched and contemptible figure they make, with stupid staring eyes, and muddled countenance; so contemptible, that could a drunkard once see himself in that situation, he could not fail, one would imagine, to despise himself, and to avoid as a scorpion the excess which so disguises, degrades, destroys all the rational in him? Could he too, at the same time, hear the absurd, the weak, the offensive, the lewd, the immoral and profane follies which fall from his stammering tongue, he would forswear a vice, which, beyond all others, unmans and exposes to scorn. The Spartans, my young friends, sensible of the numberless evils which spring from Intemperance, used to inculcate sobriety on their children, by exposing to their notice the behaviour of their slaves, in a drunken fit, frequently making them eye-witnesses of all their madness and absurdities, and at length, of the perfect senselessness which the immoderate draught occasioned; not doubting but the vile change, would be so fixed in

the minds of its beholders, as to render them utterly averse from its cause: and we may reasonably conclude that from hence, from the frequency of so sad and humiliating a sight, the children of those persons, who have been accustomed thus to disguise themselves, have often proved remarkably sober. Avoiding in their riper years their parents' crime, from that utter detestation of it which they contracted in their earlier years. Would to God, my young friends, you may always thus draw good from evil! Would to God, whenever you behold this, or any other deformed appearance of vice, you may be struck with abhorrence at the sight, and engaged to a nearer and more affectionate love of virtue!

But I have not done with the ill consequences of the vice of Intemperance: it is the parent of lust, as well as the murderer of reason. For who can doubt of the worst sensual gratifications following it with those, whose passions are all on fire, and whose reason lies buried in the profoundest oblivion? And can that be a man, a rational, an immortal creature; much more, can that be a Christian, who thus knowingly drowns all that is right and good in his soul, and voluntarily unbars the gates to admit his worst and most destructive enemies?—But on this head we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter.

Let me observe again, that not only the health, the fortune, the reputation, the chastity, but all the peace of that man's mind must necessarily be destroyed, who is a slave to this vice. Even in the most jovial hours, contentions and quarrels are apt to arise; "For, who hath woe, who hath sorrow, who hath contentions, who hath babblings, who hath wounds without cause, who hath redness of eyes, ?—They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."*—But these are not their

* Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.

only woes; for what can be more pitiable than a man given up to the severity of his own reproaches on account of his excesses, and of the evil consequences which he cannot help fearing from them? What peace of mind can such a man enjoy?—And, worn out with Intemperance and disease, incapable any longer to relish the boon companion and the circling glass; deserted by his summer friends; unsupported by any inward consolation; how peevish, how pitiable, how deplorably wretched must be the decline of such a man's life!

Yet neither is this the worst; for all who are unhappily connected with such a one, must in a measure also feel his evils, and be deprived of peace. Who can paint in colours sufficiently affecting, the distressful situation of a tender wife, and the affectionate family? The afflicted wife, waiting with anxious sorrow, and a thousand reasonable and foreboding apprehensions, the return of an husband, deformed with Intemperance, and bringing to his home,—not the cheerful endearments of the father—the husband—the companion—the friend; but the foul, the litigious, or the stupid debasement of the brute! O shame to human nature, to virtue, to tenderness and love! And is it thus men destroy the sweetness of domestic felicity, and drive themsetves from the enjoyment of that best earthly paradise, their home? Oh, my young friends, when I consider you, as rising into life; when I contemplate those who now are interested in your good conduct; those who will hearafter be connected with you by the tenderest and most endearing tie, and who, with sweet affection, will depend on you for the best and choicest comforts of human life; how I tremble, lest the seductions of false pleasure should allure and ensnare you! lest you should forfeit the expectations formed of you! lest cruel to yourselves, as well as

unkind to others, you should blast the fair prospects of felicity, which innocence and virtue present to your view!

But do not so, my young friends! recollect, that with the happiness of others your own is involved; that if you deviate from the cheerful, comfortable paths of temperance, you cannot suffer alone; your vices will become the affliction of others, and of those perhaps most dear to you. Let therefore, to the call of private happiness, that of social also be united; and with these, let the voice of religion join, to dissuade you from the least approaches to Intemperance; which, beside all the destructive consequences we have just enumerated, is attended with this further ill consequence, that it totally incapacitates for all the duties, and renders a man's whole life and spirit totally inconsistent with the life and spirit, of the religion of Jesus. That religion "teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; to live soberly; to take heed that we be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;" and in short, lays its professors under the most indispensable obligations to preserve an absolute dominion of the soul over the body, and to prepare themselves by strict temperance, and purity of heart and life, for that kingdom, where eating and drinking will no longer be necessary to our existence; but where, freed from the incumbrance of these mortal tabernacles, we shall be as the angels of God.

But of our obligations to this duty, with such rules as may be useful to preserve us in the practice of it, we will speak in the next: rules which, I cannot doubt, will be acceptable to you, my young friends, and carefully observed by you. For, though I am earnestly desirous to show you your duty in every particular, to point out the dangers you have to encounter. and to paint in the strongest colours

the deformity of those vices, which are most likely to beset, and to prove destructive to you; yet I cannot persuade myself that there can be anything in the beastly detestable practices I have attempted to expose, any allurement or temptation in the mere indulgence of an animal palate, sufficient to counterbalance the loss of all those mighty pleasures, which sobriety, temperance, and constant possession of the mind afford; sufficient to counterbalance the loss of reason, the loss of health, the loss of fortune, the loss of peace and serenity of conscience, the loss of domestic felicity,—and, what is the greatest loss, the fearful consequence of all these—the loss of heaven! For, "Be not deceived," says the sacred writer, "Neither the sensual nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God."*

Are not all these losses (the certain issue, be assured, of an intemperate course) sufficient to warn you in your youth from the least approaches to *Intemperance;* sufficient to render you most scrupulously exact in your observance of the nicest rules of sobriety? If they are not, let me just add in conclusion, that this vice, if once indulged, is of so peculiarly ruinous a nature, that it holds fast by a man more remarkably tenacious than any other; insomuch, that though converts from every other vice are frequent, yet such are the effects of Intemperance upon the mind, so doth it stupify and deaden all the rational faculties; such a peculiar and immediate tendency hath it to harden the heart, to render callous to every good impression, or, as the wise man expresses it, "to take away the heart;" that very few examples of reformation from this vice have been found: men habituated to it, know not how to forsake it, but gradually grow worse till disease incapacitates, or death finishes their wretchedness.

* 1 Cor. vi. 10.

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What a consideration, my young friends, to urge your strictest guard against Intemperance! which, levelling you with the meanest and the lowest of the human race, making you the wretched companions of the most illiterate and most abandoned of your species; will rob you of all that personal elegance so amiable and so engaging in youth; will deprive you of the sweetest pleasures of that sweetest season of your life; and cause you to lament in age, in ignorance and disease, the unthrifty and improvident waste of a period, which can never be too much valued while possessed, which can never be too much deplored, when passed unimproved.

May the gracious Father of heaven who gives you this period, and every other good gift, cause you to enjoy all its innocent and exquisite gratifications! May his almighty grace enable you duly to improve it to the great increase of your knowledge, your wisdom, your virtue! May he, of his unspeakable mercy in Christ Jesus, preserve you from every temptation dangerous to your innocence; and enable you so to persevere in the paths of pleasantness and peace, that you may afford the fullest satisfaction and the highest comfort to all who love you; and reap in your own peaceful and serene bosoms, a full, a triumphant reward here, exquisite foretaste of one infinitely more triumphant hereafter! AMEN.

SERMON XII.

ON INTEMPERANCE.

PART II.

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.—1 CORINTHIANS ix. 25.

I Cannot suppose, my young friends—let me still continue the voice of friendly exhortation to you—that any young man of good principles sets out with any other purpose than that which is truly commendable, of striving for, and earnestly wishing to obtain, the mastery. I cannot but suppose, that you all aim at, and will use your utmost endeavours to attain that high, that glorious prize of your calling, a religious and a happy life here, certain introduction to one eternally happy hereafter.

It is not to be imagined,—you yourselves can never conceive, that such a prize, the greatest possible, can be attained, without much care and attention. What is there in life, either great or good which the hand of supineness and negligence will ever grasp? It is to unwearied and assiduous efforts, it is to the toil of virtue, and the unfainting labour of perseverance, that success and honour hold forth their glorious rewards. And if this be the case in worldly matters, in things of the least consequence, how much more so, do ye suppose it must be the case, with things of the highest moment—with the unutterable glories of eternity? Let not the thought discourage you. In the pursuit of worldly good, difficulties generally stimulate the generous mind

to greater activity; pursuits of easy attainment are scorned and neglected. Though the path to glory and honour seem steep and rugged (to everlasting glory, I mean, and immortal honour); yet, through the goodness of Him, who sits the great proposer and spectator of the struggle, the way is strewed with variety of delights; and it is the peculiar praise of religion and virtue, that their strictest discipline is accompanied with the truest pleasure; and that they will render the combat delightful to all those, who have courage enough to enter with their whole hearts into it.

This in particular is the case with that amiable virtue of *temperance*, which we endeavoured to recommend in a former Sermon, and without which, it is as fruitless for you to hope for the prize of an heavenly crown, as for those who contended in the olympic races and combats of old, for an earthly one. "Everyone that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

Temperance is the preservation of the dominion of soul over sense, of reason over passion: it is the due government of ourselves; and the want of it involves a number of evils, which utterly mar the peace, and destroy all the prospects of happy and successful life. It prejudices the health, the fortune, the conscience: it robs of personal elegance and of domestic felicity; but, what is worst of all, it spoils us of our chief prerogative, degrades our reason, and renders us utterly incapable of the offices of religion. This hath been fully shown; and is not this sufficient to convince us of the high obligations we are under to cultivate this virtue, if we wish to obtain the prize; if we wish to be happy ourselves, and to render happy those who are in any degree connected with us.

For, suffer not, my young friends, little narrow

sentiments of selfish, solitary happiness to contract your hearts, and bound your prospects within yourselves. Enlarge your minds, expand your ideas: you are not born for yourselves; you cannot live for yourselves, if you mean to live virtuously and religiously: you must fill up a part in the great social world, and filling it up with propriety, will doubly bless yourselves by blessing others. Parents now are interested in your welfare: in a short period perhaps the tender names of wife and children, and all the dear connections of domestic life, will have a mighty concern in your behaviour. You cannot be wretched, but they must partake of your wretchedness: you cannot, your good hearts will not suffer you to be happy alone; they will, they must bask in the sunshine of all your felicity. See then how amiably, in this respect also, self-love unites with social; and both, in friendly alliance, unite to set forth the obligations you are under to be "temperate in all things."

But further still, with self-love, and with social, the public voice unites; for we showed abundantly, in the last Sermon, that the intemperate man is not only an enemy to himself, and to those immediately related to him, but he is an enemy to the community; in various respects an enemy; not only as neglecting to fill up properly the department in life assigned him; but as frequently involving others in great difficulties and distresses by his negligence and vices, and very often becoming, in an higher degree, a pest and a nuisance to society. So that, if you mean to fulfil your duty to society; if you mean to be regarded and respected amongst your fellow-creatures; you are under the highest obligation to be temperate in all things.

But there are still greater obligations than these. It is true the wisdom and goodness of God has so

admirably concerted the plan of human affairs, that a man must necessarily fulfil the highest duties, and act with the immediate approbation of his God, who does well to himself, to his relations, to mankind in general. A consideration, which should infinitely endear our God to us, who, out of his inexpressible mercy, creating us for perfect happiness, demands nothing as a service, but what tends to that happiness.

It is in this view he expects that we be temperate in all things; carefully abstaining from every excess in all our animal gratifications, which may render us unfit for the services of reason and religion; which may degrade us from rational to brutal. His great, his benevolent purpose is, to raise us from human to divine, from rational to angelic. Of all merely-human virtues, temperance is best calculated to serve this important purpose; it preserves the due dignity of the soul over the body; it preserves reason on her throne, and keeps the subject passions in obedience at her feet. It gives tranquillity to the mind, and keeps the conscience in peaceful serenity. Defecated and clear from all the obstructing clouds and fumes of irregular indulgences, the soul sees around her, and soars aloft on the wings of sublime contemplation. Pure devotion wings her ardours to heaven, and all the virtues and graces of divine religion attend in harmony on the soul, and present her with the sweetest foretaste of those celestial pleasures, which corrupted passions shall never defile, which irregular desires shall never interrupt. Temperance is the virtue of angels, it makes man angelic. Angels are ever blessed, because their spirits are ever pure: would man endeavour through divine grace to preserve that purity of spirit, according to the divine promise, he would ever see God: he would enjoy the continual presence, and affectionate contempla-

tion of his greatness and his love; like another Enoch, he would walk with God here, and like him assuredly be translated to walk with him eternally.

Thus religion lays us under the highest obligation, even by motives drawn from private happiness, to cultivate the virtue of temperance. But further still, when we consider the obligations of duty and gratitude to God, how forcible are they? Hath not the apostle told us,—with awakening truth told us, that "we are not our own," that we have been "bought with a price;" a price, how inestimably great! passing all account, exceeding all value: for what can be put into the balance, what in earth or heaven can we compare with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the only begotten and beloved of the Father!

In this view, what conclusion so reasonable, I will say more, what conclusion more indispensably obligatory, than that of the apostle, "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's*." God's by right of creation; still more so, by that high price of redemption, which his blessed son paid both in body and in spirit for you. Will you, then, by Intemperance and disorder, degrade and defile that body, pollute and destroy that soul, for which the blessed Jesus,—author of all mercy, God of all love,—gave his body to torment and suffering, "his back to the smiters, and his cheek to those who plucked off the hair:" for which the blessed Jesus gave his soul to sorrow, "exceeding sorrow,—sorrow even unto death; despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?" Oh, my young friends, if there is anything ingenuous in human nature, if there are any motives or arguments, which can influence and persuade the human heart; surely you have them all,

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

in the condescension of Jesus Christ, the son of God, the King of glory; his matchless condescension for your sakes, and for your salvation. Love, gratitude, duty, interest, all combine to enforce the apostle's conclusion, grounded on the justest principles; all combine to advise, to exhort, to command, that you "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.".

But, my young friends, let us mark well the expression, "Therefore glorify God." Great and awful being! whose creative fiat gave existence to this sublunary world! whose tremendous frown can in a moment give it to destruction! Thou who, consummate in bliss, art from eternity to eternity the same, uncontrollably great, unchangeably happy! Eternal sovereign! before whose throne all the hierarchies of heaven fall down, and confess themselves nothing in thy sight! Can it be possible that we, whose dwellings are in houses of clay; who are as easily crushed before thee as the feeblest moth; whose days are vanity, and whose best actions are weakness and sin; can it be possible, great GOD! that we can glorify thee? that our frail bodies, or our imperfect souls can bring augmentation to thy honour, or by any means increase the riches of thy glory?—We are humble to the dust by the solemn information; we will believe it, because thy word of truth hath said it; we will believe it, because thou hast given us undeniable proof that out welfare is dear to thee, that thy glory is indeed concerned in the salvation of mankind; for thou hast given thy son to purchase that salvation! thou wilt not then, O gracious giver of all good gifts! thou wilt not withhold thy grace, but enable us to act worthy the high, the ennobling motive; wilt enable us to look to thy glory in all our actions, and to make it the grand, the leading principle of our lives!

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No, my young friends, God will not withhold his grace from you, if you ask it sincerely for his dear Son's sake: he who gave the greater, will never refuse the less gift: "He who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Give us his grace more especially, when we ask it with so laudable an intention, as thereby to be empowered to walk worthy our high vocation; to glorify God in our body and in our spirit?

To the other motives, therefore, which we have urged, let this peculiarly be added; the lively, the honourable, the invigorating motive, "that frail as we are, and corrupted by sin, yet, by asserting the dignity of our nature, yet, by preserving our bodies temperate and pure, as the temples of the living God; yet, by elevating our souls above the attachment and pollution of earthly debasements; yet by acting as becometh the servants and sons of God, we can bring glory to the God who made and redeemed us; can render his name more illustrious on earth; can make the religion he has established still more and more amiable; can increase the number of his servants below; and shall add to the number of his angels above!"

Can you want further motives to the virtue of temperance? If you do see them in the example of the blessed Jesus! which you are not only called upon, but on every account interested, to imitate.

He was the pattern of the strictest temperance and moderation. Though we find him occasionally at feasts and entertainments, yet we find him not only always masters of himself, but making the cheerfulness of those entertainments subservient to the great end of his ministry; the glory of God, and the good of men's souls. Thus emphatically teaching us always to preserve the dominion of our minds, and a

disposition, in consequence, to all acts of benevolence and religion.

But I should wrong the subject, nay, I should think myself guilty of little less than blasphemy, were I to assert barely that the blessed Jesus was temperate, was moderate, was always master of himself.—He was infinitely more: his heaven-directed soul continually presided over his body, which he (a sufferer for our sakes even from his birth) kept in a state of continual abstinence and mortification. So that with respect to temperance, you not only have him as the supreme master, encourager and pattern of the virtue, but as the severest reprover of Intemperance; which surely must of all things least become the disciples of a mortified and self-denying Saviour; the foundation of whose discipline is laid in abstinence, and in the subdual of all those passions, which Intemperance of appetite introduced. Well, therefore, in this respect, may we apply his own words, "Why call ye me Master and Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Christian signifies "A follower of Christ." Pythagoreans, Epicureans, all the sects of old, made it their labour, and made it their boast, to imitate the master whose name they assumed, and whose discipline they embraced. Shall these persons, who followed vain and fallible men, and embraced vain and erroneous doctrines; shall they rise up in condemnation against us, who blindly and absurdly assume and glory in the name of Christains—our master infallible, and his doctrine unerring rectitude, while we are equally inattentive to the one and the other?—If this is to be Christians, no wonder that Infidels laugh at and despise us. You will mark the absurdity, I trust, my young friends, and consider yourselves as under the highest, the most indispensable obligations, if you assume the name and profess the faith, to copy the pattern,

and conform to the precepts of Jesus Christ; and not only with respect to the present virtue which I am enforcing, but to all others, will labour to be, what your name imports, Christians indeed; that is, sincere imitators of the mind and manners which were in Christ.

If you neglect at all, I am persuaded that what I have urged will be abundantly sufficient to convince you of the importance and necessity of temperance to all your best present and future interests, and to induce a resolution in your breasts, of abstaining from every the least appearance of, or approach to the contrary vice. And I am equally persuaded, my young friends, that if you maintain, as I have recommended, a lively sense of religion upon your souls, with a constant recurrence to God for the supplies of his grace, you will find it sufficient to preserve you in the practice of temperance.

But, as human nature is most frail; as occasions and temptations frequently prove the destruction of the best established virtue, without the strictest guard; as religion by no means precludes the succours of human prudence, but supplies and sanctifies them; permit me to conclude what I had to offer on this subject, with a few rules, which may be of use, and which you will apply as your necessities may require.

In the first place, happy still in uncorrupted youth, lay the reins on your appetite now, and keep them still stedfast and unloosed. Accustom yourselves to frequent restraints, that you may better preserve and render your inferior passions tractable. Frequent restraints and self-denials are necessary means to secure men's innocence, as they not only preserve from excess, but keep at a proper distance from the brink of it; for if men suffer themselves to come into the way of excess, or to go to the utmost

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bounds of things lawful, they may lose the reins, and be plunged from the edge of the precipice on which they have too incautiously ventured. "He is fit to sit at the table of the Lord, and to feast with saints, says a wise man, who moderately uses the creatures which God hath given him. But he who despises even lawful pleasures, shall not only sit and feast with God, but reign together with him, and partake of his glorious kingdom."

Be careful, Secondly, to avoid the ensnaring company of the Intemperate. It is Solomon's advice, "Be not amongst wine-bibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh." All Bad Company, we have shown, is sufficiently pernicious; but is peculiarly so in the present case, as men are often seduced to this vice by a too easy compliance in public, which in privacy, or among proper companions, they would totally have avoided: and many a man owes his excess, perhaps his ruin, to false shame; which hinders him from asserting the freedom to which every man would claim a right in almost every other instance. Certainly, in a cool hour, resolutions may be formed, which will stand the attack of a boisterous jest, from noisy and despicable companions.

Thirdly, maintaining a fixed detestation of the lowest degree of Intemperance, be peculiarly on your guard, when in the way of temptation. The wise man exhorts to put a knife to the throat, when there is any probability of exceeding the due moderation.

Fourthly, beware of beginnings; habits of Intemperance steal on insensibly: too many examples, I fear, are within the notice of us all, of persons, once apparently the most sober and regular, sunk, through want of proper caution at first, into total sensuality; lost to God, the world, and themselves; feeding, unhappy, on the very husks with swine; who once fed with angels, and ate the bread of life!

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Fifthly, if you have often lost the command of yourself, when a certain quantity of liquor has been exceeded, you should be more than ordinarily careful always to keep yourself much within that quantity.

Take care, Sixthly, that you never, by bad custom, make strong liquors necessary to your refreshment; nor ever, under cares or troubles of any kind, fly to them for ease: for, be assured, whatever temporary relief may arise from such a practice,—from mere stupefaction; the remedy is worse than the disease; and will only in the end multiply your troubles, and augment your cares tenfold. In all human troubles, in all the trials and afflictions of this life, the best cordial, the draught of never-failing comfort, is the religion of Jesus; is the faith and love of God our Father.

I observe, in the last place, that while we live in an habitual and stated course of temperance every day, we should make it a rule, not only to abstain on some certain days from food wholly; or at least from as much as we can, consistently with our health; but also, at other times, we should abstain partially, and take a less quantity than usual. For it is certain, that fasting is not only necessary as an evangelical duty, but as immediately conducive to the virtue of temperance, and, in a due degree, to the health of the human frame. Very rarely is that frame injured by abstinence; every day it is shocked, diseased, and destroyed by intemperate repletion.

These rules, seconded by such as your own prudence, experience and constitution shall suggest, and united with the motives we have before offered, will be sufficient to keep you temperate in all things, while striving for the mastery. And, to close all, consider, my young friends, what an indignity, what a reproach, what a condemnation it will be, that they who, as St. Paul tells us, strive only for the poor

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perishing prizes of this world, for corruptible crowns, from the hands of corruptible mortals; that they should be temperate in all things, keeping under their bodies, and avoiding all excess; while you, while Christians, who have an incorruptible crown, an everlasting unfading prize to receive at the hands of the God of the whole earth, are but little anxious to secure it! indulgent, intemperate, voluptuous! Scorn the reproach, and take up the resolution of St. Paul; deeply reflecting, if such a resolution were necessary for him, how much more necessary must it be for each of us! "Every man," saith he, "that striveth for the mastery, in the olympic races, is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible: I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: sure of the victory, certain of my prize; because I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, while I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

ANECDOTES, *recommending the virtue of temperance.*

1. "Temperance," says Sir William Temple, "is a virtue without pride; a fortune without envy; which gives ease to the body, and tranquillity to the mind; is the best guardian of youth, and the support of old age; the precept of reason as well as religion, and the physician of the soul as well as of the body: it is the tutelar goddess of health, and universal medicine of life; that clears the head, and cleanses the blood; that eases the stomach, strengthens the nerves, enlightens the eyes, and comforts the heart: in a word, it secures and perfects the digestion, and thereby avoids those causes to which we owe the cholic and the spleen; those crudities and sharp

humours which feed the scurvy and the gout, and those dregs out of which the gravel and stone are formed within us; diseases by which we often condemn ourselves to greater torments and miseries in life, than have perhaps been yet invented by anger or revenge, or inflicted by the greatest tyrants upon the worst of men! See his works, vol. iii. 8vo, p. 262.

2. Anacharsis the Scythian, in order to deter young men from that voluptuousness, which is ever attended with ill effects, applied his discourse to them in a parable; telling them "That the vine of youthful gratification and Intemperance had three branches, producing three clusters; on the first, says he, grows Pleasure; on the second Sottishness; and on the third Sadness."

3. One of our most celebrated poets has somewhere observed, that

"Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain."

The following may serve as an instance. Chremes of Greece, though a young man, was very infirm and sickly, through a course of luxury and Intemperance, and subject to those strange sorts of fits which are called trances. In one of these, he thought that a philosopher came to sup with him; who, out of all the dishes served up at the table, would only eat of one, and that the most simple: yet his conversation was sprightly, his knowledge great, his countenance cheerful, and his constitution strong. When the philosopher took his leave, he invited Chremes to sup with him at an house in the neighbourhood: this also took place in his imagination; and he thought he was received with the most polite and affectionate tokens of friendship; but was greatly surprised when supper came up, to find nothing but milk and honey, and a few roots dressed up in the plainest manner; to which cheer-

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fulness and good sense were the only sauces. As Chremes was unused to this kind of diet, and could not eat, the philosopher ordered another table to be spread more to his taste, and immediately there succeeded a banquet, composed of the most artificial dishes than luxury could invent, with great plenty and variety of the richest and most intoxicating wines. These too were accompanied by damsels of bewitching beauty. And now Chremes gave a loose to his appetites, and every thing be tasted raised extasies beyond what he had ever known. During the repast the damsels sung and danced to entertain him; their charms enchanted the enraptured guest, already heated with what he had drank; his senses were lost in extatic confusion; everything around him seemed Elysium, and he was upon the point of indulging the most boundless freedom; whom lo! on a sudden their beauty, which was but a vizor, fell off, and discovered to his view forms the most hideous and forbidding imaginable. Lust, revenge, folly, murder, meagre poverty and frantic despair now appeared in their most odious shapes, and the place instantly became the direst scene of misery and desolation. How often did Chremes wish himself far distant from such diabolical company, and how dread the fatal consequence which threatened him on every side! His blood ran chill to his heart; his knees smote against each other with fear, and joy and rapture were turned into astonishment and horror. When the philosopher perceived that his scene had made a sufficient impression on his guest, he thus addressed him: "Know, Chremes, it is I, it is Æsculapius, who have thus entertained you; and what you have here beheld, is a true image of the deceitfulness and misery inseparable from luxury and Intemperance. Would you be happy, be temperate. Temperance is the parent of health, virtue,

wisdom, plenty, and of everything that can render you happy in this world, or the world to come. It is indeed the true luxury of life; for without it life cannot be enjoyed." This said, he disappeared, and Chremes awaking, and instructed by the vision, altered his course of life, became frugal, temperate, industrious, and by that means so mended his health and estate, that he lived without pain to a very old age, and was esteemed one of the richest, best, and wisest men in Greece.

4. Such is the beautiful moral drawn by the pen of elegant and instructive fiction; with which, if there be any mind so insensible as not to be properly affected, let us only turn to that striking reality, presented to us in the case of Lewis Cornaro. This gentleman was a Venetian of noble extraction, and memorable for having lived to an extreme old age; for he was more than an hundred years old at the time of his death, which happened at Padua in the year 1565. Amongst other little performances, he left behind him a piece, entitled, "*De vitæ fobriæ commodis:*" that is, Of the advantages of a temperate life; of which we will here give our readers some account, not only because it will very well illustrate the life and character of our author; but may possibly be of use to those who take the summum bonum, or chief good of life, to consist in good eating. He was moved, it seems, to compose this little piece, at the request, and for the benefit of some ingenious young men, for whom he had a regard; and who, having long since lost their parents, and seeing him, then eighty-one years old, in a fine florid state of health, were desirous to know of him what it was that enabled him to preserve, as he did, a sound mind in a sound body, to so extreme an age: He describes to them, therefore, his whole manner of living, and the regimen he had always

pursued, and was then pursuing. He tells them, that when he was young, he was very intemperate; that his Intemperance had brought upon him many and grievous disorders; that from the thirty-fifth to the fortieth year of his age, he spent his nights and days in the utmost anxiety and pain; and that, in short, his life was grown a burden to him. The physicians, however, as he relates, notwithstanding all the vain and fruitless efforts which they made to restore his health, told him, that there was one medicine still remaining, which had never been tried, but, which, if they could but prevail with him to use with perseverance, might free him, in time, from all his complaints; and that was, a temperate and regular way of living. They added, moreover, that, unless he resolved to apply instantly to it, his case would soon become desperate; and there would be no hopes at all of his recovery. Upon this he immediately prepared himself for his new regimen; and now began to eat and drink nothing but what was proper for one in his weak habit of body: but this at first was very disagreeable to him. He often wanted to live again in his old manner; and did indeed indulge himself in a freedom of diet sometimes, without the knowledge of his physicians; but, as he informs us, much to his own detriment and uneasiness. Driven, in the mean time, by the necessity of the thing, and resolutely exerting all the powers of his understanding, he, at last, grew confirmed in a settled and uninterrupted course of temperance; by virtue of which, as he assures us, all his disorders had left him in less than a year: and he had been a firm and healthy man, from thenceforward, till the time in which he wrote his treatise.

To show what security a life of temperance affords against the ill consequences of hurts and disasters, he relates the following accident, which befel him

when he was very old. One day, being out in his chariot, and his coachman driving somewhat faster than ordinary, he had the misfortune to be overturned, and dragged by the horses a considerable way upon the ground. His head, his arms, and his whole body was very much bruised, and one of his ancles was put out of joint. In this condition he was carried home; and the physicians seeing how grievous ly he had suffered, concluded it impossible that he should live three days to an end. They were, however, mistaken; for, by bleeding and evacuating medicines, the usual method of treating persons in like cases, he presently recovered, and arrived at his former stability and firmness.

Some sensualists, as it appears, had objected to his abstemious manner of living; and, in order to evince the reasonableness of their own, had urged, that it was not worth while to mortify one's appetites at such a rate, for the sake of being old, since all that was life, after the age of sixty-five, could not properly be called *vita viva*, *sed vita mortua:* not a living life, but a dead life. "Now, says he, to show these gentlemen how much they are mistaken, I will briefly run over the satisfactions and pleasures which I myself enjoy, in this eighty-third year of my age. In the first place, I am always well, and so active withal, that I can, with ease, mount a horse upon a flat, or walk to the tops of very high mountains. In the next place, I am always cheerful, pleasant, perfectly contented, and free from all perturbation, and every uneasy thought. I have none of that *fastidium vitæ* that satiety of life, so often to be met with in persons of my age. I frequently converse with men of parts and learning, and spend much of my time in reading and writing. There things I do just as opportunity serves, or my humour invites me, and all in my own house at

Padua. I frequently make excursions to some of the neighbouring cities, for the sake of seeing my friends, and conversing with adepts in all arts and sciences; architects, painters, statuaries, musicians, and even husbandmen. I contemplate their works, compare them with the ancients, and am always learning something which it is agreeable to know. I take a view of palaces, gardens, antiquities, public buildings, temples, fortifications, and endeavour to let nothing escape me which may afford the least amusement to a rational mind. Nor are these pleasures at all blunted by the usual imperfections of great age; for I enjoy all my senses in perfect vigour; my taste especially, in so high a degree, that I have a better relish for the plainest food now, than I had for the choicest delicacies formerly, when immersed in a life of luxury. Nay, to let you see what a portion of fire and spirit I have still left within me, be pleased to know, that I have, this very year, written a comedy, full of innocent mirth and pleasantry; and, as I say, if a Greek poet was thought so healthy and happy, for writing a tragedy at the age of seventy-three, why should not I be thought as healthy and as happy, who have written a comedy when I am ten years older? In short, that no pleasure whatever may be wanting to my old age, I please myself daily with contemplating that immortality, which I think I see in the succession of my posterity. For, every time I return home, I meet eleven grandchildren, all the offspring of one father and mother; all in fine health; all, as far as I can discern, apt to learn, and of a good behaviour. I am often amused by their singing; nay, I often sing with them, because my voice is stronger and clearer now than ever it was in my life before. These are the delights and comforts of my old age: from which, I presume, it appears, that the life I spend is not a

dead, morose, and melancholy life, but a living, active, pleasant life; which I would not exchange with the most robust of those youths, who indulge and riot in all the luxury of the senses, because I know them to be exposed to a thousand diseases, and a thousand kinds of death. I, on the contrary, am free from all such apprehensions; from the apprehensions of disease, because I have nothing in my constitution for a disease to feed upon; from the apprehensions of death, because I have spent a life of reason. Besides, death, I am persuaded, is not yet near me. I know that, barring accidents, no violent disease can touch me. I must be dissolved by a gentle and gradual decay, when the radical humour is consumed, like oil in a lamp, which affords no longer life to the dying taper. But such a death as this cannot happen of a sudden. To become unable to walk and reason, to become blind, deaf, and bent to the earth, from all which evils I am far remote at present, must take a considerable portion of time; and I verily believe, that the immortal soul, which still inhabits my body with so much harmony and complacency, will not easily depart from it yet. I verily believe that I have many years to live, many years to enjoy the world, and its blessings by virtue of that strict sobriety and temperance which I have so long and so religiously observed; friend as I am to reason; but a foe to sense." Thus far this good and wise philosopher; who was known afterwards to have prophecied very truly concerning his future health and happiness. See the *Christian's Magazine*, vol. v. page 484; and the *Spectator*, no. 195, in which Mr. Addison observes further,

5. "It is said of Diogenes, that meeting a young man who was going to a feast, he took him up in the street, and carried him home to his friends,

as one who was running into imminent danger, had not he prevented him. What would that philosopher have said, had he been present at the gluttony of a modern meal? Would not he have thought the master of a family mad, and have begged his servants to tie down his hands, had he seen him devour fowl, fish and flesh; swallow oil and vinegar, wines and spices; throw down salads of twenty different herbs, sauces of an hundred ingredients, confections, and fruits of numberless sweets and flavours? What unnatural motions and counter-ferments must such a medley of Intemperance produce in the body! For my own part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy I see gouts and dropsies, fevers, and lethargies, with other innumerable distempers, lying in ambuscade among the dishes."

6. "The testimony of a good conscience, is such a plesaure," says Dr. South, "as never satiates or wearies: for when age itself, which of all things in the world will not be baffled or defied, shall begin to seize and remind us of our mortality, by pains, aches, deadness of limb, and dulness of sense; yet then, even then, the pleasure of the mind shall be in its full youth, vigour, and freshness. A palsy may as well shake an oak, or a fever dry up a fountain, as either of them shake, dry up, or impair the delight of conscience: for it lives within; it centers in the heart; it grows into the very substance of the soul; so that it accompanies a man to his grave: he never outlives it; and that for this cause only, because he cannot outlive himself. How short of this, are the delights of the Epicure! How vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of the eating, and those of the thinking man! Indeed, as different as the silence of an Archimedes in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a sow at her wash. Do not the pleasures

of a voluptuous man expire while they satisfy, and after a few minutes, determine in loathing and unquietness! How short is the interval between the pleasure and the burden! The necessities of nature are quickly and easily provided for; and then, all that follows is a load and an oppression: every morsel to a satisfied hunger, is only a new labour to a tired digestion: every draught to him who has quenched his thirst, is but a further quenching of nature. He that prolongs his meals, and sacrifices his time, as well as his other conveniences to his luxury, how quickly does he outsit his pleasure! and then, how is all the following time bestowed upon ceremony and surfeit! till at length, after a long fatigue of eating, drinking, and babbling, he concludes the great work of dining genteelly, and so makes a shift to rise from table, that he may lie down upon his bed; where, after he has slept himself into some use of himself, with much ado he staggers to his table again, and there acts over the same brutish scene. So that he passes his whole life in a dozed condition, with a kind of drowsiness and confusion upon his senses: with what pleasure it can be, is hard to conceive. All that is of it, dwells upon the tip of the tongue, and within the compass of his palate. A worthy prize for a man to purchase with the loss of his time, his reason, and himself!

7. Nothing can be more worthy a serious perusal, than the latter part of the 23d chapter of Proverbs, to guard men against the odious vice of drunkenness. In *v.* 33, &c. the writer bids us mark the particular ill effects of it. "Thine eyes," says he, "shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth on the top of a mast." That is, "Thou wilt sottishly run thyself into the extremest hazards,

without any apprehensions of danger; being no more able to direct thy course than a pilot who slumbers when the ship is tossed in the midst of the sea; no more able to take notice of the perils thou art in, than he who falls asleep on the top of a mast, where he was set to keep watch." He goes on, "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I awake?—I will seek it yet again." There is great beauty and energy in the conciseness of the original; What we render "I was not sick," should rather be, "and I was not sensible of it." The next clause should be, "They have mocked me, and I knew it not." —They have stricken me, and I was not sensible of it: they have mocked me, and I knew it not! How striking and instructive a portrait is this of the stupid insensibility of a drunkard! Mr. Prior in his *Solomon* has well expressed it in the following lines. There are," says he,

——"Yet unnumber'd ills that lie unseen,
In the pernicious draught: The word obscene,
Or harsh (which once elanced must ever fly
Irrevocable); the too prompt reply,
Seed of severe distrust, and fierce debate,
What we should shun, and what we ought to hate.
Add too, the blood impoverish'd, and the course
Of health suppress'd by wine's continued force.
Unhappy man! Whom sorrow thus, and rage
To different ills alternately engage:
Who drinks, alas! but to forget; nor sees
That melancholy sloth, severe disease,
Memory confused, and interupted thought,
Death's harbingers, lie latent in the draught;
And in the flowers that wreathe the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and poisonous serpents roll."

8. Another writer has given us as lively a picture of the opposite virtue:

"The sad effects of luxury are these;
We drink our poison, and we eat disease:
Not so, O temperance bland! when ruled by thee;
The brute's obedient, and the man is free:

Soft are his slumbers, balmy is his rest,
His veins not boiling from the midnight feast,
'Tis to thy rules, bright temperance, we owe
All pleasures which from health and strength can flow.
Vigour of body, purity of mind,
Unclouded reason, sentiments refined;
Unmixed, untainted joys, without remorse,
Th' intemperate sensualist's never-failing curse."

9. If there ever was a man who, in a worldly sense, "strove for the mastery," it was Charles the 12th of Sweden; and accordingly his history tells us, that he was remarkably "temperate," in order to the attainment of his end: even his boisterous and romantic character, therefore, may edify and improve wiser and better minds. "The earlier days of his administration," says Voltaire, "gave no favourable ideas of him; it seemed as if he had been more impatient to reign, than worthy of it. He had indeed no dangerous passion; but nothing was to be seen in his conduct, but the sallies of youthful impetuosity and obstinacy. He appeared quite careless and haughty. The ambassadors from other courts even took him for a very moderate genius, and painted him as such to their several masters. Sweden too had the same opinion of him, and nobody knew this real character. Nor did he know it himself, till the sudden storms that burst forth in the northern world, gave his hidden talents an opportunity of displaying themselves. But then, everyone was in the highest degree surprised to see him instantaneously renounce all, even the most innocent amusements of his youthful days. From the moment he prepared for war, he commenced a life entirely new, from which he never after varied in the least. Full of the idea of Alexander and of Cæsar, he purposed to imitate in those conquerors, everything but their vices. He no longer consulted magnificence, or regarded sports or relaxations; he reduced his table to the exactest fru-

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gality. He had been hitherto fond of splendour in his apparel; from henceforward he dressed himself only as a common soldier: he had been suspected of having entertained a passion for a lady of his court; —but, whether this circumstance be true or not, it is certain, that from thenceforth he for ever renounced the sex; not merely for fear of being governed by them, but to set an example to his soldiers, whom he wished to preserve in the strictest dicipline; and perhaps, also from a vanity of being the only king who had conquered a propensity to difficult to subdue. He likewise resolved to abstain from wine all the rest of his life; not, as some have pretended, because he would punish in himself an excess, which was said to have led him into actions unworthy of his character (for nothing is more false than this popular report); but because it too much stimulated his fiery temper: nay, he even quitted beer, and reduced himself to pure water. To crown the whole, we must remember that sobriety was then a virtue entirely new in the north, and therefore Charles was determined to be a pattern to his Swedes in every particular." See Voltaire's *Life of Charles* xii. p. 13, and 24. 2d edit.

10. Cato the censor constantly represented to his countrymen in the Senate, the fatal consequences of that luxury, which in his time began to introduce itself into the Roman Republic. Observing the large strides which his nation made upon Greece and Asia, provinces filled with all the delicacies and dangerous baits of pleasurable indulgence, and how the Romans were beginning to lay their hands on the treasures of distant kings; "I am greatly afraid," said he, "that we shall become slaves to these foreign riches, instead of being their masters; and that these conquered nations will conquer us in their turn, by communicating to us their examples and their

vices." His fears we know were not imaginary; and all he had foreseen came to pass, to the ruin of his country.

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

11. But what then is this subtle secret poison, which thus lurks under the pomp of luxury, and the charms of Intemperance; enervating at the same time the whole strength of body, and the whole vigour and superiority of the mind? The solution is plain. The natural effect of voluptuousness and delicacy, which are the inseparable companions of luxury, is to render men subject to a multitude of false wants and necessities; to make their happiness depend upon a thousand trifling conveniences and superfluities, which they can no longer be without, and to give them an unreasonable fondness for life; thus stifling in them the great and only true motives of glory, of zeal for their prince, and love to their country; while it renders them selfish and sordid, fearful and cowardly, and hinders them from exposing themselves to dangers, which may in a moment deprive them of all those things wherein they place their felicity. *England* is now become a rich, a victorious, a polite and scientific nation. Now, therefore, is the period in which we ought to keep a more than ordinary vigilance over our manners; and to establish a few needful restraints, to preserve as long as we can, some degree of industry, frugality, and fortitude alive among us; that so the day may be late, in which we are probably to sink—God grant we may not irrecoverably sink—under our great prosperities; as but too many nations of past ages have done before us, and are now no more!

SERMON XIII.

ON GAMING.

I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.—LUKE xvi. 3.

THIS is part of the unjust Steward's severe self-remonstrance, when called upon to render up his accounts of a stewardship, in which he had been sadly unfaithful: "I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed! A more distressful and pitiable situation cannot be conceived, than one, where labour and honest industry are impossible to the more delicately educated, or vice-enervated body; and where humble submission, and a cry for mercy are no less impossible to the arrogant and over-bearing mind! Yet such, alas, is the wretched situation to which a vicious waste of fortune frequently reduces!

The sacred writer does not inform us in what manner this person wasted his own and his Lord's goods: the word used on this occasion implies a dissipation of them, without any attention to future advantage;* and is the same with that used in a former chapter to express the extravagance of the prodigal son, who is said to have "wasted his substance in riotous living." We have no need to inquire after the methods of spending a fortune in a life of riot and luxury; or—if the terms shall suit the subject better—in a life of politeness and pleasure. There is, however, one mode of doing so, one method of dissipating the substance however considera-

* Διασκορπιζων. See my Sermons on the miracles and parables, vol. iv. p. 58.

ble, to which it is likely, neither this steward, nor this youthful extravagant, as fine gentlemen, were strangers; a method extremely common in the present times, and the pursuit of which has, of all things, the best chance to reduce a man to the situation referred to in the text. It will be easily understood that I mean *gaming;*—another of those false pleasures, my young friends, which I have undertaken to develope and decry, for your sake and for your preservation; and one, from which you can never be too minutely cautioned, too strongly guarded; as it has custom and fashion so powerfully to plead on its side, "though pregnant with almost every evil, and the fatal source of miseries the most distressful to man."

We will endeavour to make this appear: but first, in order to prevent mistakes or misapprehensions in tender consciences, it may be proper to distinguish a little; and to consider *play* as an amusement, before we speak of it as a vice.

Whatever some divines, and moralists of a severer cast, may urge against play in the general, as hurtful and criminal; as contrary to duty, and dangerous to salvation; thus much, I think, may be asserted with truth, upon the most candid and rational state of the case; that "Amusements and relaxations being in a high degree necessary to the human mind, as well as to the harmony and continuance of cultivated society, *play*, considered merely as an amusement or relaxation, and pursued only as such, can never be criminal; is in no respects contrary to the laws of God, or of reason." And, as almost all nations have permitted and used diversions of this sort, Games of chance or hazard; it would seem rather too severe a censure on the general opinion of mankind, to condemn them in the gross. Nor can any sufficient cause of censure, in my judgment at

least, be urged, if they be limited as above: nay, if so limited, it is unquestionable that they may be made the occasion of showing without ostentation, "Nobleness of sentiment," "Justness of understanding," "Politeness of manners," and "Evenness of temper." But then, we must be extremely careful,—in order to attain ends so excellent,—to keep within the limits specified: we must be extremely careful not to suffer a matter of mere amusement to deviate into a blameable excess; which becomes the case with play, when it is immoderately pursued, occasions avaricious desires, or ruffles in any degree the serenity of the temper.

All amusements, of whatsoever kind, how innocent or allowable soever in themselves, become highly blameable, when immoderately pursued: for thus, while their proper end and design is perverted, they are not only preposterously made the business of life, but unhappily interfere with, and prejudice its true business. Besides, a continued attention to, and thirst for amusements above all things, tends to weaken the nobler powers of the soul; to take off the mind from better and more important subjects; to shut up every avenue from just and serious reflection; and in short, to induce a perfect dissipation and annihilation of thought. And, as thus destroying all power of improvement in virtue, and by consequence tending directly to extinguish it wholly; such an attachment to play, or any other amusement, unquestionably partakes of the nature of vice, and will therefore stand exposed to all its consequences.

If, farther, it is not only immoderately, but avariciously pursued, and ceases to be a calm and cheering relaxation of the mind, by irritating, disturbing, and agitating the passions, it instantly looses all its innocence; it is no longer to be justified or excused: it stands condemned as criminal; and is no

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more to be considered as an harmless amusement, but as a pernicious vice.

And certainly, as a *vice*, there is nothing more pregnant with mischiefs and miseries to mankind: for, in the first place, *gaming* owes its birth* to one of the meanest and most despicable principles which actuate the human mind; a principle so low and base, so contrary to the laws of reason, of nature, and of God, that no man was ever found hardy enough to avow and acknowledge its influence! Yet, from this *avarice*, vile and contemptible as it is, Gaming, whether in a higher or lower sphere, undoubtedly derives its original; It being inconceivable, upon the principles of reason and good sense, that any man should either subject his mind to the continual tortures and anxieties which the gamester must feel; or should put his fortune to the hazard at the Gaming-table, from any motive less forcible and prevalent, than the covetous desire and expectation of increasing that fortune.

Other motives, and other causes, it is true, may co-operate and lead young and unexperienced adventurers to that table: they may commence dupes, but dupes they can never continue. The practice pursued unavoidably induces other principles; and whatever men commence, it may be said with strict truth, that if they persevere, they must end knaves: For their principle (that only principle which can induce them to persevere) never yet was found overnice in points of honour or of honesty: and it would be as absurd to expect either, from a mind actuated by avarice, as to expect streams of generous wine from a foul pool of stagnated water.

* The reader will observe, that we speak here of Gaming, absolutely considered. We do not say or think that every man who plays or plays deep is a covetous man: there have been, we believe there may be, instances to the contrary; but those instances are very rare. See *Anecdote* 10.

But if no good streams can be expected to flow from such a principle, evil ones in abundance will flow. Usury, injustice, and every illegal method of procuring money, which can be pursued with any tolerable degree of safety, and often, at the extremest hazard of reputation and of life, will certainly take place in such circumstances: and whether gain or loss ensues, the same evil dispositions, and the same illicit practices will, more or less, assuredly show themselves. For how should it be otherwise in minds wholly depraved as theirs must need be, wholly devoid of moral or religious principles, who give themselves up to a vice, connected with such a variety of evils as Gaming?

One of the worst and most pernicious of these, is "An introduction into that abandoned and worthless society which always surround the Gaming-table." And if nothing be so prejudicial to youth, nothing so much to be guarded against as evil company,* no vice can be so dangerous to them as Gaming; since there is none whereby they are so likely to reap an abundant harvest of this kind. The truth is, Gaming levels distinctions of every sort; and so strange is the bewitching infatuation, that men of the first characters and the first fortunes are unable, with this fatal mist before their eyes, to discern the sharper from the peer; the beggar from the wealthy; or even the friend from the professed and profligate cheat. Indeed friendship, though a name often used on these occasions, is used only as a bait to ensnare and destroy†: and the noble boast of Gaming is,

* See p. 131.

† An excellent Writer speaking of this kind of men, says of them, "That they are to the light, unthinking part of the world, what the Spider is to the Fly: they wait with cool, deliberate, unwearied patience, till they get their prey within their nets, and then drain out their vitals without remorse; Or, to speak more properly, enjoy their dying complaints."—Delaney's *Sermons*, vol. ii.

that as it levels all distinctions, so it bids an adieu to all the virtues; and while the tyrant passion rages, suspends or stagnates at least all the just and honourable affections of the soul; insomuch that not friendship only becomes a name, but all the sacred dictates of religion, nay, and the laws of society are broken through: no times, places or seasons, however holy, are respected: even "Sunday shines no sabbath-day to such." And what is more if possible than all this, even the dear connections of wife, of children, of relations, are, with unrelenting fury sacrificed on the altar of this destructive demon!

And as it thus extinguishes the most amiable and excellent passions in the soul; as it introduces to the vilest society, and levels all distinctions; so does it conduce, above all things, to mar the peace and tranquillity of the mind, and to discompose, in the most frightful manner, the sweetness and serenity of the temper. Indeed, what sweetness or serenity can that mind enjoy, which, ever on the rack of painful torturing anxiety, knows not a moment's respite from the tumultuous agitation of hopes and fears!—No proof of this can be wanting to those, who have at any time been present at a gaming-table! where the paleness and dejection sitting on the countenances of some, the horrible perturbation working on the brows of others; the fearful blasphemies and execrations heard on all sides; the mutual recriminations, quarrels, oaths and curses, present the astonished and terrified spectator with the fullest and most dreadful idea of the court and midnight orgies of death and of hell! And this—oh gracious God! former of the human race! This is one of the pursuits, this one of the engagements, which thy reasonable creatures call, and prosecute as pleasure!

But, if such be the present enjoyment it affords, let us consider the end. Who can wonder, that amidst

such a scene as that to which we have just referred, —that amongst minds so disturbed and agitated, disputes and contentions of the most boisterous and rancorous kind should arise, and consequences the most fatal ensue?—Hence, full often the bloody and barbarous duel finishes what the Gaming-table began; and everlasting death and ruin seals the eyes of the man, slain by the hands of his friend; in the pride of youth perhaps; perhaps the sole support and great expectation of some honourable house; but now, cut down and destroyed in one rash moment, and sent to his last fearful account with all his sins in deepest aggravation on his head! But of this accursed practice of duelling, we will take an occasion to speak more fully in the next Discourse.

If an evil of this kind be avoided, yet, how often is death the consequence in another way! How often have repeated losses in high life, as well as low, led men to practices which have proved most fatal to them! Hence forgery, and other iniquitous modes of cheating mankind; and hence the bold adventurer, stung by desperation, void of all resourse, too much enfeebled to labour, too proud and arrogant to stoop to any low and honest means of supplying his wants, sallies forth to repair his ruined fortunes on the road, or in the streets by preying on the fortunes and the security of others! till at length, stopped in his wretched career, an ignominious punishment delivers society from the pernicious burden of the gamester and the robber!

But there is yet a case more deplorable than any of the foregoing, where death comes, arrayed indeed in all its terrors; and the most distant prospect of which ought to make you shudder (my young friends) and fly with horror from the very appearance of the vice we are decrying! The case I mean, is, when ruined fortunes, broken mind, upbraiding friends

and self-convicting conscience, suffer the harrowed, overwhelmed, desperate wretch no longer to support the torturing load of existence: when unable by any means to suply himself or his family—(for "dig he cannot, and to beg he is ashamed")—when, finding no resource in his mind from principles of religion; (all of which, thanks to his loose companions and abandoned associates, he has long since exchanged for the more flattering system of darkness and infidelity)—when in this horrid pitiable situation, Lo! he plunges by his own trembling hand,—plunges into the awful presence of an avenging God, and the miseries of eternity, to avoid the consequences of his own imprudence and guilt in this world! Fancy shudders at the representation!—Think then with yourselves, what must be the situation of those interested in such a man's welfare! Think with yourselves, what must be the situation of his wretched parents, if they yet unhappily survive, to be the witnesses of this dismal disappointment of all their affectionate hopes! Think if connected with a family, what must be the situation of his distracted wife, thus to behold the object of her tenderest regard, weltering in his blood,—that blood flowing from his own unfortunate hand! Herself deserted and undone! her fortune wasted and gone with her miserable husband, and she herself, with her weeping infants around her, left to desolation and contempt, to beggary and to shame!

These are thy triumphs, oh thou infamous and destructive vice! And yet, as if in despite of divine and human laws, of every just and proper feeling, of every amiable and excellent virtue; yet dost thou prevail; and, unterrified by consequences, unmoved by the calls of honour, of justice, and of truth, high and low, the noblest and the meanest bow at thy shrine; degrade and ruin themselves!—Still they game on, and still they are undone!

Oh, my young friends; could I but prove like a guardian angel to preserve you from this most pernicious of vices;—could I but set its mischiefs and its miseries in their true point of view;—could I but engage you now to renounce it, and to form the strongest resolutions against its future allurements; how blest, how successful should I think my endeavours! And be well assured, that from the practice no true pleasure can ever flow; real misery, and consequences the most disquieting and distressful, must always flow, if haply you escape those extreme and fatal ones we have enumerated.

It is not possible however for any man to say, how far he will go and no farther; what consequences shall or shall not follow, if once he commences a lover of Gaming: for as no fortune is sufficient to supply its hazard, so the greatest fortune may as speedily be dissipated and destroyed by its perilous chances, as the least. Indeed, the natural and almost unavoidable evils are so many and so dreadful, that no wise man would run the danger of encountering even the smallest of them, were he certain (which he never can be) of avoiding the greatest. And would any reasonable man pursue that as a pleasure, which in every view is incapable of giving real satisfaction; but which may possibly involve the total ruin of himself,—his soul and body—his family and dearest connections? But even granting that such total ruin, and such severe miseries should be avoided; granting that even success should attend: yet, can that success be adequate to the "Constant anxiety and agitation of passion," which is inseparable from the practice; or can that success be in any respect satisfactory to a mind of the least feeling of generosity, when it reflects, that a friend, perhaps an intimate, is the sacrifice to that success, and that its own good fortune is raised upon the ruin and entire overthrow of another? Thus even

success, in this case, is pain and bitterness: what pain and bitterness must then accompany the want of success, and the ruin of fortune and family!

Think with yourselves, my young friends, if your parents yet live, with what anguish it would pierce their aged and affectionate hearts, to see you the dupes of a vice, which inferred much more that a probability of your total ruin; perhaps of your speedy and ignominious death; and, most likely, a dissipation of all that happy patrimony, which they with so much care have treasured up for your future honour and comfort! Think, if those dear authors of your birth are no longer in being, how it would wound their spirits even in the realms of blessedness, if they could be conscious that you had dissipated, amidst false friends, sharpers and knaves, so shamefully and dishonourably dissipated the patrimony they left you! Your good hearts, touched with filial gratitude and love, will, for those parents' sake, living or dying, spare them the inexpressible pain of such consequences; spare yourselves the pungent remorse of such reflections.

Happy too in future connections, as Husbands, as parents yourselves, you will avoid this cruel and destructive vice, which can eradicate, or at least suspend, all the tender and social affections! God forbid that it should ever thus tyrannize over any of you! God forbid, that, deaf to the pathetic and affectionate call of the faithful wife, to the pleadings and almost irresistible tears of beloved children, you should burst from these, and desert dometic peace and dissembled friendship, for tumultuous agitation, and the society of selfish, crafty, ruinous villains! Oh picture to yourselves for a moment, a young man, happy in the wife of his choice; happy in sweet and much-loved infants around him; happy in all his domestic connections; esteemed by his

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friends, and easy in a plentiful fortune! Picture to yourselves this young man, deluded by some false and pretended friend to the infernal society of gamesters, and at length duped and deprived by them of all his fortune, and so of all his comforts! With what an eye of anguish and of horror must he now look on what before gave the sweetest consolation to his sight! Can the bosom of that wife, where once he found perpetual peace and joy, now afford other than the keenest distress? He has undone that wife! Can those babes, whose innocent prattlings once were music to his ears, now do other than pierce his very soul with their cries?—He has undone those babes! Friends, dwelling, all things are misery to him; nor can a ray of satisfaction beam into his benighted mind; where the consciousness, the dreadful consciousness that his own vice and folly have wrought all this ruin, haunts him for ever, and murders all repose!

You would not, my young friends, be a wretch like this? Then avoid, like death and the grave, the least approach to that vice, which indulged, may probably lead to such fatal consequences. Nor let the pestilence of ill-example blast you with its dire contagion, and induce you, through the fear of singularity, to fall a slave to a practice so infamous, so pernicious! it is a precept of your God, that "you should not follow a multitude to do evil;" and though that multitude be composed even of the highest ranks in life; though it should unfortunately happen even that they, whose exalted stations should lead them to propose better examples to those beneath them, are of this multitude; that even many of those who are called upon to unite "in forming the laws," should themselves be transgressors of the laws; though it should happen, that even the greatest and the highest, and those, on other accounts the

most respectable, should unhappily endeavour to sanctify the practice by their own pursuit of it; yet remember, this can never alter the nature of things, or render that practice less blameable or less pernicious. It is, no doubt, a great misfortune to those in the inferior orders of life, when their superiors set such examples: however, in a case like this, there is only the greater need of more caution, and more fortitude. Every good man is then called forth, whatever his station, to bear his testimony against a proceeding so ruinous to his country; and singularity will ever be esteemed a virtue, when vice, when such a gigantic and enormous vice more particularly, is in fashion!

But, my young friends, whatever may be in fashion, or whatever those who deem themselves the politer world may judge, you have a certain rule whereby to direct your conduct; and that rule is, "Reverence yourselves, and the peace of your own minds." And, while fully ascertained that no tumult or agitation of passions can ever be consistent with the dictates of religion, and the laws of self-government on this view determine never to play where avarice can in the least tempt you; can cause the smallest agitation of mind, or disturb and ruffle in the minutest degree, the evenness and serenity of your temper. For if these effects ensue, though the more fatal ones are avoided, play, at the lowest rate, becomes criminal: and it is unpleasing to remark, how unhappily the passions are agitated, how much the temper is often betrayed, where mere amusement is, and can only be designed. It should be our care diligently to guard against such evils; it should be more especially the care of that softer sex, from whose gentleness of manners, and sweetness of temper, we naturally expect the highest and most soothing comforts of life. They will, therefore, give

us but poor expectations of such comfort; they will necessarily defeat their own designs, and injure their own interests, if they discover, at the table of amusement, tempers ill adapted to social felicity: much more if they discover a disposition for, and atttachment to, Gaming; which, however odious und pernicious in men, has effects much more odious and pernicious in their sex; involving, among other losses, the loss of that, which ought ever to be dearest in their estimation,—the loss of virtue and of honour; at the same time that it tends utterly to diminish and to cloud those personal graces, by which they are formed to attract. For a sight most unpleasing, though sometimes to be seen, is a face, stamped by heaven with every angelic beauty, and winning charm, yet paled by long anxiety over the midnight game, and dimmed and darkened with every furious passion which anxious hope and dread can paint in strong colours on the solicitous brow!

But I forbear; not only as my more immediate concern is with those of my own sex, but because I would hope those of the other are neither so much addicted to this vice, nor will by any means break through the laws of reason and of self-interest to pursue it; thus forfeiting either the character of good wives and good mothers, or, if single, leaving themselves no chance to become either. For, who in their right senses would take a female gamester to their family and embraces? Let one word, however, of friendly caution be just suggested, that no great foundation of domestic comfort can on either side be laid, if the rage even for the amusement, not the vice, of play prevails; and if that rage be indulged to excess by either party, to the extreme waste of that most precious of all human possessions, time; to the neglect of better and more important duties; and to the uneasiness and lassitude of the

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mind, if by chance deprived of so wretched and trifling a dissipation.

Thus, my young friends, I have given you a general prospect of the mischief and miseries of the vice of gaming: your own good sense and reflection will easily lead you to enlarge upon a variety of particulars, which I have but just hinted, or to which what I have hinted may lead. I have endeavoured to distinguish, as clearly as I could, between the vice and the amusement; have shown where the amusement, as such, becomes a vice, and where the vice is peculiarly dangerous and destructive. And I flatter myself, that if you see it in its just and reasonable light, you will think it truly one of those "false pleasures," of which I have heretofore given you the characteristics, and which I would wish to develope, in order to preserve you from their snares and their ruin.

However, as the close of what I have to urge respecting these pleasures; as a lively example to confirm the truth of all I have advanced; as a full proof of the "mischiefs and the miseries," which I have asserted to be the consequences of them; you will permit me to deliver to you, from the pen of a nervous and affecting writer,* "An account of the last hours of *a Man of Pleasure;* a person of high birth, and high spirit; of great parts, and strong passions; every way accomplished; not least in iniquity. His unkind treatment was the death of a most amiable wife: his Gaming, love of pleasure, and great extravagance, in effect, disinherited his only child."

"The sad evening before he died," says our Author "I was with him: no one was there but his physician, and an intimate, whom he loved, and whom he had ruined!

* Dr. Young.

At my coming in, he said, "You and the physician are come too late! I have neither life nor hope. You both aim at miracles: you would raise the dead."

Heaven, I said, was merciful.

—"Or I could not have been thus guilty. What has it not done to bless and to save me? I have been too strong for Omnipotence! I plucked down ruin."

I said, "The blessed Redeemer—"

"—Hold, hold! you wound me!—That is the rock on which I split.—I denied his name."

Refusing to hear anything from me, or take any thing from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck.—Then, with vehemence,—

"Oh, Time, Time! It is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou fled, for ever!—A month!—Oh, for a single week! I ask not for years; though an age were too little for the much I have to do."

On my saying, we could not do too much: that heaven was a blessed place:

—"So much the worse. 'Tis lost! 'tis lost!—heaven is to me the severest part of hell!"

Soon after I proposed prayer!

"Pray you that can. I never prayed: I cannot pray.—Nor need I. Is not heaven on my side already? It closes with my conscience: its severest strokes but second my own."

His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this, (who could forbear? I could not) with a most affectionate look, he said:

"Keep those tears for thyself: I have undone thee.—Dost weep for me?—That's cruel. What can pain me more?"

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him:

"No stay: thou still may'st hope; therefore hear me. How madly have I talked? How madly hast thou listened and believed! But, look on my present state, as a full answer to thee, and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain; but my soul, as if stung by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason; full mighty to suffer: And that which thus triumphs within the jaws of Mortality, is, doubtless, immortal: and as for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I feel!"

I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary confessor, on his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus, very passionately,

"No, no! Let me speak on: I have not long to speak. My much-injured friend! My soul, as my body, lies in ruins; in scattered fragments of broken thought. Remorse for the past throws my thought on the future: worse dread of the future strikes it back on the past!—I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldest struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames:—that is not an everlasting flame;—that is not an unquenchable fire."

How were we struck! Yet, soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out,

"My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy: my unkindness has murdered my wife!—And is there another hell? —Oh, thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God! Hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown."

"Soon after his understanding failed: his terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated,

or ever forgot. And ere the sun (which I hope has seen few like him) arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont expired."

I shall not pretend to make any reflections on this mournful narrative: the foregoing discourses will supply sufficient, and the death-bed of the profligate abundantly show what is the end of all his boasted pleasures and pursuits. Leaving it therefore to your own private thoughts, I shall only intreat the Giver of all good gifts, to preserve us from the contagion of loose, immoral, irreligious principles, and from vicious practices, the almost necessary consequence of such principles: to keep us stedfast in the exercise of our holy faith, and in the paths of virtue and of goodness, which that faith so perfectly inculcates. That, avoiding all the rocks and shelves of destructive vice and false pleasure, we may pass through the waves of this world, in the right, the happy, the comfortable discharge of every duty; and so find acceptance, through the merits of Christ Jesus, at his right hand, where there are pleasures, solid, substantial, unfading pleasures for evermore. Amen!

Anecdotes *on Gaming.*

1. It is related of Mr. Locke, that being invited to a company of the highest rank and first abilities in the kingdom, and hearing cards called for as soon as dinner was over, he retired thoughtful to a window; and being asked the reason of his seriousness, replied, "He had not slept the foregoing night, for the pleasure which their lordships had given him to expect from that day's conversation, with men of the first character for sense and genius: and hoped his sorrow for his disappointment would be forgiven him." This seasonable rebuke had the proper effect: the game was instantly thrown up, and conversation

restored with a brilliancy suitable to the illustrious assembly.

2. "I cannot," says a late writer, "see how a man of quality, sitting day after day, and night after night, at a quadrille or Gaming-table, rises superior to the lowest mechanic at similar amusements; unless it be in having a cleaner room, and risking larger sums; which indeed increase the expence, but do not lessen the folly of the action. Cards are the universal mode of a whole people, who pique themselves upon being intelligent and polite: and yet, the best that can be said of them is, that they make people easy, by allowing them to be dull, and superseding the necessity of their being entertaining: so that this species of diversion might not improperly be called, "The stratagem of shallow people, who, unable to supply conversation themselves, would bring down to the same level all that could." For *Gaming* is a suspension of the understanding for hours together; a stupid attention to a parcel of black and red spots: a continual conflict of the lowest and basest passions; and, if there be some skill required in some degrees of it, the highest of the kind is still so unworthy of ambition, that creatures who do not discover common sense in other things, often excel in this.—And yet, for this, gentlemen forego their distinction of birth and education; and, forgetful of the debt to their illustrious ancestors, and the demands of the present and future generations, waste a whole life in the most trifling of amusements, and bury the noblest faculties in the meanest of employments. For this too, the ladies pass anxious days and sleepless nights; deny themselves the benefits of light and air; grow pale and lifeless, and sacrifice even beauty to the dear diversion: since as the poet but too justly remarks,—

"The strong desire shall ne'er decay,
Who plays to win, shall win to play;
The breast where love had plann'd his reign,
Shall burn unquench'd with lust of gain;
And all the charms that wit can boast,
In dreams of bitter luck be lost!
Thus neither innocent nor gay,
The useless hours shall fleet away;
While Time o'erlooks the trivial strife,
And, scoffing, shakes the sands of life."

"In short, the itch of play (for so," continues our author, "I must beg leave to call it) rages like a plague, and depopulates the island of all that is lovely, generous and brave: it is epidemical throughout the kingdom; it spares neither age nor sex, among us; and we are become a nation of gamesters. In this quarter [Bath] the distemper breaks out with all its terrible symptoms, and has absorbed the other entertainments and follies of the place; as the floating humours of the body sometimes settle into a gout, which is a complication of them all. Nothing is to be seen but play, and the preparations for it. Persons of all characters, distinctions, and denominations, sit down to cards, from morning to night, and from night till morning; and they agree in this particular, who disagree in everything else."

3. "There never was deep play amongst men only," says a celebrated genius, "but there was a sharper or two in company, who were sure to win. But, besides the fatal consequence of losing at play, it is an illiberal diversion, and brings a gentleman into the worst and most infamous company imaginable: for a gaming-table levels all distinction; and it often happens, that the footman of yesterday sits next to his lord, and is his equal at a hazard, or a basset-table. Another disagreeable consequence of gaming is, that most young men begin to play as bubbles; but when they have lost a great deal, often turn cheats themselves, in hopes of recovering it.

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In short, there would be no end of relating the fatal effects of gaming: it creates quarrels, which often end in bloodshed: it beggars, it disgraces, and affects the character, as well as the purse of a gentleman."

4. Nothing is more common at the public places of polite resort, than to see among the other bijoux of the toy-shop, boxes and dice in miniature, fabricated at a high price, for the use of little gentlemen and ladies, by way of initiating them into the science of Gaming. So that, in this instance, if in no other. Juvenal bears his testimony that we still retain some of the old Roman spirit.

—"Monstrant ipsi pueris, traduntque parentes:
Si damnosa senem juvat alea, ludit et Hæres
Bullatus, parvoque eadem movet arma fritillo."
Sat. 14. l. 3.

5. "One of the methods" says Mr. Addison, "which I would propose for filling up our time, should be useful and innocent diversions. I must confess, I think it is below reasonable creatures to be altogether conversant in such diversions as are "merely innocent," and have nothing else to recommend them, but that there is no hurt in them. Whether any kind of Gaming has even thus much to say for itself, I shall not determine; but it is very wonderful to see persons of the best sense, passing away a dozen hours together, in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other conversation but what is made up of a few game phrases; and no other ideas but those of black and red spots, ranged together in different figures! would not a man laugh to hear anyone of this species complaining that life is short?"—*Spectator*, no. 93.*

6. "Whence comes it to pass," says Monsieur Pascal, 'that mankind are transported to such a

* See also *Guardian*, no. 120.

degree with Gaming, hunting, or other diversions, which seem to have taken an absolute possession of their souls? Not because there is any real or intrinsic good to be obtained by these pursuits; not because they imagine that true happiness is to be found in the money they win at play, or in the beast which they run down in the chace: for should you present them beforehand with both these to save their trouble, they would be unanimous in rejecting the proposal. It is not the gentle and easy part which they are fond of, such as may give them leisure and space for thought; but it is the heat and hurry, which divert them from the mortification of thinking. On this account it is, that men are in love with the noise and tumult of the world; that a prison is a seat of horror; and that few persons can bear the punishment of being confined to themselves.

7. In one of the principal cities in Europe, lived Lucius and Sapphira, blessed with a moderate fortune, health, mutual love, and peace of mind. Their family consisted of two little darlings, a son and a daughter; they seemed to want for nothing as an addition to their happiness, nor were they insensible of what they enjoyed; but animated with gratitude to heaven, they were happy instruments of good to all about them. Towards the close of the summer in 1765, Lucius happening to fall in company with some neighbouring gentlemen, who proposed to waste an hour or so at cards, he consented, more in complaisance to the taste of others than his own. Like other gamesters, he met with a variety of fortune (a variety more seducing than a continuance either of good or bad), and being warm with liquor, he was inconsiderately drawn in, before the company broke up, to involve himself more than his fortune could bear. The next day, on sober reflection, he could not support the thoughts of that dis-

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tress which his folly had brought upon his Sapphira, and her little innocents. He had not courage enough to acquaint her with what had happened; and, whilst in the midst of pangs to which he had been hitherto a stranger, he was visited, and again tempted by one of the last night's company, to try his fortune once more. In order to drown reflection, and in hopes of recovering his loss, he flew to the fatal place; nor did he leave it till he had lost his all. The consequence of which was, that the next day, in undescribable despair, after writing to acquaint Sapphira with what had happened, he shot himself through the head. The news of this deprived the lady of her senses. She is (at least was lately) confined in a mad house; and the two little innocents, destitute of parents and of fortune, have a troublesome world to struggle with; and are likely to feel all the miseries which poverty and a servile dependence entail upon the wretched.

8. A young lady, who lived in the north, was on the point of marriage with a young gentleman, of whom she was passionately fond, and by whom she was as greatly beloved. She was, at the same time, admired by a person of high rank, but whose passion, as he was already married, was consequently dishonourable. He was determined, however, at any rate, to indulge his diabolical lusts; but the lady being a person of the strictest honour, he was obliged to act with caution, and keep his intentions a secret. Knowing her propensity to Gaming, he laid a snare for her, into which she fell, to the great diminution of her fortune. This he, fiend-like, took care to have represented with the most aggravating circumstances to the gentleman to whom she was engaged; upon which his friends painted to the young lover the dreadful inconveniences of his taking a gamester to wife: that poverty, disease, and probably

dishonour to his bed, were the likely consequences: in a word, they so managed matters, as to break off the match. The "Noble Villain," who occasioned the breach between the lovers, notwithstanding, missed his wicked ends: his addresses and proposals met with the contempt and abhorrence which they deserved: yet, though she preserved her chastity,—a circumstance very precarious among female gamesters, — the loss of her intended spouse, on whom she had inviolably fixed her affections, threw her into a decline, which, in a few months, put a period to her life.

9. The late Colonel Daniel (who took great pleasure in giving advice to young officers, guiding them in their military functions, &c.) whenever he was upon this article of Gaming, used always to tell the following story of himself, as a warning to others; and to show that a little resolution may conquer this absurd passion. During Queen Anne's wars, he was an ensign in the English army then in Spain: but he was so absolutely possessed by this evil, that all duty, and everything else which prevented his gratifying that darling passion, was grievous to him. He scarce allowed himself time to rest; or, if he slept, his dreams presented packs of cards to his eyes, and the rattling of dice to his ears. His meals were neglected; or, if he attended them, he looked upon that as so much lost time, swallowed his meat with precipitance, and hurried to the Gaming-table again. In one word, he was a professed Gamester. For some time fortune was his friend; and he was so successful, that he has often spread his winnings on the ground, and rolled himself upon them, in order that it might be said of him, "He wallowed in gold." Such was his life for a considerable time; but, as he often said (and we may presume, every considerate man will join with him), "it was the

most miserable part of it." After some time he was ordered on the recruiting duty, and at Barcelona he raised 150 recruits for the regiment; though even this business was left entirely to his serjeant, that he might be more at leisure to attend his darling passion. After some changes of good and ill luck, fortune declared so openly against him, that in one unlucky run, he was totally stripped of the last farthing. In this distress, he applied to the captain of the same regiment with himself for a loan of ten guineas; which was refused with these words: "What! lend my money to a professed Gamester! No, sir, I must be excused; for of necessity I must lose either my money, or my friend. I therefore choose to keep my money." With this taunting refusal, he retired to his lodging, where he threw himself on the bed, to lay his thoughts and his sorrows to a momentary rest during the heat of the day: a gnat or some such insect happening to bite him, he awoke; when his melancholy situation immediately presented itself to him in strong colours. Without money; and no prospect how to get any, to subsist himself, and his recruits to the regiment, who were then at a great distance from him: and should they desert for want of their pay, he must be answerable for it; and he could expect nothing but cashiering for disappointing the Queen's service. He had no friend! for he whom he had esteemed such, had not only refused to assist him, but had added taunts to his refusal. He had no acquaintance there; and strangers, he knew, would not let him have so large a sum as was adequate to his real necessity. This naturally led him to reflect seriously on what had induced him to commence Gamester; and this he presently perceived was idleness. He had now found the cause, but the cure was still wanting. How was this to be effected, so as to preclude a relapse?—Something

must be done; some method pursued, so effectually to employ his time, as to prevent his having any to throw away on Gaming. In this state of mind it occurred to him that the adjutancy of the regiment was to be disposed of, and this he determined to purchase, as a post the most likely to find him a sufficient and laudable way of passing his time. He had letters of credit, to draw for what sum he pleased for his promotion in the army, but not to throw away idly, or to encourage his extravagance. Thus far all was well; but the main difficulty remained, and he must get to the regiment before he could take any steps towards the intended purchase, or draw for the sum to make it with. While he was thus endeavouring to fall upon some expedient to extricate himself out of this dilemma, his friend, the Captain, who had refused him in the morning, came to pay him a visit. After a very cool reception on the Colonel's side, the other began by asking him what steps he intended to take to relieve himself from the anxiety he plainly perceived he was in? The Colonel then told him all that he had been thinking upon that head, and the resolution he had made of purchasing the adjutancy, as soon as he could join the regiment. His friend then getting up, and embracing him, said, "My dear Daniel! I refused you in the morning in that abrupt manner, in order to bring you to a sense of the dangerous situation you were in, and to make you reflect seriously on the folly of the way of life in which you are engaged. I heartily rejoice that it has had the desired effect. Pursue the laudable resolution you have made; for, be assured, that *Idleness and Gaming are the ruin of youth.* My interest, advice and purse, are now at your command: there, take it, and please yourself with what is necessary to subsist yourself and the recruits." This presently brought the Colonel off the bed; and the

afternoon's behaviour entirely obliterated the harshness of the morning's refusal. He now viewed the Captain in the agreeable light of a sincere friend, and for ever after esteemed and found him such. In short, the Colonel set out with his recruits for the regiment, where he gained great applause for his success, which, as well as his commission, he had well nigh lost by one morning's folly. He immediately solicited for, and purchased the adjutancy; and from that day never touched cards or dice, but (as they ought to be used) merely for diversion, or to unbend the mind after too close an attention to serious affairs.

10. Sir Richard Steele gives us the following spirited description of a Gaming-table, as seen by him and Pacelot his aerial friend: "The first thing," says he, "that we took notice of, was a nobleman of a goodly and frank aspect, with his generous birth and temper visible in it, playing at cards with a creature of a black and horrid countenance, wherein were plainly delineated the arts of his mind, cozenage and falsehood. They were marking their game with counters, on which we could see inscriptions, imperceptible to any but us. My lord had scored with pieces of ivory, on which were written, *Good-Fame*, *Glory*, *Riches*, *Honour*, and *Posterity*. The spectre over-against him, had on his counters the inscriptions of *Dishonour*, *Impudence*, *Poverty*, *Ignorance*, and *want of Shame*. "Bless me! said I; sure my lord does not see what he plays for?"—"As well as I do," said my invisible companion: "he despises that fellow he plays with, and scorns himself for making him his companion." At that very instant I saw the fellow who played with my lord, hide two cards in the roll of his stocking. The nobleman, however, soon won the game: but the little triumph he appeared in, when he got such a trifling stock of

ready money, though he had ventured such great sums with indifference, increased my admiration. But Pacolet began to talk to me: "This to you looks wonderful, but not at all to us higher beings: that noble has as many good qualities as any man of his order, and seems to have no faults, but what, as I may say, are excrescences from virtues. He is generous to a prodigality; more affable than is consistent with his quality, and courageous to a rashness. Yet, after all this, the source of his whole conduct is (though he would hate himself if he knew it) mere avarice! The ready cash laid before the gamester's counters, makes him venture, as you see, and lay Distinction against Infamy, Abundance against Want; and, in a word, all that is desirable, against all that is to be avoided."—*Tatler*, no. 15.

11. Hence then we may observe, that amidst every other, the ruling passion of the gamester, whatever his pretensions, is *avarice*. "But—(as one satirically remarks)—can he be avaricious, who trusts his whole property to chance? Who immediately circulates what he wins with a liberality, that has been censured by others as a profusion! Can avarice be his motive to play, who, with twenty thousand pounds in the funds, sits down with a man whose whole estate he knows to be in his pocket, and to amount to no more than ten pieces? The charge of avarice is indeed so ridiculous and absurd, that I am ashamed of an attempt to confute it." "It has been said, that gamesters are strangers to reciprocal felicity; and that the happiness of one is produced by the misery of another; the pain of him who loses, being always proportioned to the pleasure of the winner. But this is only the cavil of popular prejudice: if I am happy, what is it to me who else is miserable."*

* *Adventurer*, no. 29

12. Of all gamesters, and gaming in general, if it be excessive, we may justly conclude, that whether they win or lose for the present, their gains are not "munera fortunæ, sed insidiæ," as Seneca observes; "not fortune's gifts, but baits to ensnare their votaries." The common catastrophe is beggary, in return for the little pleasure and small gains which they now and then derive: their wives, children, families, parents, friends, suffer for, and deplore their career in the mean time; and they themselves bitterly rue it in the end. "A Gentleman, my particular friend, (says the above-quoted writer) who had the honour to be many years an eminent gamester, being without money, committed a robbery upon the highway, to procure another stake, that he might return to his profession. It happened unfortunately that he was taken; and though he had great interest, yet he was committed and hanged. This gentleman's ill-luck continued all the while he was in jail; so that he was compelled to dispose of his body to the surgeons, and lost his money to a friend who visited him in the cells the night before his execution. He appeared however next morning with great composure: no reflection on the past, no anticipation of the future, caused him once to change countenance, during his passage to the gallows: and though he was about to receive death,—so indifferent was he as to what should afterwards befall him, that he bravely refused to say Amen to the prayers!"* What a horrid proof of the total annihilation of all right and generous feelings, produced by a love of Gaming!

* See the *Adventurer*, as above.

SERMON XIV.

ON DUELLING.

But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.
MATTHEW v. 39.

THAT the Christian Religion should have met with opposition, appears nothing extraordinary, when we consider the pride and the prejudice, the passions and the vices of mankind: but that anyone should have been hardy enough professedly to attack its *morality*, may well seem strange, considering the purity and perfection, the benign tendency and social excellence of that morality. Indeed, it is upon this very bottom, that a hardy veteran* in the cause of infidelity hath grounded his heavy charge: the morals of Jesus Christ,—palpably beyond the reach of censure,—are therefore "too good," "too refined;" incompatible with the weakness, unattainable by the powers of imperfect human nature. An objection as false as it is frivolous; calculated no less to encourage the indolence and depravity, than to repress all the noble aspirations of the soul after the highest attainments in virtue.

Amongst the proofs of the impracticability of the Christian morals urged by this clumsy combatant, is that doctrine of "Non-resistance of injuries" inculcated by our Saviour in the text: a doctrine certainly of the greatest utility, both to individuals, and to society; as easy for the man of true Christian principles to perform, as it will ever be found delightful

* Chubb.

and satisfactory in the performance. Indeed, if determined to indulge their passions, to oppose no barrier to their pride or malice, their lust or revenge, there is no wonder that men think not only this, but every other precept of Christian truth severe, and are fond to fancy and to represent them as impracticable. But hence no fair judgment of the case can be formed: we must learn it, as indeed we only can learn it from those who, solicitous to subdue their evil lusts and passions, have entered into the combat with resolution and sincerity; desirous to *overcome*, after their great Master's example, and fixed, through his grace, to persevere unto the end. When men like these declare the precepts of Christ beyond their attainment, his laws too refined, and his morals too sublime for practice, their testimony, doubtless, will deserve to be treated with respect and deference. But when the enemy of the Christian faith, hunting for plausible objections to support his cause; when the man of the world, wedded to his passions, and centered in himself; when objectors like these arraign the morals of Christ, as too exalted and pure, we wonder not at the objection; we readily grant its full weight and force, with respect to them.

Were it otherwise,—to come to a case in point,—could a practice so impious and absurd in itself, and so directly opposite to the whole spirit and genius of the Gospel, as that of *Duelling*, have ever been known in a Christian land? No man can doubt that this barbarous brutality is forbidden by the laws of Christ; of him, who hath commanded *that we resist not evil:* and no man can have hardiness enough to avow that the precept is, in this respect, impracticable; for who will assert that *Duelling* is necessary? So far from it, we dare to assert that the custom, in every view of it, is unmanly, irrational, sinful: as despicable for the most part, in

its *causes*, as it is dreadful and destructive in its *consequences*.

1. Yes, my young friends, develop the real *causes*, discover the true sources of *Duelling*, and you will perceive them to be as despicable, as the practice itself is criminal. True, you will hear much from the defenders of this Gothic custom, of Honour, of Reputation, of Satisfaction,* and other high-sounding words; which, when reduced to their proper import, will be found to mean nothing less in the vocabulary of these gentlemen, than what they really imply. For that honour, for instance, of which we hear so much, and see so little amongst characters of this kind, is so far from countenancing, that it peculiarly condemns the practice. Honour, as a principle, is the refinement of virtue;† as an end, it is the splendour of reputation, the reward of such virtue: and the true man of honour is he who, from the native excellence and real dignity of justice, goodness, and truth, is led to act at all times consistently with them: ever reverencing his conscience and his character, and solicitous to fill up the great, the worthy part, far above the narrow restraint and coercion of the laws, or the fallible testimony of mere human judgment.‡ And can it be supposed that a principle like this can ever allow, can ever justify the hazarding our own, or taking away the life of a brother, for a slight, nay for the greatest affront imaginable? Can it be supposed that a principle like this can ever give rise to duels, or attain its great end and reward, a splendid reputation, in consequence of them? They must be strange and perverse estimators of human actions, who can either believe the one, or bestow the other.

* See Anecdote 10.
† See the Anecdotes, and *Delany's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 260.
‡ See Cicero de Officiis.

In the romantic ages of chivalry, when men's brains were heated with wild and fantastic notions of bravery and honour, it is possible that some entered the lists, on what appeared to them the true and high principles of generosity and virtue. But it would be no less easy to show the folly and falsehood of those principles, than it is palpable to observe, that they have no influence in modern times. Principles far different, and which can by no means claim a thousandth part even of their worth, now place the weapons of death in the hand of the duellist, and call him forth in horrible opposition to his friend, and his brother! Furious passion, and unforgiving pride, here unite to give the sudden challenge! There wine or women, or, in plainer words, drunkenness and lust, draw the destructive sword. In other cases, the demon of gaming* brings this fatal evil in its rear after other mischiefs, and finishes the ruin of fortune with the loss of life. Notable causes all! and such as must necessarily put the soul in a fit condition to appear before the tribunal of God, if discharged, from the body in the hazardous, the impious contest!

Virtue, my young friends, is consistent, is uniform. Founded upon the immoveable basis of reverence to the Deity, and dependance upon him, it will never dare to enter deliberately upon actions which it is conscious that Deity must and will disapprove. And therefore, we may lay it down as an infallible truth, that the man of real virtue will never draw his sword on a fellow-creature, or dare him to the lists of death; will never give or accept the challenge, or oppose his weapon to a human heart, except in self-defence. And if the causes of Duelling, just mentioned, be for the most part such as I have specified; if this detestable practice generally arises from worthless and criminal motives; we see still further, that the truly

* See Sermon on Gaming.

good man, the man of strict and real honour, as he will never give occasion for, so can he never have any necessity to engage in desperate, deliberate, single combat!

A practice, how shocking to the imagination! how opposite to all the principles of reason, religion, and humanity! Two fellow-creatures, frail, fallible, short-lived mortals, endued with reason and reflection, and taught by religion as well as by nature to consider each other as brethren, as friends, as united by the most tender and social ties; two men instigated by the meanest passions, with revenge and guilt boiling in their hearts, preparing by the pistol or the sword, to finish each other's short and precarious existence; and to plunge, the one with all his vices blossoming upon him, into awful futurity; the other, to drag the miserable remains of life, haunted with the distracting consciousness of his brother's, his friend's, perhaps his once dearest friend's* murder upon his soul! Can this be honour? and can reputation ever accompany a deed like this; alas, were it possible, what reputation, what worldly pomp or praise could ever be availing to calm the sorrows of a soul, stained with the guilt of such blood!

But mistake it not, my young friends: as honour bears no part in such actions, so real reputation never attends them. Look round the world and see,

* This is well expressed by an elegant poet:—

Panthus and Euclio, linked by friendship's tie,
Lived each for each, as each for each would die;
Like objects pleas'd them, and like objects pain'd;
'Twas but one soul that in two bodies reign'd.
One night, as usual 'twas their nights to pass,
They ply'd the cheerful but still temp'rate glass;
When lo! a doubt is raised about a word;
A doubt that must be ended by the sword.
One falls a victim,—mark, O man, thy shame—
Because their glossaries were not the same!

See Stillingfleet's *Essay on Conversation.*

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whether the duellist is the man of estimation: search and examine, whether he, who fears not on all occasions to hurl defiance to mankind, and to dare them to the point of his sword, is ranked amongst the characters of general respect? No, rather you will find him an object of general detestation; nor would you wish to be connected in social intercourse with him, whose sword has already reeked with the life's blood of his friend, and who dares to avow and glory in a deed, the very relation whereof chills the heart of the truly virtuous man! Indeed, the frivolous maxims of a neighbouring nation, from whence we are too fond of importing foibles and follies, have gone so far as to sanctify this enormous evil: and, not yet sufficiently purged by manly reason and genuine Christianity, from the wild errors of rude and Gothic barbarism, they with their usual levity, can even approve the duellist,* and represent murder as a characteristic of honour. But the maxims of no nation, however wise and respectable, can alter the true nature of things; no maxims can ever justify inhumanity in feeble mortals; passion, pride, and the lust of revenge in the diciples of Jesus Christ.

2. Supposing this however to be possible; granting that the *causes* of Duels might sometimes be justified, and that there were cases in which a man could no otherwise vindicate his honour, and defend his reputation, than (horrible expedient!) by the pistol or the sword; yet, when reflection turns a moment on the *consequences*, every appearance of justification must immediately vanish.

* It is no uncommon thing in France to recommend a gentleman, as peculiarly worthy your friendship and favourable notice, because "*He has killed his man!*" We must however do justice to the laws of France, Henry IV. though too favourable to the practice, discountenanced it by his laws; and the edict against Duelling was one of the greatest glories of Lewis XIV's reign.

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With respect to himself, the duellist has but two dreadful alternatives before him; either to perish by the hand of his antagonist, or to incur the fearful guilt of that antagonist's blood! The former how irremediably fatal! The latter, how melancholy a corrosive of all the future peace and comfort of life: oh, my young friends, when you consider the awful greatess of eternity, the sublime and self-annihilating laws of him, who is the Lord of that eternity; when you consider the terms upon which you hold that existence which he has given you, the tremendous sanctions by which he hath fenced, as it were, the sacred human life;* when you consider that no laws, human or divine, allow self-revenge, or ever consent to put into man's hand so dangerous an instrument as that of private retaliation of injuries; you will shudder at the consequences of Duelling, as they respect yourselves; and reply, in that case, like the celebrated Patriarch on another, "*How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against my God,*" against my conscience, against society, against reason, against humanity, against every hope of present and future happiness!

But we live not for, ourselves. Can the duellist then, in the fury of his passions, or the bitterness of his revenge, overlook and totally disregard the terrible consequences of this desperate deed to those, with whom he is connected by the tenderest ties? Perhaps he lives the sole hope and stay of some ancient and venerable house; and, after all the labour and anxiety of youthful education is past, is advancing on the great theatre of the world, the delight of his friends, and the solicitous expectation of his affectionate parents; who in the decline of life see with transport their youth renewed, and the hopes and honour of their family reflourishing in their beloved

* See Genesis, ix. 5, 6.

son! And canst thou suppose, oh young man, that no debt, on thy part, is due to these parents, these friends? Canst thou suppose that the disposal of thy life is with thyself only, and that these have no claim upon thee?—I appeal at present only to thy natural affections: I call thy filial love, thy gratitude, thy tenderness, to the trial: consult with these, and thou wilt never dare to hazard thy sacred life; and in one fatal moment to deprive thy parents of a son, thy family of a support, thy friends of a benefactor!

But dearer, tenderer ties still remain, to twine about the heart, to touch it with the keenest sensibility, and to preserve it from the seducing calls of false honour and romantic bravery. If thou wilt needs engage in the desperate Duel, see, on one side, —to unnerve thy wretched arm—Honour, reason, humanity, religion, disavowing the deed. And from what source then shall courage spring? and, on the other side, see the beloved and faithful partner of thy bed, with streaming eyes, and anguish too great for utterance, pointing to the little pledges of your mutual affection, and with dumb but expressive oratory, bewailing her widowed, and their orphan state! Think not the melting softness, which on that sight, on these reflections, must steal upon thy soul; think it not any derogation to thy honour as a man: it is a noble proof of right, of genuine feeling, and deserves to be cherished, to be encouraged, more if possible, than the black and malignant passions brooding in the breast, and instigating to murder and revenge, deserve, to be repressed, subdued, and execrated!

Surely no man, on the flightest review of *consequences* like these, would so far disclaim his reason, as to rush upon a deed, which every law, civil and sacred, condemns; which can admit of no justification, no indulgence; which must either involve his

soul in the horrid guilt of murder, subject him to exile or imprisonment; to wander like the first shedder of a brother's blood, a wretched fugitive over the earth; or to incur the danger of an ignominious death from the impartial sentence of the rigid law. Or, more fatal still, must dismiss him into the tremendous presence of an eternal Judge, under the immediate guilt of transgressing one of his strongest, plainest commands, and for ever precluded from the possibility of repentance!

How astonishing to think, that a practice thus pregnant with mischiefs should ever have prevailed amongst mankind! In some measure to account for it, many date its origin from those dark and barbarous ages, when the true principles of government were neither known or established; when legal redress for injuries was not easily to be obtained; and when too we may add, romantic ideas of courage and virtue prevailed, and the solid grounds of honour or religion were little understood. While others trace the dreadful practice up to the days of that first murderer above referred to; and conceive it cotemporary with the vices and corrupt passions of our kind. Those vices and passions, no doubt, are the genuine source of this destructive evil: but we must, with equal certainty, refer to the gothic ages, for the regular establishment of the barbarous custom *: a custom, which all the refinements of modern government, manners and religion have not been sufficient to explode; which surely it would be the glory of a prince to explode; and one happy step towards which, as a secondary means at least, would be the abolition of that savage fashion,—another vile fruit of the Gothic tree,—"the appearing with an instrument of death in civil and social

* See *Delany's Sermons*, vol. iii. p. 252. *Sully's Memoirs*, vol. ii. and Index, under the article, *Duels*.

intercourse." Seems it not strange, and most unpleasing to thought, that a weapon of vengeance must be worn on the thigh of him, who converses only with fellow-men, with countrymen, and with Christians?—Seems it not of all absurdities the most absurd, that courts, and meetings of the most civilized sort, demand the ungraceful appendage of a sword; and proclaim that self-defence is necessary even there? When will the days arrive, that, awakened to just reflection, men will divest themselves of prejudices riveted by time; and abjure customs, which have nothing but barbarous antiquity to plead in their cause? *

To these prejudices and these customs, my young friends, it is to be feared, you must continue to comply with the rest of mankind; and so long as they are not palpably immoral, an easy compliance is best. But for the practice which we have been decrying, when you consider its causes, and its consequences, when you consider its contrariety to the laws of your nature, your country,† and your God;

* When matters become *ridiculous*, they often fall of themselves to the ground; it was therefore reasonable to have thought that the evil complained of would have been removed, and the practice of wearing swords have been entirely dropped, from the time "that physicians were seen entering the chambers of the sick, with those formidable weapons by their side!" Can a more ridiculous absurdity be fancied! except it be that of our modern fine gentlemen, who with monstrous and fearful *Hangers*, now parade the streets, and appear with them, in all morning assemblies at least.

† Gentlemen of the army, who often so far mistake their duty, as to think themselves obliged to engage in Duels, are of all others the least justifiable in the practice; since, not to speak of the peculiar right which their country has in their lives, the articles of war are express against the practice. For there it is enjoined, "That no officer or soldier shall presume to send a challenge to any other officer or soldier to fight a Duel, upon pain, if a commissioned officer, of being cashiered; if a non-commissioned

you will no more dare to give or accept a challenge, than you will dare to commit the most flagrant and atrocious enormity. And this, not because you are deficient either in courage or in honour: but on the very contrary account; because you are a man of true courage, fearing God and reverencing his laws: a man of true honour, cultivating virtue in its purest refinements, and solicitous to maintain the reverence of your own conscience. And farther we will add, never daring the illegal, the impious Duel, because your life is not your own; because the avenging of yourself is not entrusted with you by the laws of society: much more, because your soul is not your own, but His who purchased it with his own blood; and who both by his sacred precepts, and his benevolent example, hath taught, hath commanded you, *not to resist evil;* but to subdue your own passions, to conquer your lust of revenge; and at the same time to forgive the injurious as freely, fully, and heartily, as you hope and expect to meet with forgiveness from Him.*

Anecdotes *on Duelling.*

1. Perhaps there is not any word in the language less understood than HONOUR, and but few that

officer or soldier, of suffering corporal punishment, at the discretion of a court martial.

"Whatsoever officer or soldier shall upbraid another for refusing a challenge, shall himself be punished as a challenger; and we hereby acquit and discharge all officers and soldiers of any disgrace or opinion of disadvantage, which might arise from their having refused to accept of challenges; as they will only have acted in obedience to our orders, and done their duty as good soldiers, who subject themselves to discipline." *Articles of War*, sect. 7, Art. 2, 5.

* My young readers will be highly entertained and instructed by a fine comment on what we have here endeavoured to enforce, if they refer to the pleasing and judicious picture Mr. Richardson has drawn of his hero, Sir Charles Grandison, in the declining of a Duel. See vol. ii. p. 44, &c.

might not have been equally mistaken, without producing equal mischief. Honour is both a motive and an end; as "a principle of action," it differs from virtue only in degree, and therefore necessarily includes it, as generosity includes justice; and as a "reward," it can be deserved only by those actions, which no other principle can produce. To say of another, That he is "a Man of Honour," is at once to attribute the principle, and to confer the reward; but in the common acceptation of the word, HONOUR, as a principle, does not include virtue; and therefore as a reward, is frequently bestowed upon vice. Hence (such is the blindness and vassalage of human reason) men are discouraged from virtue by the fear of shame, and incited to vice by the hope of honour. Honour indeed, is always claimed in specious terms; but the facts upon which the claim is founded, are often flagitiously wicked. Lothario arrogates the character of "a Man of Honour," for having defended a lady who had put herself under his protection from insult, at the risk of life; and Aleator, for fulfilling an engagement, to which the law would not have obliged him, at the expence of liberty. But the champion of the lady had first seduced her to adultery, and to preserve her from the resentment of her husband, had killed him in a Duel; and the martyr to his promise had paid a sum, which should have discharged the bill of a tradesman, to a gamester of quality, who had given him credit at cards! Such, in the common opinion, are "Men of Honour;" and he, who in certain circumstances should abstain from murder, perfidy, or ingratitude, would be avoided, as reflecting infamy upon his company! See the *Adventurer*, no. 61.

2. Eugenio, in consequence of a quarrel with the illiberal and brutish Ventosus, received a challenge from the latter; which he answered by the fol-

lowing billet. " Sir, your behaviour last night has convinced me that you are a scoundrel; and your letter this morning, that you are a fool. If I should accept your challenge, I should myself be both. I owe a duty to God and my country, which I deem it infamous to violate; and I am entrusted with a life, which I think cannot without folly be staked against yours. I believe you have ruined, but you cannot degrade me. You may possibly, while you sneer over this letter, secretly exult in your own safety; but remember, that to prevent assassination, I have a sword, and to chastise insolence a cane." This letter was delivered to Ventosus, who read it with all the extravagances of rage and disdain. The person who conveyed it, however, endeavoured to sooth and encouruge him. He represented Eugenio as a poltroon, whom he ought no otherwise to punish than by removing him from the rank into which he had intruded; and this, he said, would be very easily accomplished. Accordingly it was soon industriously reported, that Eugenio had struck a person of high rank, and refused him " the *Satisfaction* of a gentleman," which he had condescended to ask. For not accepting a challenge, Eugenio could not be legally punished, because it was made his duty as a soldier by the articles of war ;* but it drew upon him the contempt of his superior officers, and made them very solicitous to find out some pretence to dismiss him. The friends of Ventosus immediately intimated, that the act of violence to which Eugenio had been provoked, was committed within the verge of the court, and was therefore a cause to break him ; as for that offence he was liable to be punished with the loss of his hand, by a law, which though disused, was still in force. This expedient was eagerly adopted, and Eugenio was accordingly deprived of his commission."

* See page 360.

3. Forgiveness of injuries, and a merciful disposition towards those who have offended us, is not only an infallible mark of a great and noble mind; but is our indispensable duty as reasonable creatures, and peculiarly so as Christians. The following is a fine example of this virtue. Gaston, marquis de Renty, an illustrious nobleman, was a soldier and a Christian, and had the peculiar felicity to reconcile the seeming opposition between those characters. He had a command in the French army, and had the misfortune to receive a challenge from a person of distinction in the same service. The marquis returned for answer, That he was ready to convince the gentleman that he was in the wrong; or, if he could not convince him, was as ready to ask his pardon. The other, not satisfied with this reply, insisted upon his meeting him with the sword. To which the marquis sent this answer: "That he was resolved not to do it, since God and his king had forbidden it; otherwise, he would have him know, that all the endeavours he had used to pacify him, did not proceed from any fear of him, but of Almighty God, and his displeasure: that he should go every day about his usual business, and if he did assault him, he would make him repent it." The angry man, not able to provoke the marquis to a duel, and meeting him one day by chance, drew his sword, and attacked him: the marquis soon wounded and disarmed both him and his second, with the assistance of a servant who attended him. But then did this truly-christian nobleman show the difference betwixt a brutish and a Christian courage; for leading them to his tent, he refreshed them with wine and cordials, caused their wounds to be dressed, and their swords to be restored to them; then dismissed them with Christian and friendly advice, and was never heard to mention the affair afterwards even to his nearest friends. It was

a usual saying with this great man, "That there was more true courage and generosity in bearing and forgiving an injury, for the love of God, than in requiting it with another; in suffering, rather than revenging; because the thing was really more difficult." Adding, "that bulls and bears had courage enough, but it was a brutal courage; whereas that of men, should be such as became rational beings and Christians."

4. We cannot, perhaps, better instance the noblest way of taking revenge, than that heretofore pointed out by a common soldier. When the great Condé commanded the Spandish army in Flanders, and laid siege to one of its towns, the soldier in question being ill-treated by a general officer, and struck several times with a cane, for some words he had let fall, answered were coolly, "That he should soon make him repent it." Fifteen days after, the same general officer ordered the colonel of the trenches to find him out a bold and intrepid fellow in his regiment, to do a notable piece of service, and for which he promised a reward of an hundred pistoles. The soldier we are speaking of, who passed for the bravest in the regiment, offered himself to the business; and taking with him thirty of his comrades, whom he selected, discharged his commission, which was a very hazardous one, with incredible courage and success. On his return, the officer highly commended him, and gave him the hundred pistoles he had promised. These, however, the soldier presently distributed among his comrades; saying, he did not serve for pay; and demanded only, that if his late action seemed to deserve any recompense, they would make him an officer; "And now, sir, continued he, to the general (who did not know him) I am the soldier whom you so abused fifteen days ago; and I told you, I would make you repent it." The general

instantly recollected him, and in great admiration of his virtue, threw his arms round his neck, begged his pardon, and gave him a commission that very day.

5. A quarrel having arisen between a celebrated gentleman in the literary world, and one of his acquaintance; the latter heroically, and no less laconically, concluded a letter to the former, on the subject of the dispute, with "I have a life at your service, if you dare to take it." To which the other replied, "You say you have a life at my service, if I dare to take it. I must confess to you that I dare not to take it: I thank my God, I have not the courage to take it. But though I own that I am afraid to deprive you of *your* life, yet, sir, permit me to assure you, that I am equally thankful to the almighty Being, for mercifully bestowing on me sufficient resolution, if attacked, to defend *my own.*" This unexpected kind of reply had the effect: it brought the madman back again to reason; friends intervened, and the affair was compromised.

6. The famous Sir Walter Raleigh (a man of known courage and honour) being very injuriously treated by a hot-headed rash youth, who next proceeded to challenge him, and on his refusal spit upon him, and that too in public; the knight, taking out his handkerchief, with great calmness made him only this reply. "Young man, if I could as easily wipe your blood from my conscience, as I can this injury from my face, I would this moment take away your life."—The consequence was, that the youth, struck with a sudden and strong sense of his misbehaviour, fell upon his knees, and begged forgiveness.

7. The Turks, we are assured, suffer no such things as duels in their dominions. Busbequius tells us of a reproof given to a valiant man by a basha of Constantinople, for boasting that he had challenged his enemy, which is well worthy the notice of every

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thinking Christian. "How durst thou, said he, challenge thy fellow-creature to a duel?—What! was there not a *Christian* to fight with?—Do not both of you eat the emperor's bread?—And yet, for sooth, you must go about to take away each other's lives! What precedent had you for this? Do not you know that whoever of the twain had died, the emperor had lost a subject?" Saying this, the challenger was immediately ordered to prison, where he lay pining many months, and was at last with difficulty released, and even then, with the loss of his reputation.

8. When any matter of difference had fallen out in Macedon betwixt two persons, who were notoriously men of a turbulent and contentious temper, it was brought before king Philip, that he might determine it at his pleasure; who is reported to have generally passed this exemplary sentence upon them: "You, (said he to the one) I command immediately to run out of Macedon; and you, turning to the other, see that you make all imaginary haste after him:" thus banishing them as pests from the capital. A good riddence (says another) of such salamanders, as delight to live in the fire of contention; commencing sharp quarrels upon trivial accounts, and withal knowing no time wherein to end them. See Wanley's *History of man*, b. 4. c. 42.

9. The Greeks and Romans who lived before the general corruption of their countrymen, never dreamt that a *Duel* (which is to be decided by chance, or at most, by a skill in fencing, which they considered as the profession of their slaves) was a proper method of justifying one's self with regard to a reproach; which frequently does not at all concern a person's bravery. The advantage gained proves only that one is a better Gladiator than his adversary, but not that he is exempt from the vice with

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which he was charged. See Dr. Jackson's *Literatura Græca.*

10. It is no uncommon thing, with persons of the duelling stamp, to make a very liberal, but inexplicable use of the term "Satisfaction." An honest country gentleman had the misfortune to fall into company with two or three modern men of honour, where he happened to be very ill treated. One of the company, being conscious of his offence, sent a note to him the next morning, telling him, "he was ready to give him Satisfaction."—"Why, surely now," says the plain honest man, "this is fine doing: last night he sent me away very much out of temper, and this morning, he fancies it would be a satisfaction, to be run through the body!"—See the *Tatler*, no. 25.

11. This abominable custom of fighting Duels seems, in some measure, owing, as we observed, p. 359, to that Gothic fashion of men's wearing swords, who are not of the military class; or, if they are soldiers, when they are not upon military duty. A gentleman cannot go to court, to church, to see his friends, or to visit his patient, unless he is armed with an instrument of slaughter. The ancient Greeks and Romans never wore swords but in war, neither were any Duels (as we have above hinted) ever fought amongst them. If they challenged one another, it was either a contest between rival princes, and to prevent a greater effusion of blood; or else, it was singly to fight against the enemies of their country. Cæsar has given us a remarkable instance of this kind of challenge, in his excellent *Commentaries.* Two centurions of high rank, T. Pulfio, and L. Varenus, having with great animosity long contested which was the braver man, or most worthy of preferment; and being present at Cæsar's camp, when assaulted by the Gauls, the former, in the heat of the

attack, called aloud to the latter in these words: "Quid dubitas, Varene? Aut quem locum probanda virtutis tuæ expectas? Hic dies, hic dies de notris controversiis judicabit:" "Why should you remain in doubt, Varenus? What fairer opportunity can you desire for the proof of your valour?—This, this shall be the day to decide our controversies." Immediately on this spirited call, Pulfio went out of the camp, and rushed upon the enemy. Varenus followed his rival; who, with his javelin, slew the first of the Gauls who engaged him; but being attacked by a shower of darts, one of them pierced his shield, and stuck after such a manner in his belt, as prevented him from drawing his sword. The enemy presently surrounded him, thus encumbered and unable to defend himself. At this instant, Varenus came up to his assistance, slew one, and drove the rest before him; but, pursuing them too eagerly, he stepped into a hole, and fell down. Pulfio, who had now disencumbered himself from the dart, and drawn his sword, came very seasonably to the rescue of Varenus; with whom, after having slain many of the Gaul, he returned with safety and glory to the camp. Thus the Romans, we see, did not in their private quarrels sheath their swords in each other's breast; contests of valour among them were only calls and incitements to the exertion of public and patriotic deeds. See Potter's Antiq. Græc. vol. ii. p. 51, 88. and Cæsar's *Comment. Bell. Gallic.* lib. 5. c. 44.

12. It is reported of the famous viscount de Turenne, that when he was a young officer, and at the siege of a fortified town, he had no less than twelve challenges sent him; all of which he put in his pocket, without further notice: but, being soon after commanded upon a desperate attack on some part of the fortifications, he sent a billet to each of the challengers, acquainting them "that he had re-

ceived their papers, which he deferred answering till a proper occasion offered both for them and himself, to exert their courage for the king's service; that, being ordered to assault the enemy's works the next day, he desired their company, when they would have an opportunity of signalizing their own bravery, and of being witnesses of his." We may leave the readers to determine in this case who acted most like a man of sense, of temper, and of true courage.

13. When Augustus Cæsar received a challenge from Mark Anthony, (in his decline of fortune) to engage him in single combat, he very calmly answered the bearer of the message; "If Anthony is weary of his life, tell him there are other ways of death, besides the point of my sword!" Now, who ever deemed this an instance of cowardice? All ages have admired it as the act of a discreet and gallant man: who, sensible of his own importance, knew how to treat the petulant and vindictive humour of a discontented adversary with its deserved contempt.

14. The author of the Turkish Spy, writing to his friend on the subject in question, observes, "It is not only in Italy that people kill one another in single combats; 'tis the same in France. The best friends tear each other on the smallest occasion, and prepare for a duel in such a manner, as will appear to thee, without doubt, ridiculous. I cannot but call these Christians fools, who suffer such customs among them, yet adore a Messiah, who is a God of peace; and who call us barbarians, when they are the only people that teach us and all other nations, the art of single combat,—the most pernicious custom that can be introduced amongst men: who cut one another's throats, oftentimes on slight occasions, and become prodigals of that treasure wherewith the Immortal has entrusted them."

15. What can be more shocking and painful to

the good mind, than to read that account of the duel between Sir Edward Sackville, and his friend Lord Bruce? given in the *Guardian*, nos. 129 and 133. Of two brave and eminent men, companions and friends, plunging each other into present, and perchance into future woe! "The gallant behaviour" as it is called, "of the combatants," to use the author's own words, "may serve to raise in our minds a yet higher detestation of that false honour, which robs our country of men so fitted to support and adorn it." But, (as one justly remarks) barely to lose life, is the smallest of those evils which attend this mischievous practice. It is pregnant with a long, an almost endless train of disastrous consequences to parents, wives, children, friends, associates, and the community. It is an infallible expedient to be deprived of the favour of an infinite God, and to be excluded the joys of his eternal kingdom: it is the sure way to become an object of abhorrence to the angels of light, and be made the laughing-stock of devils in their dungeons of darkness: "Shame, everlasting shame, shall be the reward of such gallantry, the promotion of such fools." How happy would it be for such, could they now reflect on that future solemn day, wherein He who died ignominiously for us, shall descend from heaven to be our judge, in majesty and glory! "How will the man, who shall die by the sword of pride and wrath, and in contention with his brother, appear before Him, at whose presence all nature shall be in an agony; when all the powers of heaven shall be shaken; when the elements shall dissolve with fervent heat; when the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up!" Surely, it should damp in every mind the diabolical madness, which prompts men to decide their petty animosities by the hazard of eternity, to reflect, that in this one act, the criminal does not

only highly offend, but forces himself uncalled into the awful presence of his Judge. This is certainly his case who dies in a duel. He that so perishes knowingly, outrages the Deity, and in that very action rushes into his offended presence! Is it possible for the heart of man to conceive a more terrible image than that of a departed spirit in this condition? Could we but suppose it just to have left its body, and struck with the dire reflection,—"that to avoid the laughter of fools, and the bye-word of idiots, it has now precipitated itself into the din of demons, and the howlings of eternal despair; how willingly now would it suffer the imputation of fear and cowardice, to have one moment left, not to tremble in vain! How terrible are conviction and guilt, when they come too late for penitence!

16. "I shall recount one accident," says Lord Herbert," which happened while I was at the court of the French king. All things being ready for a ball, and everyone being in their place, and I myself next to the queen, expecting when the dancers would come in, one knocked at the door, somewhat louder than became, as I thought, a very civil person. When he came in, I remember there was a sudden whisper among the ladies, saying, "It is Monsieur Balagny;" whereupon, I also saw the ladies and gentlewomen, one after another, invite him to sit near them, and which is more, when one lady had his company awhile, another would say, "You have enjoyed him long enough, I must have him now." At which bold civility of theirs, though I were astonished, yet it added unto my wonder, that his person could not be thought at most but ordinarily handsome. His hair, which was cut very short, half-grey; his doublet but of sackcloth, cut to his shirt; and his breeches only of plain grey cloth. Informing myself by some standers-by who he was,

I was told that he was one of the gallantest men in the world, as having killed eight or nine men in single fight; and that for this reason the ladies made so much of him, it being the manner of all French women to cherish gallant men, as thinking they could not make so much of anyone else, with the safety of their honour. This cavalier, though his head was half grey, had not yet attained the age of thirty years." See p. 356 foregoing; *Lord Herbert's Life*, p. 70, and *Hale's Golden Remains*, p. 107, &c.

SERMON XV.

ON CONVERSATION.

PART I.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying; that it may minister grace to the hearers. —EPHESIANS iv. 29.

ENOUGH, my young friends, of *false pleasures;* let us take the more grateful view; let us contemplate together, as we proposed,* those pleasures, whose delights are real, permanent, and unembittered; which give ample satisfaction in enjoyment, and afford the rich repast of reflection to the self-approving mind. When I enumerate amongst these the pleasures of "Conversation," "of Reading,"† "of Friendship," "of the right and industrious Employment of Time," "and as the crown of all, the pleasures and comforts "of sincere Religion:" you will readily acknowledge that the characters just given, strictly belong to them; and that they are indeed the genuine source of man's highest and most rational delight.

That they may prove so, to you, my young friends, we will consider them together; and endeavour to show by what means they may impart most

* See Serm. 10, part 1.

† I do not propose to add anything more on this subject, but refer to what has been already advanced in Sermon 5, "on Early Application to Wisdom."

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plentifully to you, from that abundance of *blessings* wherewith they are fraught.

The pleasures of *Conversation* first demand our attention: Conversation, the glory and the prerogative of man, the distinguishing mark of his superiority over the animal world. Whether that world have an ability to communicate their ideas, to converse with each other, has been, with many, a subject of much doubt and speculation. That the different species of animals can convey their conceptions to each other, seems clear beyond a doubt; but that they are able to hold together anything like discourse, must for ever be denied, till better proofs, can be given, than have hitherto been brought, that they possess aught like reason or intellect. No; as this ray of the Divinity gives to the human mind its superiority, its dominion over the inferior creation, so the power to communicate the dictates of that reason, the conceptions of that heaven-born mind, dignifies, at the same time that it blesses in a peculiar degree, the human race. Hence the Psalmist, with expressive force, styles that member, which is the instrument of so much honour, and so much good, his *Glory*, and *the best member that he hath*:* since by means of the articulating tongue, not only all the pleasures and all the benefits of Conversation are enjoyed; but man, weak man, is enabled to address and praise the great God of his life; nay, and to become, as it were, the thankful and adoring high-priest for the whole round of silent, but rejoicing nature.†

Formed, however, for these high and excellent ends, and admirably capacitated in every respect, to answer them, — this *glory* of man, too frequently deviates from its purpose, and instead of the best, becomes the very worst, and most pernicious mem-

* Psalm lvii. 8, xxx. 12. † See Psalm cxlviii.

ber that he hath. St. James* fully felt, and hath finely described this horrible perversion of speech: "Behold," says he, "we put bits into the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole bodies. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the *tongue* is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue [ill-employed] is a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue, [if unrestrained] among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of birds, of beasts, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison; therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God [their common father]. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place, sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries, or the vine, figs? So can no fountain yield both salt water and fresh. Who is a *wise man*, and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him show, out of a *good Conversation*, his works with meekness of wisdom."

This, my young friends, is what I would especially wish you to show; and as you learn from this strong passage of the sacred writer (upon which common life will read you but too plain a comment) how easy it is to offend in tongue, and how scandalous and pernicious such offences are,—depriving us

* James, iii. 3, &c.

at once of all the comforts of that choicest blessing, rational Conversation, and at the same time subjecting us to the wrath of our God. I flatter myself you will determine to avoid all those abuses of the divine gift of speech, which we will now proceed briefly to specify; that so no corrupt communication may ever proceed out of your lips, but such as is *good*, fitted to answer all the valuable ends which the gracious Creator designed, when he gave us this distinguishing prerogative.

By "corrupt communication," St. Paul unquestionably means such discourse as tends at once to show the defilement of the speaker's mind, and to defile and pollute the minds of those who hear; discourse, which is in every view *criminal*, and destructive of all the good purposes of Conversation. Of this kind are "profaneness and blasphemy, obscenity, lying, and slander." These, my young friends, sap the very foundations of liberal converse, and dreadfully pervert, from its proper, its beneficent use, man's glory, the divine and cheering gift of speech! Let no such corrupt, such poisonous communication proceed out of your mouths, since thus you can neither display your own wit or understanding, or in any degree improve others.

For surely, there lives not a rational creature, who can think it any mark of a superior mind to "blaspheme" that only name, by which we are called, and to hurl bold "profaneness" at the throne of the Omnipotent! In truth, nothing can so amply testify a weak understanding; for, as there is no practice more detestable in itself, more full of guilt and impiety, so is there none, which hath so little to urge in justification or excuse; no pleasure which tempted, to plead; no profit which invited, to offer! So that those who accustom themselves to the horrid usage of profane and blasphemous discourse, must stand

forth of all offenders at once the most criminal, the most weak, and the most completely self-condemned. And the rather, as it is not only most easy to abstain from the diabolical language of execrations and blasphemy; but as it is found, by repeated instances, that those who unreservedly use it on other occasions, can abstain, in the company of persons of virtuous character, and whom they respect and reverence!

Unthinking mortals! And shall the presence of a fellow-creature, weak and frail like yourselves, be sufficient to awe you into decency, and to curb the daring license of your sinful tongues; and shall the presence of that eternal, almighty, and avenging Majesty, who hears and notes, and will punish with terrible vengeance your vile and repeated blasphemies: shall His tremendous *presence* have no influence? shall it inspire no awe? shall it impress with no fearful, no alarming apprehensions of his justice and his wrath? Though now with daring, inconsiderate, and abandoned insolence, you call down, in terms shocking to the ear, "damnation from that God," bold to defy, and presumptuous to imprecate; the day, the dreadful day is hastening on apace, when ye will sink, poor, weak, defenceless creatures, into very abjects and cowards, before his blasting frown: when the quick curse, which you have so often called down upon yourselves, launched like blue lightning from his irresistible right hand, will drive you into everlasting perdition; and leave you eternally to execrate amidst devils and condemned spirits, with empty blasphemies, the madness and the folly of your conduct!

God forbid, my young friends, that so horrid a fate should befall any of you! God forbid, that any of you should fall into the guilt of so enormous, so inexcusable a vice! It would be easy for me to en-

large upon it, and show, in a variety of views, its atrocious and destructive nature. But I cannot persuade myself, that you would tread these courts, and listen to these duties, if you could allow yourselves in such an unpardonable practice. I will therefore only observe farther, that if you would avoid this first and greatest impediment to rational Conversation, you cannot be too cautious of admitting any thing tending to an oath, or to the name or concerns of God, in your common discourse.

It is unpleasing to remark, in the general intercourse of life how very little attentive to this particular many of those persons are, who abhor, and start from the imputation of common swearers; and who are, on several other accounts decent and respectable. Yet they (and I am sorry to observe, that this disgrace is sometimes allowed to attach even the delicacy of the female sex) can allow themselves unreservedly, and without the least compunction, in the free use of the name of *God*, of *Lord*, of *Christ*: nay, and frequently can even hazard the sacredness of the *faith*, their *soul*, and the like, in something which seems very similar, to an oath, if indeed it be not a most solemn and serious one. This practice is not only in direct contradiction to St. Paul's advice in the text; but to our Lord's precept, *Swear not at all*, and to his advice that our communication should be simple and sincere*: and certainly comes under the malediction of the commandment which declares, that the *Lord will not hold them guiltless, who take his name in vain.* It is a practice highly immoral, and destructive of the ends of good Conversation; it incurs the guilt of blasphemy; it tends to take off the restraint arising from a due reverence to God and his gospel; and is by all means to be avoided in youth especially, by the means to

* See Matt. v. 37.

be corrected in those who have, or do at any time unfortunately allow themselves in it.

To such, and to all of you, my young friends, I would recommend the practice, and the example of the incomparable Mr. Boyle, who never used the name of the most high God, the sovereign of all the kings of the earth, but he either moved his hat, or made some token of obeisance and respect. And whoever, like that great and good man, have on their souls a just and serious impression of the superlative and unutterable greatness of the God of glory, will never dare, on any account, or even in the slightest manner, to profane or unhallow his awful name: but, on the contrary, will hear and repeat it with religious reverence; and will honour it no less by their lips, than by their lives, with every service which their weakness and humility can render. "Accustom not then yourself to *swearing* (to close this head with the advice of the wise man); neither use yourself to the *naming* of the Holy One. For as a slave who is continually beaten, shall not be without a blue mark, so he that sweareth and nameth God continually, shall not be faultless. A man that used much swearing, shall be filled with iniquity, and a plague shall never depart from his house. There is a word [a blasphemous, profane Conversation] which is clothed about with death; God grant, that it be not found in the heritage of Jacob!—for they that use it, shall leave their memory to be cursed, and their reproach shall not be blotted out. But they that remain shall know, that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord, and that there is nothing sweeter than to take heed unto his commandments*."

Another species of corrupt communication, decried by St. Paul, and to be avoided by every man

* Ecclus. xxiii. 9 &c.

who wishes to enjoy the benefits of refined conversation, is "lewd and obscene discourse;" the certain testimony of a depraved mind, and one of the surest means to depraved the minds of others. Our Saviour hath told us, that *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;* and hence our words, as being but the dress of thought, the index of the heart, assume either their merit or blame; whence again we are informed, that by our words, we shall be justified or condemned. What then can so amply declare a heart full of uncleanness and defilement, as a delight and relish in that Conversation, which kindles a blush, upon the cheek of modesty, and makes the eye of virtue look down with concern? Nor is this the only evil of such Conversation; for while it betrays the inward rottenness of the heart, it tends at the same time to take off the restraints of purity, and debauches the chaste and innocent mind.

Never therefore, my young friends, allow yourselves in the use of it, or associate with those who are familiar in the filthy practice. Youthful lusts, God knows, are but too prevalent, and need nothing to awaken and enflame them; on the contrary, every possible method should be exerted, in compliance with the Apostle's counsel, to flee from, resist, and subdue them. And believe me, you will find more effectual to this good end, than at first you might suppose, a determined resolution never to allow on your own lips, the most distant hint or syllable of obscenity; never to familiarize yourselves with those, who indulge in so scandalous an abuse of language: and whose corrupt tongues are continually venting the poisonous streams of their lustful hearts. If, haply, at any time thrown into company of this sort, you have an easy and a sure method to show your disapprobation, at least, of so debasing a perversion of the divine gift of speech: "You can be grave,

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and silent." And let me tell you, my young friends, if you have judgment and fortitude enough to be so, you will soon find the happiest effect from so powerful a remonstrance. I have seen,—with pleasure I have seen, the serious look of a virtuous and amiable youth, pierce the heart, and put to silence the tongue of age and indecency. And oh, my young friends, if you meet with such, be firm, be modest; and be assured, the incautious jest, the ribbald wit, the studied double-meaning,* will not long offend you: for virtue has charms too strong to be resisted; and the more aged and advanced in life will blush for themselves; and remember, how much they are to be condemned, who forget to "reverence youth."

But if you mean to be reverenced by others; you must first reverence yourselves: and I know not of any particular more necessary to this end, as well as to all the purposes of Conversation, than "Truth." Indeed, truth is the very basis of all Conversation, of all intercourse between man and man; who, if they can be supposed to speak falsely, and to deal deceitfully with each other, all friendly communication, all rational society must cease. On this account it is, that the universal consent of mankind hath united to hold at once in the bitterest scorn, and the lowest contempt, the character of the liar. Almost every other vice hath, or boasts to have, something of bravery annexed to it; but this is so mean and pitiful, so groveling and base, that the abject, guilty of it, shrinks into the lowest insignificance before us. And truly contempt would be his properest reward, did not the mischiefs and injuries to others so frequently arising from his lying tongue, render him justly an object of abborrence also, and a nuisance to society; and while thus scorned and hated by men, as perverting the divine

* See Ephes. v. 4.

power of speech, as desecrating the unpolluted sanctity of truth, the liar is held in abomination by that God also,* who is truth, and who hath destined to eternal perdition whosoever *loveth and maketh a lie*†.

Considerations, more than sufficient, my young friends, to enforce upon your minds the strictest attachment to veracity; to undissembled sincerity,—that ever amiable and estimable virtue,—in all you say and do. You will find the pleasures and the rewards of it inexpressibly great and delightful. You will be free from all the anxieties and entanglements in which falsehood and dissimulation are continually involved. Truth is in its nature so plain and simple, that it requires no art, no subterfuge. It gives boldness and ingenuity to the countenance; it gives firmness and intrepidity to actions. Oh cultivate sacred truth as a fund of self-complacence, of respect and love from others, and of favour with your God! Labour to attain that venerable-pleasing character, of an *Israelite without guile*. Sincerity is the very ground-work and foundation of almost every social virtue. But for the pleasures of Conversation, wherewith we are now more particularly concerned, they can have no existence without veracity. To enjoy them therefore, resolve on all occasions to maintain the strictest attachment to that veracity; to be sincere and undissembled in all your discourse: in particular, never accustom yourselves to strong and positive assertions, which generally lead on to oaths, in order to support and confirm them; and thus too commonly add to falsehood the guilt of profaneness. Nor by any means indulge yourselves in the practice of telling marvellous and extraordinary tales: your credulity will be ridiculed, or your veracity doubted. In short, maintain, on all occasions, plain, simple, natural truth; assured that the

* See Prov. xii. 22. † Rev. xxii. 15.

*lip of truth shall be had in honour, shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment.**

There is another species of corrupt communication, which may, with great propriety come under the head of lying; and that is "Calumny and Slander"—the bane of all conversation; the index of a black and malevolent mind; and the sorest plague of social felicity. Yet, my young friends, detestable and destructive as it is, contradictory, in the strongest degree, to the plainest and most important precepts of Christ, nay, and even unworthy the character of rational, much more of civilized, creatures; into what society shall I lead you, to what company or Conversation shall I be able to recommend you, where this fatal mischief will not intrude?

But why lament the evil? Be it our care rather to avoid it. To which purpose, study to engraft upon the goodness of your natural tempers and dispositions, the noble refinements of divine and Christian love†; that love, which inspires with the truest, with the most genuine good-nature, and makes the possessor the delight, the favourite of all mankind. The heart, fraught with this love, will fill the tongue with gentleness and kindness; nor from it can ever flow the language of malevolence and injury, the poison of slander, or the keen severity‡ of censoriousness and detraction. So far from it, taught by that love, inspired by that right and rational good-nature‖, just and generous sentiments will fill the soul: the weakness and imperfections, the follies or the vices of fellow-creatures will be observed with candour and concern; conscious of our own nature, we shall

* Prov. xii. 19, &c. † 1 Cor. xiii.

‡ See Proverbs xii. 18.

‖ May I be allowed to refer my young hearers to a poem on this subject, the first in my little collection?

make proper allowances for their defects, who share that nature in common with us; shall never blazon an absent brother's faults, magnify his vices, or depreciate his virtues; but, well convinced of the value and importance of reputation, shall secure our own, by being tender and cautious of the reputation of others.

While sentiment and principle, while the just dictates of Christian love preserve you, my young friends, from the black guilt of determined and malicious Calumny. Let not an allowed volubility of tongue, or a vacancy of mind, an emptiness of understanding, betray you into unpremeditated, and undesigned censoriousness. A love of talking, and a barreness of subject, are too often the fertile sources of this evil.* Place therefore a guard, a restraint upon your lips, if you find yourself unhap-

* Here it may be proper just to add, as a caution (though perhaps it might be thought to belong more properly to the general hints respecting Conversation) that speaking too largely either in Praise or Dispraise of any person, is absurd and dangerous, and will tend to attack the person's character for veracity, who indulges so improper a custom. But I cannot express my own sentiments better than in the words of the ingenious Mr. Stillingfleet:—

Be rarely warm in censure, or in praise,
Few men deserve our passion either ways:
For half the world but floats 'twixt good and ill,
As chance disposes objects, these the will;
'Tis but a see-saw game, where virtue now
Mounts above vice, and then sinks down as low.
Besides, the wise still hold it for a rule
To trust that judgment most that seems most cool:
For all that rises to Hyperbole,
Proves that we err at least in the degree.
But if your temper to extremes should lead,
Always upon the indulging side exceed:
For tho' to blame most lend a willing ear,
Yet hatred ever will attend on fear:
And when a neighbour's dwelling blazes out,
The world will think, 'tis time to look about.

See the *Essay on Conversation.*

pily prone to garrulity: and be careful at your leisure hours, well to store your mind, that when you prepare for the pleasures of Conversation, you may be able to produce something from your treasury, worthy yourself and those with whom you converse.

It is shameful to hear, as we often do, from "rational creatures," the want of other matter than scandal for Conversation urged, as a plea for the wretched trifling waste of time at cards. What then! can a set of intelligent beings, formed for society, for Conversation, for the noble intercourse of soul with soul; and alone, of all our creation, favoured with this high, this exquisite prerogative:—can such beings find in the whole round of nature and of grace, in the visible or invisible world, in the past or the present ages, in time or eternity—nothing worthy to engage their thoughts, to employ their speculations, to communicate their ideas, to amuse, delight, improve, or enlarge their minds? Nothing but the little, pitiful, insignificant defects of others—marked stronger, perhaps, in their own conduct; nothing, but what they should blush to mention, or weep to hear told!

Away, my young friends, with such poor, such wretched pretences! such hypocritical self-deluding arguments, to countenance the meanest and most despicable abuse of time, and the veriest degradation of the human intellect! The liberal and the virtuous, the serious and contemplative, can ever find sufficient matter to supply Conversation with its choicest luxuries, without wounding the reputation, or stabbing to the heart an absent brother's good name! As they find no propensity to a vice thus accumulated with guilt, so to shun it, they have no cause to "cry for mercy to the lowest amusement;" or to pass their important hours, in insignificance, to say the least;—how often might we add, in the most

desperate and destructive employment*! Solicitous at all times to improve their own minds, they enter with satisfaction the social assembly; as assured that the minds of others will gain improvement from their acquisitions, at the same time that they impart, in return, their pleasing contribution of knowledge and wisdom.

Thus, my young friends, I have traced out four capital evils in Conversation, which taint it in its very vitals, and are ever to be avoided;—"Blasphemy," "Lewdness," "Lying," and "Slander." But it is not enough that you shun these. To enjoy the "Delights of Conversation," other rules are necessary; and we will proceed to them in our next.

* See the Sermon on *Gaming*.

SERMON XV.

ON CONVERSATION.

PART II

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying; that it may minister grace to the hearers. EPHESIANS iv. 29.

IN conformity with the sacred counsel of the prophet, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well;* St. Paul exhorts, with respect to *Conversation*, that we first shun that which is *corrupt*, and Secondly, practise that which is *good*.

Avoiding therefore the extreme evils of "Profaneness." "Indecency," "Lying," and "Slander," those worst branches of corrupt communication; you are to be careful, my young friends, in the next place, that your Conversation be not only innocent, but *good*, instructive, useful, and pleasing: to which purpose you must diligently attend no less to the *matter* than the *manner*, of your Conversation.

With regard to the former, there can be no doubt, that St. Paul designs to recommend especially serious and religious discourse, the most interesting, the most instructive, and the most noble of all others: but yet not so to recommend it, as to exclude every other subject of discourse, or to render it criminal to converse on different and ordinary topics. Every wise and good man, would certainly wish to converse most freely and frequently on those matters which interest and delight him most, and to such a

man no matters can be so interesting and delightful, as the great, the important truths of religion. But in proportion to their importance, should be our prudence in introducing, and our caution in discussing them.

There are, my young friends, those who, heated with false zeal, and agitated by enthusiasm, continually obtrude religious Conversation; and without the least prudence or discernment, nauseously press it upon every company. You will observe, in consequence of this impropriety, the dull and stagnating silence which commonly ensues: or, perhaps, which is worse, the illiberal jest, or sour contention which spring up, to the total abolition of all rational converse. Made wise by these admonitions, and still more so by his counsel, who hath commanded you *not to throw pearls before swine;* you will be cautious how you force religious Conversation. Large and mixed companies will seldom bear it: the utmost you can do, in such societies, will be to preserve the innocence of the Conversation; and now and then, perhaps, with delicacy and attention, to throw in a remark which may be serious and useful. More than this, will not only subject you to the charge of impertinence, but to one which is still more unpleasing, I mean, that of "Hypocrisy;" for true religion, being of a silent nature, men justly suspect those of a deficiency in it, or of false pretences to it, who are continually wearing it in their mouths, not showing it by the noiseless tenour of an active, uniform, and virtuous life.

Thus cautious of obtruding religious discourse, you must endeavour to show no less wariness and prudence, when so happy as to have found a proper season, and a proper set, to enjoy this highest feast of the rational mind. By no means assume the character of the "Dissertator" or the "Disputant:"

the one never fails to weary and disgust; the other to irritate and offend: and both serve so much to feed and to discover those tempers and dispositions, which are diametrically opposite to the meekness and humility of the Christian, that they totally destroy all the good purposes of religious Conversation. It is the peculiar, the distinguishing praise of this Conversation, that while it informs the head, it amends the heart: and therefore we cannot be too attentive, that none of those passions intermingle themselves in it, which are fatal to moral improvement. A spirit of modest inquiry; a willingness to hear and to learn; a deference to the opinions of others; and a respectful proposal of your own, will tend at all times to enlarge your minds, and to gratify the minds of those with whom you converse. Nor can we conceive, that the human intellect can enjoy a more luxurious entertainment, than Conversation, thus regulated and formed amongst men of thinking, serious dispositions on subjects the highest and most ennobling in themselves, and to the human nature of the most momentous weight and concern. An entertainment, my young friends, by no means to be expected in large and mixed assemblies: but for which you must retire, with the wisest men of ancient times,* to the shades of private life; and in the small and select band, known and approved, enjoy this delicious repast, this intercourse of soul with soul, this most improving, most elevating, and most useful communication.

* "Thus," says Mr. Hervey, "Socrates, the wisest of the Athenian sages; thus Scipio, the most acccomplished of the Roman generals, conversed.—Thus Cicero, the prince of orators, improved his elegant retirement at the Tusculan villa. And Horace, the brightest genius in the court of Augustus, formed the most agreeable hours of his conversation upon this very plan." See *Theron* and *Aspasio*, vol. i. p. 5.

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But not with respect to religion only, it is to be feared, that if you would wish to enjoy the true delights of refined Conversation, on topics of any kind, you must never expect it in large and general meetings: "The small, select, and social band,"* seems alone calculated to diffuse and enjoy this exquisite pleasure.† Mixing with these, you must remember, that Conversation is a matter of mutual traffic; towards which every man is bound in duty to contribute his quota; and therefore if he means to partake of the profit, he ought by all means to furnish his part of the stock.

To this end, your great endeavour should be so to supply your own mind with the proper materials for Conversation, that you may be able, like the rich householder, to bring out of your plenteous treasury, *things new and old*, for the entertainment and instruction of your friends and companions. We have before observed, that as it is *from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, so men's words and Conversation necessarily flow from the ruling principle within: and therefore, if by reading and reflection your mind is occupied upon wise and sensible objects, and your thoughts filled with them, you will be naturally led to communicate from your store; and your discourse, to the great emolument of those with whom you converse, will take the same useful and improving turn with your thoughts.

However, one thing is carefully to be avoided; "a monopoly of the Conversation." Though your topic is most instructive; though you understand it

* There is an old but good remark concerning the number requisite to form such a band: "They should never be more than the Muses, it is said, or fewer than the Graces."

† Dean Swift, in his useful *Hints on Conversation*, calls it "a useful and innocent pleasure, fitted for every period and condition of life, and very much in all men's power." See his works, vol. xiii.

completely; and can treat of it in the most masterly manner; nothing can excuse your assuming to yourself the principal part of the discourse, and not allowing to others their due share and portion of it. For Conversation, founded upon equality, by no means allows of engrossing: every man has a right to claim his part, and expects to be heard. But this is not the only evil or offence of garrulity; it betrays a weak and an arrogant mind: and if it be accompanied, as too frequently happens, with an insolent and dogmatical air, with an over-bearing, presumptuous, and pedantic* manner, it defeats the ends of Conversation: and infallibly brands the intemperate prater with the stigma of contempt.

Pythagoras, my young friends, well convinced of the great wisdom and utility of knowing how to restrain the tongue, enjoined all his disciples a three years silence: and be assured, there is more good sense and advantage in knowing how to keep silence properly than you are aware of. "Silence in company, if not dulness or sheepishness, is observation or discretion."† An attention to others, conciliates their regard and attention to you: and a modest question thrown in, now and then; a kind of inquiring observation, never fails to conciliate to young men the esteem of all with whom they converse.‡ Always to be more knowing than you appear to be;

* "Pedantry, as I take the word," says Dean Swift, "is not properly used: because Pedantry is the too frequent and unseasonable obtruding our own knowledge in common discourse, and placing too great a value upon it; by which definition men of the court or army, may be as guilty of Pedantry, as a philosopher or divine, &c. See the whole discourse."

† Sir W. Temple.

‡ The best rules to form a young man, Sir W. Temple says, are, to talk little, to hear much, to reflect alone upon what has passed in company, to distrust his own opinions, and value others, that deserve it.

never forwardly to obtrude yourself, or wish to outshine others in company; but on all occasions to wear the garb of diffident modesty, is the infallible road to gain in Conversation both knowledge and respect.

Besides engrossing the Conversation, we must note another defect, the consequence generally of a love of talking,—that fertile source of innumerable evils. Never, my young friends, on any account, unless immediately called upon, and urged by self-defence, "make yourselves the topic of your discourse." Nothing so nauseous, so offensive as egotism: it bespeaks the empty, vain, and insignificant mind. Men, conscious of the source from whence this error springs, will suspect whatever you say, and withhold from you all the praise you propose to gain by holding forth your own perfections to view: and should you, with some, absurdly affect to condemn yourself in sober sadness, for some vice or evil (to which you unfortunately are addicted)!* your hearers will have discernment enough, be sure, to see of what virtue you thus mean to claim the excess; and will ridicule the weakness which you alone are too blind to overlook. To please and to be instructed, you will act wisely to "annihilate yourself," as it were, in Conversation: nothing is so disgusting as a man "too big" for his company;† and

* Dean Swift, than whom no man understood human nature better, observes in his *Hints on Conversation*, that "some make a vanity of telling their faults; they are the strangest men in the world, they cannot dissemble; they own it is a folly; they have lost abundance of advantages by it; but if you would give them the world, they cannot help it; there is something in their nature which abhors insincerity and constraint; with many other insufferable topics of the same altitude.

† Nothing so unreasonable or insufferable, in common Conversation, as sufficiency, says Sir William Temple. See his *Heads of an Essay on Conversation*, Works, vol. iii. p. 525, 8vo, and *Anecdote* 19.

nothing so despicable and tedious, as the insipid retailer of dull stories and circumstantial narratives; the miserable, minute, self-important historian of uninteresting details, which lull even sweet Patience herself to sleep, and make good sense run mad!

But let me caution you, my young friends, as against the excess of talking* on one hand, so against the defect on the other. A modest and respectful silence is doubtless most wise and amiable: but a dull and morose one is hateful and disgusting. And I know not whether the eternal shallow prater may not be the better companion of the two, than the man who in solemn silence hears, and speaks not: or only, perhaps, in blunt honesty as he calls it, now and then speaks his mind, to the pain and disgust of all present; or, with an importance, which nothing but his dullness can exceed, occasionally distils a sentence or two, drop by drop, from his oracular lips.

That great apostle, whose words we have taken as the foundation of this discourse, tells us, that it was a rule of his conduct "*to become all things to all men*, so far as reason and religion allowed him to comply, *that he might gain some*; with the Jews a Jew, with the Gentiles a Gentile." It is a rule, my young friends, no less useful for the attaining all the pleasures and advantages of Conversation†. *Become all things to all men*, under the same invariable

* A distinction here should take place, which is well put by Dean Swift: It is not, says he, a fault in company to talk much; but to continue it long, is certainly a great one for if the majority of those who are got together be naturally silent or cautious, the Conversation will flag, unless it be often renewed by one among them, who can start new subjects; provided he doth not *dwell* upon them, but leaveth room for answers and replies.

† Aulus Gellius judiciously exhorts to take care to unite the benefits of improvement, with the blandishments of Pleasure and Conversation.

distinctions endeavour, as much as you can, and ought, to conform yourselves to the taste, character, and present humour of those with whom you converse. To do this, certainly requires discernment and judgment; but a due attention, and constant observation of men and manners, will be found sufficient to teach it, at least in a great degree. Especially if, while you take the rule from St. Paul, you take also from him the grand principle whereupon he framed it; namely, a sincere love to your fellow-creatures, grounded on the principle of Christian truth. This love will inspire you with so amiable a desire to please all those with whom you converse, to their edification, that it will teach you the truest politeness;* that eminent qualification, without which, Conversation must be offensive; with which, it can never fail to be agreeable.

Politeness in the common intercourse of the world, is a subsidium to what Christian love is, in the better system of religion and virtue. The former may be defined "A constant attention to oblige, to do or say nothing, which may give pain or offence:" And Christian love is a continual endeavour to please, in order to promote our neighbour's best welfare. While, therefore, my young friends, you act upon the amiable principles of Christian truth, let that love especially, which is the most refined politeness, be the principal regulator of your behaviour in Conversation. "Study always to please, in order to im-

* The elegant author of the *Essay on Conversation*, advises.

"Study with care, politeness: that must teach
The modish forms of gesture and of speech.
She moves with easy, though with measured pace.
And shows no part of study, but the grace;
Yet even by this man is but half refined,
Unless philosophy subdues the mind:
'Tis but a varnish, that is quickly lost,
Whene'er the soul in passion's sea is tost."

prove and do good." Good sense, good humour, and good breeding, unite in nearly the same dictate: * and if they carry not the motive so far as it is carried by Christianity, rejoice, that you have the happy, the plain direction of a precept to form your behaviour, which is no less infallibly productive of your own internal peace and felicity, than it is certain to recommend you to the approbation and good esteem of others.

Thus too, permit me to observe, you will be enabled to promote, in a peculiar manner, the honour of that holy religion, upon which the morose and forbidding carriage of some austere and mistaken zealots hath brought a suspicion of moroseness and unsociability. How differently will they judge of it, who see you, actuated by its divine principles, *showing out of a good Conversation your works, with all the meekness of wisdom;* showing that genuine and unaffected humility, which Christian love inspires, and which is one of the most requisite and adorning qualifications in Conversation: when they see you actuated by the first and characteristic precept of it, love to mankind; cautious of all offence in word, abhorring profaneness, indecency, falsehood, and slander; and daring no more to offend God, than to injure, in the slightest degree, the reputation of a fellow-creature: when they see you with the utmost modesty, sweetness, and gentleness of manners,

* The chief ingredients in the composition of those good qualities, which gain esteem and praise, says Sir W. Temple, are truth, good nature, good sense, and good breeding. Good nature is seen in a disposition to say or do what one thinks will please or profit others. Good breeding, if doing nothing one thinks will either hurt or displease them. Good nature and good sense come from our births or tempers; good breeding and truth chiefly by education and converse with men. Yet truth seems much in one's blood; and is gained too by good sense and reflection, that nothing is a greater possession, or of more advantage to to those who have it, as well as those who deal with it.

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hearing with attention,* replying with diffidence, and instructing, while never seeming to instruct: while they see the blush kindle on your cheeks, on any occasion of producing yourself, and mentioning your own concerns; studious to please others; careful never to pain or offend them; and consequently, never meddling with those dangerous weapons raillery† and humour, which too commonly cut with both edges, and wound as well as the hand that strikes, as the person stricken with them: in short, while they see you solicitous to become all things to all men, that you may engage and win them; and anxious to introduce the most profitable "matter," by the most pleasing "manner," in Conversation, that you may, if possible, *minister grace;* and lead, by the paths of imitation, those who hear, to the same fountain whence you drwa such a fund of satisfaction and advantage.

Many more, my young friends, are the rules, which are or may be laid down for Conversation; one of the liveliest of our pleasures, the enlarger of our knowledge, and a principal source of our intellectual wealth. But what I have said may suffice, at once to point out the chief evils which you should avoid, and the more important qualifications which you should cultivate, in order to enjoy this pleasure

* To make others wit appear more than one's own, a good rule in Conversation: a necessary one to let others take notice of your wit, and never do it yourself.—Sir *W. Temple.*

† Hence the author of the *Essay on Conversation,* advises,

"—Above all things raillery decline,
Nature but few does for that task design:
'Tis in the ablest hand a dangerous tool,
Which never fails to wound the meddling fool:
For all must grant, it needs no common art,
To keep men patient, when we make them smart."

These specimens from this useful poem, will be sufficient to recommend an attentive perusal of the whole. See *Dodsley's Miscellany,* vol. i. p. 310.

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in its truest perfection. Happy they, who, associated with those of similar dispositions and pursuits with themselves, cherish and enjoy this highest entertainment. Mixed with friends chosen and approved, you may discuss with infinite utility subjects of the most important nature; and such discussion, be assured, will peculiarly enlarge your minds.

Great and extensive is the round of intellectual knowledge; various and infinite the topics worthy to engage a rational attention and inquiry; and one peculiar excellence, my young friends, of such attention and inquiry is, that while it mends and improves the mind, it preserves it at that same time from the pitiful aberrations, into which they fall, who are vacant and unemployed; or engaged alone in the frippery pursuits of vanity, folly, and the world.

Cultivate, therefore, my young friends, rational Conversation; and let me particularly recommend, as a subject ever and most especially worthy that Conversation, the Deity and his works; his ample works in creation and redemption. Religious Conversation, under the restrictions laid down in the former part of this discourse, is, as we have said, and truly said, "the most noble, the most interesting, and most instructive of all others." "A frequent conference on the glories of the *Godhead* (I use the words of one, who well knew the sublimity and excellence of that conversation)* or the wonders of creation, will invigorate and ennoble the soul: will enlarge her faculties, and elevate her desires. *Did not our hearts burn within us*, said the travellers at Emmaus, *while* HE *talked with us by the way?* These discourses, it is true, were conducted with a spirit, and enforced with an energy, absolutely unequalled. Yet the same happy effects would, in an inferior degree, result from our friendly conferences, if they

* Mr. Hervey. See *Theron and Aspasio.*

turned upon the same important points. We also should feel our hearts warmed with holy zeal, and glowing with heavenly love. Nor would such conferences be productive of present advantage only; they would yield a renewed pleasure in the retrospect. We might reflect with real complacency, on hours spent in so rational a manner."

And as a farther motive to such Conversation, we shall do well to consider, that the infinite and eternal God is present at all our interviews; vouchsafes to express his satisfaction, and to acknowledge himself magnified, when with admiration and love we talk of his transcendent excellencies. Nay, we are assured that the Lord of all lords not only hearkens, but keeps a book of remembrance, and will distinguish such persons at the day of universal retribution. When the loose train of licentious talkers are driven away as the despicable chaff; these shall be selected for his peculiar treasure, and numbered among the jewels of Jehovah.*

Who, then, that is wise, would not habituate himself to a practice, which comes so strongly recommended by the voice of reason, and is enforced by the authority of God? A practice, which will "administer present good"—will "afford pleasing reviews"—and "terminate in everlasting honour?"

Anecdotes *respecting Conversation.*

1. Plutarch tells us, in a few words, what an infinite advantage Alexander reaped from the fine taste wherewith his preceptor Aristotle inspired him, even from his tenderest infancy. "He loved, says our author, to converse with learned men; to improve himself in knowledge; and to study." Three sources these, of a monarch's happiness, which enable him to secure himself from numberless difficul-

* See Malachi iii. 16, 17.

ties; three certain and infallible methods of learning to reign without the assistance of others. The "Conversation" of persons of fine sense instructs a prince, as it were, in the way of amusement; and teaches him a thousand curious and useful things, without costing him the least trouble. The "lessons" inculcated by able masters, impress and wonderfully improve; and furnish him with rules to govern his subjects with wisdom; and in fine, "study," especially that of history, crowns the whole; becomes to him a preceptor of all seasons, and for all hours; that, without growing troublesome, acquaints him with truths which no one else dare to give him; under fictitious names, exhibits him to himself, and teaches him to know, to feel and support his own character, as well as to investigate those of mankind, who are the same in all ages.

2. It was Mr. Locke's peculiar art in Conversation, to lead people to talk of their own profession, or whatever they best understood. With a gardener, he discoursed of gardening; with a jeweller, of diamonds; with a chemist, of chemistry; with a watchmaker, of clocks, watches, &c. "By this means, said he, I please all those men, who commonly can speak pertinently upon nothing else. As they believe I have an esteem for their profession, they are charmed with showing their abilities before me; and I in the meantime improve myself by their discourse." By this putting questions to artificers, he would sometimes find out a secret in their art which they did not understand themselves: and often give them views of the subject entirely new, which they put into practice with advantage.

3. The faculty of interchanging our thoughts with one another, or what we express by *Conversation*, has always been represented by moral writers, as one of the noblest privileges of reason, and which

more particularly sets mankind above the brute part of creation. Monsieur Varillas once told his friend, the author of the *Menagiana*, that out of every ten things he knew, he had learned nine in Conversation. And I too, says M. Menage, can in a great measure declare the same. See *Menag.* vol. i.

4. The understanding of a man deprived of the converse of others, is so little exercised, and so little cultivated, that he does not think so much thereon, as he is indispensably obliged to do by external objects. The greatest fund of the ideas of men, therefore, is in their reciprocal Conversation; and we may add, one of the most fertile sources of their comforts too. It was no ill reflection that Tully made upon the delight and pleasure men naturally have in communication, in telling other men what they know, and what they have seen: "That if a man could get up into Heaven, and take a clear view of the majesty thereof, and behold the beauty of the stars, and the other ornaments of the sky; *Insuavem illam admirationem ei fore; quae jucundissima fuisset, si aliquem cui narraret habuisset;* that wonderful prospect would be even insipid, for want of somebody to whom he might relate what he saw." Men do not see so much, because they do not mark so well, alone, as in Conversation; and he who informs others, often teaches himself: it being a blessing upon mental intercourse, that new and useful thoughts occur in the act of communication.

5. Pliny, in one of his elegant epistles, speaking of his friend Iseus, says, "Authors you may turn over at any time; but you cannot always have an opportunity of hearing Iseus. We are infinitely more affected with what we hear, than with what we read. There is something in the voice, the countenance, the habit, and the gesture of the speaker,

that concurs in fixing an impression upon the mind, and gives this method of instruction greatly the advantage of anything one can receive from books." See b. 2, lett. 3, Melmoth.

6. The utility and excellence of rational conversation cannot perhaps be expressed in words more beautiful and elegant than the following, by Dr. Young.

Good sense will stagnate. Thoughts shut up want air,
And spoil, like bales unopen'd to the sun.
Had Thought been all, sweet Speech had been deny'd;
Speech, thought's canal! speech, thought's criterion too!
Thought in the mine, may come forth gold or dross;
When coin'd in words we know its real worth.
If sterling, store it for thy future use;
'Twill buy thee benefit perhaps renown.
Thought too deliver'd, is the more possess'd;
Teaching we learn; and giving we retain
The births of Intellect; when dumb, forgot.
Speech ventilates our intellectual fire;
Speech burnishes our mental magazine;
Brightens for ornament, and whets for use.
What numbers, sheath'd in erudition, lie,
Plunged to the hilts in venerable tomes,
And rusted in; who might have borne an edge,
And played a sprightly beam, if born to speech;
If born blest heirs of half their mother's tongue?
'Tis thought's exchange, which, like th' alternate push
Of waves conflicting, breaks the learned scum,
And defecates the student's standing pool.
Rude Thought runs wild in contemplation's field;
Converse, the menage, breaks it to the bit
Of due restraint; and emulation's spur
Gives graceful energy, by rivals awed.
'Tis converse qualifies for solitude,
As exercise, for salutary rest.

Night 2.

7. Solomon tells us, that "he who walketh with wise men will be wise." It is not so only in matters of religion; it extends to every circumstance of life. Conversation with men of polite genius, is a certain method for improving our natural taste; for adorning and enriching the mind. "It is impossible," says Mr. Addison, "for a man of the greatest parts to

consider anything in its whole extent, and in all its variety of lights. Every man, besides those general observations which are to be made upon an author, forms several reflections, that are peculiar to his own manner of thinking: so that Conversation will naturally furnish us with hints which we did not attend to, and make us enjoy other men's parts and reflections, as well as our own. This is the best reason I can give for the observation which several have made, that men of great genius in the same way of writing, seldom rise up singly, but at certain periods of time appear together, and in a body; as they did at Rome, in the reign of Augustus, and in Greece about the age of Socrates. I cannot think that Corneille, Racine, Moliere, Boileau, La Fontaine, Bruyere, Bossu, or the Daciers, would have written so well as they have done, had they not been friends and contemporaries."—*Spectator*, no. 409.

8. Of all the inconveniences attending the intercourse of mankind, slander and detraction are the most frequent, and in a very high degree odious and detestable. We are told of St. Bernard, that when he was drawing near his end, he thus solemnly addressed himself to his brethren, as a dying man bequeathing legacies to his friends. "Three things I require you to keep and observe, which I remember to have kept, to the best of my power, as long as I have lived. 1. I have not willed to slander any person; and if any have fallen, I have hid it as much as possible. 2. I have ever trusted less to my own wit and understanding than to any other's. 3. If I were at any time, harmed, and annoyed, I never wished vengeance against the party who so wronged me." This memorable sentence is peculiarly applicable to every branch of the present subject; defamation, insolent overbearing, and petulant animosity, being the chief ingredients that tend to embit-

ter Conversation, and preclude its improvement and advantage.

9. It is always a certain sign of an ill heart, to be inclined to defamation. They who are harmless and innocent, can have no gratification that way; but it ever arises from a neglect of what is laudable in a man's self, and an impatience of seeing it in another. How wretchedly low and contemptible is that state of mind which cannot be pleased, but by what is the subject of just lamentation? This temper has ever been in the highest degree odious to gallant spirits, and ought to be scouted from every society of men. The Persian soldier, who was overheard reviling Alexander the Great, was well admonished by his officer, in those memorable words—"Sir, you are paid to fight against Alexander, and not to rail at him." *

10. Cicero, in one of his pleadings, defending his client from general scandal, says very handsomely, and with much reason, "There are many who have particular engagements to the prosecutor: there are many who are known to have ill will to him for whom I appear; there are many who are naturally addicted to defamation, and envious of any good to any man, who may have contributed to spread reports of this kind. For nothing is so swift as scandal; nothing is more easily sent abroad; nothing received with more welcome; nothing diffuses itself so universally.† I shall not desire, that if any report to our disadvantage has any ground for it, you would overlook or extenuate it. But, if there be anything advanced, without a person who can say whence he had it; or, which is attested by one who forgot who told it him, or, who had it from one of so little con-

* See a well written letter on this subject in the *Christian's Magazine*, vol. iv. p. 411—413.

† See the *Beauties of Shakspere*, vol. i. p. 55 and 203.

sideration, that he did not then think it worth his notice; all such testimonies as these, I know you will think too slight, to have any credit against the innocence and honour of our fellow citizens." What an admirable rule and criterion of Conversation is this! When an ill report is traced, it very often vanishes among such as the orator has here recited: and how despicable a creature must that be, who is in pain for what passes among so frivolous a people! —*Spectator*, no. 427.

11. Few have more happily expressed themselves on the topic in question than Epictetus. "Consider with yourself seriously," says he, "what figure is most fit for you to make in the world; and then fix upon a method and rule in order hereunto: which be sure to observe nicely, both at home alone, and abroad in company. At all public entertainments, and in mixed companies, keep a strict guard upon yourself, lest you be infected with rude and vulgar Conversation; for know, that though a man be ever so clear himself, yet by frequenting company that are tainted, he will necessarily contract some pollution from them. Above all things take care not to talk of other people; neither so as to censure their conduct, nor to be lavish in their commendation, nor to make invidious comparisons between one and another. In familiar Conversation with your friends and acquaintance, do not make it your business to entertain the company with tedious narratives of yourself, and your own affairs. Consider that their sensations and yours are very different upon these occasions; and though the exploits by which you have signalized yourself, the successes you have obtained, the dangers you have encountered, or the afflictions you have undergone, may be a very agreeable story to yourself to tell, yet it will not be equally so for others to hear. As little will it become you to render your-

self the common buffoon, and be always trying to make the company laugh; for this is a very nice and ticklish thing, exceedingly apt to degenerate into vice and folly; and, observe it when you will, he that only studies men's diversion, shall be sure at the same time to lose their respect. Of all kind of discourse, none is more unsafe, none more despicable than that, which breaks in upon modesty and good manners: whenever therefore any person in your presence flies out into obscenity, if so great a liberty can decently be taken, reprove him publicly, and put a stop to the lewd talk. But if that cannot conveniently be done, do yourself the justice to disapprove it; and, by forbearing to join with him, by blushing for him, and by chiding looks, let all the company see plainly, that you detest his filty ribaldry."

12. Eusebius was a man of sense, of politeness, and of unaffected piety: it often shocked him to find in the common intercourses of life, that Christians, who are forbidden to swear by anything, assumed a liberty of swearing by all things. One would think the breach of a divine precept was the only design they aimed at, and disobedience to God's commands their only diversion; as if, truly, it were some notable exploit to lay down the language of their country, and take up that of the damned. Eusebius could not endure this execrable jargon. A thousand good qualities in a person, made no atonement in his opinion for this only bad one; and though he pitied those failures, that savoured of weakness, he never gave quarter to blasphemy. "Other vices, said he, make bold with God's commands, this outrages his very person; it adds insult to disobedience, and contempt to abuse: it is a symptom of absolute irreligion. For who will revile the very being he adores? or rally and worship the same object? And what

respect, satisfaction, or credit can we expect to derive from him, who turns upon his Creator, and flies in the face of the Omnipotent?"

13. Neander was an excellent soldier, he feared nothing but fear: he always chose the van, and was often the first man on the breach. All admired his courage, and praised it; and even those who disapproved his conduct, did justice to his valour. This gentleman however, unfortunately managed it so, as to lose at the table the glory he won in the field; and by talking away in his winter quarters, dissipated the honour he had purchased in the whole compaign. In short, he was a most insufferable egotist. "I did this," said he, "at the siege of R——, and this at the battle of D——. Had not I seized on such a post at ***, the army had been in danger." One would have thought all the generals and soldiers had been in garrison, and that Neander, with his small brigade alone, had defeated the designs of the French. This over-grown vanity cost him dear: instead of gaining the reputation of a General, he went off with that of a fop; and all concluded, that he was too ambitious of praise, to deserve any. Deep rivers move with a silent majesty; shallow brooks alone make a noise and tumult among the pebbles. The great marshal de Turenne never spoke of himself, but when forced, and even then with modesty: and though the king was wholly indebted to the wise conduct of this gallant man for many victories, yet Turenne never was the man to blazon it; on the contrary, he would lay his miscarriages at his own door, and success at that of his officers and soldiers. This made him appear great even in his overthrow; and generally his moderation was more glorious to him than victory. Imitate the silence of this hero, not the noisy impatience of fools. Carry off the satisfaction of performing great actions, and let others

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acquire and enjoy the honour of praising them. For he that exalteth himself shall be abased, while they only who humble themselves, shall be exalted.

14. It was wholesome counsel which an old gentleman gave to his young friend; "Avoid, my dear sir, the modish rant of oaths and imprecations: it is an ungenteel dialect, as well as unchristian, and clashes both with the rules of breeding, and of the gospel. Custom, indeed, has made them fashionable, but neither can make them civil or lawful; for vice can never plead prescription. In a word, whatever jars with religion and attacks good breeding, is below a gentlemen; and therefore in spite of example and practice, I must caution you against some parts of English civility; for though they pass by consent in the English dominions, they will not bear the test of other nations. I know some are ready to throw a veil on those bear-garden expressions, so frequent in conversation, and to wash over their impiety with fair pretences. But, still, sir, the silliness of the excuse cannot stifle the monstrous incivility of the compliment. For, though it may signify nothing to him who receives it as words of course; it will signify much to him who uttered it, when possibly he himself has forgot it. Though a friend may let such curses fall to the ground, God will put them to account; and though they stand for cyphers in England, they may purchase eternal torments in hell."*

15. A prudent man will avoid talking much of any particular science, for which he is remarkably famous. There is not a handsomer thing said of Mr. Cowley, in his whole life, than that none but his intimate friends ever discovered he was a great poet,

* For some close reflections addressed to a person of distinction and otherwise very amiable, but a common swearer, the reader is refered to the *Christian's Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 480.

by his discourse. Besides the decency of this rule, it is certainly founded in that good policy of which Mr. Locke, as abovementioned, so well availed himself. A man who talks of anything he is already famous for, has little to get, but a great deal to lose.

16. Notwithstanding all the advantages of youth, few young people please in Conversation. The reason is, that want of experience makes them positive; and what they say is rather with a design to please themselves, than to edify or entertain any one else. If there can be anything more silly than this, it is the strange pleasure some illiberal people take, in what they call "speaking their minds." A man of this stamp will say a rude thing for the mere pleasure of saying it, when an opposite behaviour, full as sensible and more innocent, might have preserved his friend, or made his fortune.

17. Sir Richard Steele observes, that there are some men who on all occasions, in all companies, talk in the same circle and round of chat as they have picked up in their daily peregrinations. I remember, says he, at a full table in the city, one of these ubiquitary wits was entertaining the company with a Soliloquy (for so I call it, when a man talks to those who do not understand him) concerning wit and humour. An honest gentleman, who sat next to me, and was worth half a plumb, stared at him; and observing there was some sense, as he thought, mixed with his impertinence, whispered me, "Take my word for it, this fellow is more knave than fool." This was all my good friend's applause of the wittiest man of talk that I was ever present at, which wanted nothing to make it excellent, but that there was no occasion for it. See *Tatler*, no. 244.

18. The same ingenious author has the following remarks on loquacity. I look upon a tedious talker,

or what is generally known by the name of "a story-teller," to be much more insufferable, than even a prolix writer. An author may be tossed out of your hand, and thrown aside, when he grows dull and tiresome; but such liberties are so far from being allowed towards these orators in common Conversation, that I have known a challenge sent a person, for going out of the room abruptly, and leaving a man of honour in the midst of a dissertation. The life of man is too short for a story-teller. Methusalem might be half an hour in telling what o'clock it was: but for us postdiluvians, we ought to do every thing in haste; and in our speeches as well as actions remember, that our time is short. I would establish but one great general rule to be observed in all Conversation, which is this, "That men should not talk to please themselves, but those that hear them." This would make them consider, whether what they speak be worth hearing; whether there be either wit or sense in what they are about to say; and whether it be adapted to the time when, the place where, and the person to whom it is spoken.

19. A certain celebrated nobleman, speaking of another, remarkable in Conversation for his loquacity and manner of address, observed, "That he was always too big for his company." This fault is not less unpardonable for being so very common: it is neither good-natured, nor just, nor decent, but a certain mark of deficient judgment. Good-nature is more agreeable in Conversation than wit, and gives a certain air to the countenance more amiable than beauty. It shows virtue in the fairest light, takes off in some measure from the deformity of vice, and makes even folly and impertinence supportable.

20. "I remember," says lord Herbert, "that at the time I was about seven years old, I was corrected for going to cuffs with too school-fellows, being

both elder than myself; but never for telling a lie, or any other fault; my natural disposition and inclination being so contrary to all falsehood, that, being demanded whether I had committed any fault whereof I might be justly suspected, I did use ever to confess it freely; and thereupon choosing rather to suffer correction, than to stain my mind with telling a lie, which I did judge then, no time could ever deface; and I can affirm to all the world truly, that from my first infancy to this hour, I told not willingly anything that was false, my soul naturally having an antipathy to lying and deceit." See his *Life*, written by himself, p. 23.

21. Zeno the philosopher being present, when a person of a loquacious disposition played himself off, said, with an air of concern in his countenance, "I perceive that poor gentleman is ill. He has a violent flux upon him." The company was alarmed; and the rhetorician stopped in his career: "Yes," added Zeno, "The flux is so violent, that it has carried his ears into his tongue."

22. The significance and importance of frivolous, trifling Conversation, was smartly represented by a philosopher: who being asked how he left the company employed, made answer, "Some in milking the ram; others in holding the pail."

SERMON XVI.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.—JOHN xiii. 23.

PLEASURE, to be really such, must be the matter of our own free choice, our voluntary election; whatever is commanded, immediately becomes *duty:* and though by the goodness and wisdom of the commander, the paths of duty may lead to those of pleasantness, as in the case of religion; yet, strictly and properly speaking, pleasure can never be enjoined by any authority, can never submit to the bonds of obligation.

A want of attention to this obvious remark, has drawn from the pen of a noble writer*, an unwary censure upon the gospel of Christ, as if it were extremely deficient, "In having no where enjoined or required the exercise of *Friendship;* a virtue," says he, "the most amiab leand excellent; which Epicurus himself taught and practised; and whose morality, he would insinuate from thence, is preferable to that of Jesus Christ."

We entirely agree, my young friends, with the noble writer, that no virtue can be more amiable and excellent than Friendship; no pleasures more refined and cheering, than those which Friendship affords. We mean to recommend them, as the most valuable acquisition, as the highest enjoyment of your lives. But at the same time, we do not, we cannot

* Lord Shaftsbury.

enjoin them as a duty; we cannot bind them upon you as indispensable obligations: nor, if you should miss of the pleasures of Friendship, if you should not be able to find that pearl of great price, a real friend, shall we therefore condemn you as a criminal, or adjudge you as guilty of an act of sin.

For "Friendship" we will take lord Shaftsbury's own definition, "is that peculiar relation, which is formed by a consent and harmony of minds, by mutual esteem, and reciprocal tenderness and affection."* Never, therefore, can Friendship be considered or enjoined as an indispensable duty, since our lot in life may never cast us amongst those, whose minds may harmonize with our own: and consequently the Gospel could not enforce it as a duty. Friendship is rather to be considered as a rare and singular blessing, vouchsafed perhaps to few, but when vouchsafed, one of the most exquisite cordials in human life. It is true, there are certain virtues necessary to the preservation and continuance of Friendship, once engaged in, of which we shall hereafter speak, and the want whereof, is highly criminal. But the gospel, as we shall find, very strictly requires and enjoins these virtues.

But though this be the exact state of the case, though Friendship, considered as a peculiar and affectionate relation, formed by consent and harmony of minds could never be enforced under penal sanctions as a duty, in the gospel, or any system of morals: yet they surely must be very blind, and very inattentive, who assert, that even this kind of Friendship is taken no notice of in our blessed religion. The *example* of the great Founder of our faith contradicts the assertion in the strongest manner.

* Friendship has been otherwise well defined. "A union between just and good men, in their joint interest and concernment, and for the advancement thereof."

Jesus, whose heart was warm with all the most commendable and generous affections of the human nature, felt, approved, and recommended "the felicity of particular Friendship." You have frequent mention of "*his friend*" in the gospel, under the striking appellation of *the disciple whom Jesus loved.* Jesus undoubtedly loved all his disciples, loved all mankind; but the love which he bore to this happy disciple, this favoured *John*, was of another and a different kind. His love to all the world was a love of benevolence and goodwill: his love to John, was a love of tenderness and affection, formed by a peculiar consent and harmony of minds; was the love of friend to friend."

St. John, however, doth not seem to have been the only person whom our blessed Lord distinguished in this manner; he appears to have had a peculiar Friendship for Lazarus also. Lord, behold, *he whom thou lovest* is sick, was the message which the afflicted sisters sent to Jesus; and which evidently expresses his tender and particular regard. Indeed, all of this amiable family appear to have shared the peculiar Friendship of Christ. He *loved* Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus, the sacred writer tells us; and when, compassionate and tender-hearted, He wept over the grave of the latter, the remark of those who stood by was, Behold, how He *loved* him! In all which places, the words cannot be understood of that general philanthropy or goodwill which Jesus bore, and all his followers are enjoined to bear towards each other; but of that "peculiar love," that affection and tenderness which we feel for individuals, and which constitutes the "peculiar relation of Friendship."

Thus you learn, my young friends, (the more to recommend the virtue to you), that Friendshsp is enforced by the gospel, and in the only manner by

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which it could be enforced; namely, by the example of Him, whom it is your duty, as it will be your highest happiness, to follow. And we may perhaps, on this view of the subject, without any danger, adopt that noble writer's words, when he says, "I could be almost tempted to think, that the true reason why some of the most heroic virtues (as Friendship, &c.) have so little notice taken of them in our holy religion is, because there would have been so little room left for *disinterestedness*, had they been entitled to a share of that infinite reward, which providence has by revelation assigned to other duties."* A remark, doubtless, in a great measure just, so far as "peculiar Friendship" is concerned; which being no duty, can never be entered into on the view of future rewards; which the utmost disinterestedness only can render truly sincere; and the immediate purpose of which seems to be the augmentation of our private happiness in this life. Though certainly, it must be allowed, that the Christian religion sublimates Friendship to the highest perfection, by uniting souls in such a bond of amity as, they are assured, time itself can never destroy. Whence we learn, that true Christian Friendship, founded on virtue, on which all real friendship must be founded, is, and must necessarily be superior to all Friendship under every other system; because a Friendship of this kind looks with confidence beyond the grave, and triumphs in a certain eternity.

I must not, however, omit to observe, my young friends (to corroborate at least what I have advanced) that as we acknowledge and hold the divinity of the Old Testament as well as of the New; so to show the perfect agreement and conformity of each with the other, we may collect from thence both

* See the *Characteristics*, vol. i.

precepts* and examples of this divine virtue. Eminently pleasing and heroic was the Friendship of David and Jonathan. *I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan,* says the plaintive and surviving David; *Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful; passing the love of women!* Indeed, we must not expect to meet with many examples of this kind: true Friendship is rare; hath ever been rare in the world, so many qualifications are necessary to form and complete it. It was enough for a David to find one Jonathan.

What has been thus far advanced, appears to me sufficient to vindicate the gospel, and to fix the right notion of Friendship. But before I proceed, permit me just to remark, that some by Friendship mean only "that benevolence, which unites virtuous minds in the sacred bands of a special, cordial affection." And thus understood, never was Friendship more strongly recommended, and enforced, than by the gospel of Jesus Christ: which requires us to love and to do good to all mankind. In this sense, Bishop Taylor† observes well, that "Christian charity is Friendship to all the world." And certainly, this charity, or love, is enjoined in the New Testament, in the most forcible and exalted manner imaginable: *Hereby perceive we the love of God,* says St. John, *because He* [Jesus Christ, the God-Man] *laid down his life for us: and we* [after the example of such consummate love] *ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Now, though no benevolence can be carried to a nobler height, yet there seems to me no doubt, that particular Friendship is different from this general benevolence; which requires the same love of goodwill and brotherly service to all our fellow Christians.

* See particularly the book of *Proverbs.*

† See his *Opuscula,* &c.

Whereas, particular Friendship is an immediate attachment of the mind to a person peculiarly chosen and beloved; for whom you have not only this general benevolence, but a tenderness and affection interesting you more especially in everything which concerns him. It must however be allowed, that the high principle of Christian benevolence prevailing in the heart, is one of the best preparatives, as it is the noblest foundation for private Friendship.

Besides, it should be remarked, that universal as the benevolence of our minds ought to be, that benevolence in its exercise must be contracted within the sphere of those amongst whom we dwell: and the nature of the human heart is such, where it is not frozen up by chilling selfishness, that it bears us warmly and irresistibly to near and private connections, in which we may freely repose ourselves, and find rest: where we may communicate our more intimate feelings, and by the reciprocal tenderness of affection, live to, and enjoy as it were, a second self.*

Intending man for social happiness, God, in great wisdom and goodness, gave this impulse to the human heart: and with equal wisdom and goodness, he hath provided a variety of near and dear relations, in which man may freely allow to himself the full exercise of this heaven-implanted impulse. One of these is "Friendship:" right and commendable in itself, as we may fairly gather from this natural propensity of the uncorrupted heart to it.† But that heart bears yet another testimony to the propriety and excellence of Friendship, by the tacit approbation which it immediately gives to, and the genuine re-

* Est enim verus Amicus, tanquam alter Idem.—*Cicero.*

Facile indicabat natura vim suam, &c.—Una est enim Amicitia in rebus humanis, de cujus utilitate omnes uno ore consentiunt.—*Cicero de Amicitia.*

spect and esteem which it immediately feels for those worthy pairs, whose names are handed down to posterity by the faithful historian, as eminent in this virtue, and peculiarly distinguished for their reciprocal affection.* And the heart rarely errs or misleads us, in hints and admonitions of this kind. Here it is eminently faithful: for the Friendship which we thus as it were involuntarily approve and admire, is unquestionably, my young friends, one of the most singular pleasures and comforts of the human life.

For think, what a pleasure, what a comfort it is to have one in perfect amity with you, to whom you can at all times unbosom yourself with confidence and with safety! with whom you can enjoy all the refinements and the peculiar pleasures of rational conversation!† one, who will tenderly enter into and share all your griefs; one, who will kindly participate in all your joys, thus heightening the one, and alleviating the other! What a pleasure to have a friend, upon the wisdom and fidelity of whose counsels you can surely rely in all your difficulties, in all your embarrassments; whose power and interest will always be ready to succour and assist; or whose love, at least, will always be forward to console, to delight, to cheer and refresh you! Providence gives nothing in mortal life more valuable, than such a friend!‡ But the difficulty of the acquisition is proportionate to the value: for, as we ob-

* See the *Anecdotes*, no. 4. Ex omnibus sæculis vix tria aut quatuor nominantur paria amicorum, &c. says Cicero, in his treatise of friendship; from whence I shall quote the more sparingly, as I could wish to recommend a frequent perusal of the whole.

† See page 398.

‡ Solem è mundo tollere videntur, qui amicitiam à vitâ tollunt: quâ a Diis immortalibus nihil melius habemus, nihil ǂucundius &c.—*Cicero.*

served, nothing in mortal life is more rare: nor can we wonder at this, when we consider not only the state of the world, and the general attachment of men to self interest, but the variety of particulars necessary to render Friendship firm and endearing.

I cannot express my own sentiments better, or advise you, my young friends, more fully of the difficulties which attend the acquisition of real Friendship, than in the words of one of the most masterly writers of the age.* "When Socrates," says he, was building himself a house at Athens, being asked by one that observed the littleness of the design, why a man so eminent would not have an abode more suitable to his dignity; he replied, 'That he should think himself sufficiently accomodated, if he could see that narrow habitation filled with real friends.' Such was the opinion of this great master of human life, concerning the unfrequency of such a union of minds, as might deserve the name of Friendship. So many qualities are indeed requisite to the possibility of Friendship, and so many accidents must concur to its rise and its continuance, that the greatest part of mankind content themselves without it, and supply its place as they can, with interest and dependance.

"Multitudes are unqualified for a constant and warm reciprocation of benevolence, as they are incapacitated for any other elevated excellence, by perpetual attention to their interest, and unresisting subjection to their passions! But not only this hateful and confirmed corruption, but many varieties of disposition not inconsistent with common degrees of virtue, may exclude Friendship from the heart. Some, ardent enough in their benevolence, and defective neither in officiousness nor liberality, are mutable and uncertain; soon attracted by new ob-

* Dr. Johnson, in the *Rambler*, vol. ii.

jects, disgusted without offence, and alienated without enmity. Others are soft and flexible; easily influenced by reports and whispers; ready to catch alarms from every dubious circumstance, and to listen to every suspicion which envy and flattery shall suggest; to follow the opinion of every confident adviser, and move by the impulse of the last breath. Some are impatient of contradiction; more willing to go wrong by their own judgment, than to be indebted for a better or a safer way to the sagacity of another; inclined to consider counsel as insult, and inquiry as want of confidence; and to confer their regard on no other terms than unreserved submission and implicit compliance. Some are dark and involved, equally careful to conceal good and bad purposes; and pleased with producing effects by invisible means, and showing their design only in its execution. Others are universally communicative, alike open to every lie, and equally profuse of their own secrets, and those of others; without the necessary vigilance of caution, or the honest art of prudent integrity; ready to accuse without malice, and to betray without treachery. Any of these may be useful to the community, and pass through the world with the reputation of good purposes and uncorrupted morals: but they are unfit for close and tender intimacies. He cannot properly be chosen for a Friend, whose kindness is exhaled by its own warmth, or frozen by the first blast of slander: he cannot be a useful counsellor, who will hear no opinion but his own: he will not much invite confidence, whose principal maxim is to suspect; nor can the candour and frankness of that man be much esteemed, who spreads his arms to human kind, and makes every man without distinction a denizon of his bosom."

You see, my young friends, from the above fine picture of human dispositions,—drawn by the strong

pencil of this great moral master,—what difficulties attend the acquisition of a real and constant friend. Yours, indeed, is that period of life, when this acquisition is most commonly made, and made most firmly. Friendships contracted in youth, as most sincere, are generally most lasting. The heart, in that happy season, unpolluted by the vices, and unhackneyed in the ways of the world, obeys without reserve its natural propensity, and cleaves with undissembled sincerity to similar sincerity with its own. Sameness of temper and sentiment unites youthful minds, without any views of interest, without any shew of design; and as the loadstone draws the iron, almost irresistibly attracts them.*

Indulge, my young friends, the pleasing, the generous impulse: but, that the Friendships thus begun in youth, may last through life, and sooth you to the close with their pleasures and their comforts, suffer me to admonish you of that foundation, which alone can render Friendship firm and lasting. "It is *virtue*:" the only sure and solid basis whereon it can be built.† If founded on other and less worthy motives, its continuance is short, precarious; and as those motives shift and vary, it will vary with them, like the vane with the wind. Indeed such unions deserve not the name of Friendship; they are, and should be deemed confederacies only, so much the more dangerous and hurtful, as the causes uniting are more mean and vicious.

"No, my young friends, that "Friendship" may at once be fond and lasting, there must not only be equal *virtue* on each part, but virtue of the same kind: not only the same end must be proposed, but

* Great souls by Instinct to each other turn,
Demand alliance, and in *Friendship* burn.
Nec sine Virtute Amicitia esse ullo pacto potest, &c.
Cicero.

the same means must be approved by both. We are often, by superficial accomplishments, and accidental endearments, induced to love those whom we cannot esteem; we are sometimes, by great abilities and incontestible evidences of virtue, compelled to esteem those whom we cannot love. But Friendship compounded of esteem and love, derives from one its *tenderness*, and its *permanence* from the other; and therefore requires not only that its candidates should gain the judgment, but that they should attract the affections: that they should not only be firm in the day of distress, but gay in the hour of prosperity: not only useful in exigencies, but pleasing and familiar in social life. Their presence should give cheerfulness as well as courage, and dispel alike the gloom of fear and of melancholy.

"To this mutual and virtuous complacency, is generally requisite a uniformity of opinions; at least of those active and conspicuous principles, which discriminate parties in government, and sects in religion, and which every day operate more or less in the common business of life. Wherever these differences subsist, debates will arise,—vehemence, acrimony, and vexation, and in time an utter extinction of benevolence. Exchange of endearments and intercourse of civility may continue indeed, as boughs may for a while be verdant, when the root is wounded; but the poison of discord is infused, and though the countenance may preserve its smile, the heart is hardening and contracting."*

But besides *virtue*, and virtue of the same kind, familiarity of dispositions, and leading opinions,†

* See the *Rambler*, as before.

† I say *leading opinions;* a likeness of opinion and inclination is so far from being requisite to form a benevolence in two minds towards each other, as is generally imagined, that I believe we shall find some of the firmest friendships to have been contracted between persons of different hu-

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there are many other qualifications requisite to the refinement and perfection of Friendship: such as an openness and frankness of temper, joined at the same time with great faithfulness, prudence, and discretion; a constancy and firmness of mind, an evenness of behaviour; a suavity of manners;* an absence of all jealousy; a readiness to overlook little faults and foibles; and an exquisite and generous sensibility of soul; in short, all the dispositions which are directly opposite to those we have mentioned before, as incapacitating for close and tender intimacies: dispositions, my young friends, partly the produce of a kind and indulgent nature, and partly of virtuous and religious culture; rarely, it is true, found combining in one character, but where found, and approved by just observation and long acquaintance, the solid groundwork of the most pleasing, the most useful, and the most permanent Friendship.

Let us not however forget, while we specify these many good qualities, as necessary to be found in the person of a "true friend," that if we mean to obtain that blessing, we are under every obligation to cultivate those good qualities in ourselves. Here, then, my young friends, you discern one of the singular advantages of virtuous Friendship: it peculiarly and almost necessarily conduces to your own improvement in virtue. For, as no Friendship can either be real or lasting, which is not founded as well as

mours: the mind being often pleased with those perfections which are new to it, and which it does not find among its own accomplishments. Besides that a man in some measure supplies his own defects, and fancies himself at second hand possessed of those good qualities and endowments, which are in the possession of him, who in the eye of the world is looked upon as his *other self*. See the *Spectator*.

* Cicero says, Accedat autem Suavitas quædam oportet sermonum atque morum haud quaquam mediocre condimentum amicitiæ.

cemented by that virtue, and those good qualities above enumerated, it follows, that our entrance on this delightful union must encourage the cultivation of every right and amiable principle in the soul, and our continuance in it, promote that cultivation, and bring all such principles to their noblest perfection. Two virtuous minds will stimulate each other in every laudable proceeding; will guard each other from every wrong propensity, and criminal deviation: will prove a mutual support, and never dare, either of them, to commit an action, which the other will hear of with concern, or behold with a blush. Nay, indeed, by the very force of imitation alone, their virtues will grow and increase: for there is no principle in our composition more natural, than the almost insensible imitation of those whom we esteem and admire, and with whom we are frequently conversant. Of such consequence, in every view, to your preservation and improvement in the path of duty, is virtuous, disinterested Friendship.

Nor is this affectionate union of less utility for the improvement of the lesser virtues, the graces of life, the arts of pleasing, so important to our complete enjoyment of the blessings of Friendship; which when we find depend so much on the "amiable attentions," and good dispositions of our friend, we shall surely be solicitous to excel in those attentions, and to become amiable in proportion as we wish to be loved.

But to enumerate all the advantages and all the pleasures of Friendship* would far exceed my limits;

* It is not possible to separate the *advantages* of *Friendship* from Friendship itself: but it does not therefore follow, that Friendship is an *interested* thing, The truth is, that real Friendship cannot be entered upon or continue sincere, *where* views of *worldly interest* alone lead to the union; but we can never enjoy true Friendship without great profit, as well as great pleasure. So true is Cicero's assertion, that Non utilitatem amicitia, sed utilitas amicitiam consecuta est.

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that Friendship which gives to human life its highest zest and relish; which affords to virtue a strong support and encouragement; and which is enforced and recommended by the highest example, that of the blessed Redeemer. Well therefore may we say, with the wise man*, "A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found such a one hath found a treasure. Nothing doth countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is invaluable. A faithful friend is "the medicine of life;" and they that fear the Lord shall find him. "Whoso feareth the Lord, shall direct his Friendship aright: for as he is, so shall his friend be:" that is, pious and virtuous as he is himself, he shall meet with a friend equally virtuous and pious to reward and bless him!

Cultivate, therefore, my dear young friends, on every account cultivate virtuous Friendship: so will pou assuredly cultivate virtue and true religion itself!† But as this inestimable jewel is so rare, "you cannot be too slow and cautious in your choice." Let me therefore advise, that "you run not on a sudden into intimacies." The most frank and generous spirits are the most liable to this error. They are often struck with the appearance of some shining qualities, in those who are strangers to them; affect the acquaintance of such persons, and an intimacy with them; the beginning of which, perhaps greatly increases their affection, and carries them farther than discretion allows, and which a thorough acquaint-

* See the Ecclesiastes, vi. 14. Mr. Addison has given a fine illustration (in the *Spectator*, no. 68) of some passages in this excellent book, "which he observes, would be regarded by our modern wits as one of the most shining tracts of morality extant, if it appeared under the name of a Confucius, or of any celebrated Grecian philosopher."

† Virtus, virtus inquam, conciliat amicitias, et conservat.—Cicero.

ance with the admired character convinces them was much too far. "If therefore thou wouldst get a friend, (in the words of the Son of Sirach,) prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him: for some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble: and there is a friend, who being turned to enmity the strife, will discover thy reproach*."

But, when you have once entered into this endearing relation; when, either in consequence of the pleasing, disinterested attachments of youth, or of more mature choice and deliberation†, you have gained that singular and choice blessing of an heart-approved friend; felicitate your lot; and to secure the comfort, study to approve yourself by every worthy action, by everything which may bespeak your

* See Ecclus. vi. 7. Cicero too advises, Sint igitur firmi, et stabiles et constantes eligendi: judicare difficile est sane nisi expertum: experiendum autem est in ipsa amicitia, &c. See also Duchal's *Sermons*. vol. ii.

† Young people, at the early periods of life, commonly look upon each other as all *equals:* in which view Friendships, and very sincere ones, may be formed amongst those who are very unequal in station. But in general, Friendship should be formed amongst equals, to be lasting; as is well observed by the *Rambler*. "Friendship, says he, is seldom lasting, but between equals, or where the superiority on one side is reduced by some equivalent advantage on the other. Benefits which cannot be repaid, and obligations which cannot be discharged, are not commonly found to increase affection; they excite gratitude indeed, and heighten veneration, but commonly take away that easy freedom, and familiarity of intercoure, without which though there may be fidelity, and zeal, and admiration, there cannot be Friendship. Thus imperfect are all earthly blessings: thegreat effect of Friendship is beneficence, yet by the first act of uncommon kindness it is endangered, like plants that bear their fruit and die. Yet this consideration ought not to restrain bounty, or repress compassion: for duty is to be preferred before convenience; and he that looses part of the pleasures of Friendship by his generosity, gains in its place the gratulation of his conscience."

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esteem, affection, and confidence. *Be in peace with many; nevertheless have but one counsellor* [one bosom friend] *of a thousand**. Abhor, as the bane of Friendship, that worldly wisdom which advises "always to behave to your friend, as supposing he may one day become you enemy†." Away with that unworthy counsel, throwing the coldness of suspicion into the generous warmth of undisguised Friendship; which is always frank, unreserved, and open. Rather, therefore, my young friends, be this your rule; always behave to your friend in such a manner as is consistent with the highest, purest virtue; with the most disinterested affection, and the tenderest esteem; that if a breach should ever unfortunately be made between you, you may freely lay open to God and man the honest and generous breast, where truth and innocence defy all the attacks of shame and reproach.

Among the qualifications requisite for perfect Friendship, we recommended "Evenness or constancy of behaviour." If you mean to keep your friend, by all means preserve this conduct towards him. Those inconstant humourists, who are ever fluctuating, ever unsettled, are incapable either of the truth or the fine feelings of Friendship. But a constancy in virtue is no less necessary than in behaviour; it is of great utility, on many occasions, to know how to refuse. Unlimited compliance is weakness. What is right and fit must ever be your rule: for the obligations of virtue are prior to the obligations of Friendship.‡ And, agreeably to this

* Ecclus. vi. 6.

† cipio negabat ullam vocem inimiciorem amicitiæ potuisse reperiri, quam ejus qui dixisset, ita amare oportere, ut si aliquando esset osurus, &c.—*Cicero.*

‡ Nulla est igitur excusatio peccati, si amici causa peccaveris: nam cum conciliatrix amicitiæ virtutis opinio fuerit, difficile est amicitiam manere, si a virtute defeceris.—*Cicero.*

just idea, we ought to be as resolute in animadverting upon faults, as in refusing what is wrong. This is one of the most useful, though at the same time one of the most delicate and difficult offices of Friendship: and, "if possible, should be so contrived, that our friend may perceive our advice and reproof is given him, not to please ourselves, but for his own advantage. The reproofs therefore of a friend should always be strictly just, and not too frequent." *

Thus happy in the choice of a friend, and in the proper behaviour towards him, cleave to him with the utmost fidelity; tried and approved, as he is, let nothing move you to change or forsake him, or to violate the sacred, the indissoluble engagement: "grapple him, as it were, to your soul with hooks of steel: for if we ought not, in prudence, to break † even with a faulty friend, that we may not expose the weakness of our choice; how much less with a worthy and amiable one, that we may not be upbraided with having lost so valuable a treasure! "Forsake not, therefore, an old friend, for the new is not comparable to him: a new friend is as new wine, when it is old thou shalt drink it with pleasure." "Love thy friend, and be faithful unto him: but if thou bewrayest his secrets, follow no more after him." ‡

Thus mutually faithful and constant, what a fountain of perpetual pleasures will you open to yourselves, my young friends; a fountain, ever full and

* Omni igitur in hac re habenda ratio et diligentia est, primum ut monitio, acerbitate; deinde ut objurgatio contumelia careat, &c.—*Cicero.*

† Cicero advises well, that if we are unhappily obliged at any time to *break* with our friends, "Tales amicitiæ sunt remissione usus eluendæ, et *dissuendæ* magis quam *discendendæ*, &c."

‡ See Ecclus. ix. 10; xxvii. 17. Similar to this, Cicero says, Veterrima quoque (ut ea vina quæ vetustatem ferunt) esse debent suavissima, &c.

ever flowing with the most cordial and refreshing delights! especially if your Friendship, grounded on Christian virtue and real religion, looks as it ought, beyond the grave, and triumphs in the assured, the glorious hope of an eternal union! Then what views will cheer and animate you! what *conversation*, high and excellent, will engage and warm you! true conversation, in all its most useful, its most pleasing refinement!* Then what *zeal* for each other's spiritual welfare, and advancement in every high and honourable perfection will glow in your bosoms; and how will you mutually delight, as to promote each other's *good*, so to promote the good of all your fellow-creatures; exhorting and stimulating each his friend to the constant, the cheering exertion of universal benevolence and love! The divine grace operating on your minds, amidst this amiable discharge of duty,—this friendly contention as it were, to excel in goodness,—will daily

* Mr. Addison has a pleasing remark on conversation, which will serve to elucidate my meaning here, as also some passages in the *Sermon on Conversation:* "One would think," says he, "that the larger the company is in which we are engaged, the greater variety of thoughts and subjects would be started in discourse: but instead of this we find, that conversation is never so much straitened and confined as in numerous assemblies. When a multitude meet together upon any subject of discourse, their debates are taken up chiefly with forms, and general positions; nay, if we come into a more contracted assembly of men and women, the talk generally runs upon the weather, fashions, news, and the like public topics. In proportion as conversation gets into clubs and knots of friends, it descends into particulars, and grows more free and communicative: but the most open, instructive, and unreserved discourse, is that which passes between "two persons, who are familiar and intimate friends." On these occasions a man gives a loose to every passion and every thought that is uppermost, discovers his most retired opinions of persons and things, tries the beauty and strength of his sentiments, and exposes his whole soul to the examination of his friend."—*Spectator*, no. 68.

improve those minds; will daily more and more advance and confirm those tempers and dispositions, which are so necessary to the being and the continuance of Friendship; will daily make you more and more mild, gentle, faithful, conscientious, and disinterested; in short, will make you to grow more and more daily in that *Christian love*, that universal goodwill, that god-like principle, which is, of all others, the best groundwork of Friendship; the most solid foundation of an alliance, beyond the reach of time to destroy!

See then, in this particular, how admirably the Christian religion is calculated to carry to its most exalted height this sacred union of minds, which all the world has agreed to venerate; and what a peculiar provision it makes for the severest shock this union can receive, when all-commanding nature enjoins its dissolution! the friend, the Christian friend, laments not his beloved companion, dear to him as his own soul; he laments him not as lost; he grieves not as one without hope: but far beyond the regions of the grave, the limits of time, he looks to that kingdom and that period, when he shall be united in immortal, in everlasting bonds of amity, and enjoy in all its perfection that Friendship, whose delights have so cheered and blessed him in his pilgrimage through this world.

Great and generous souls, even in the dark uncertain state of Heathenism, were not willing to forego the pleasing, though doubtful idea of this blessed re-union.* Something intimated to their hearts the prospect and probability of it; and that probability awakened at once in them the noblest sentiments and the sweetest comforts! How much rather then, my young friends, should the certainty,

* See the close of Cicero's treatise de *Senectute*, et de *Amicitia*.

the transporting certainty of a future life and immortality, brought to light through our great Redeemer, cheer, animate, and inspire you! How much rather should it influence you to fidelity and affection in your Friendships, to reflect, that you may enjoy here all the blessings which that noble passion communicates, under the full, the blissful persuasion, that you never shall be deprived of those benefits: but when death shall dismiss you from your labours and trials below, eternal Friendship and love shall meet and crown you with transport, in the kingdom of truth, of peace, and of glory; *which*, *&c.*

ANECDOTES *respecting Friendship.*

1. Athenodorus the philosopher, by reason of his great age, begged leave to retire from the court of Augustus; which the emperor accordingly granted him. In making his compliments on the occasion, as he was about to withdraw, "Remember, Cæsar, said he, whenever you are angry, that you say or do nothing, before you have distinctly repeated to yourself the four and twenty letters of the alphabet." Upon this Cæsar, catching him hastily by the hand, cried out; "Stay, stay, Athenodorus! I have need of thy presence longer still;" and so detained him another year. This incident is celebrated by the ancients as a rule of excellent wisdom, and does high honour to this intrepid and honest counsellor to the world's master.

2. At the siege of Bridgenorth Castle, in the reign of Henry II. which was defended by Roger de Mortimer, the king exposed himself to so much danger, that he would have been slain, if a faithful vassal had not preferred his sovereign's life to his own. For, while he was busied in giving orders too near the wall, Hubert de St. Clare, constable or governor of Colchester Castle, who stood by his

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side, seeing an arrow aimed at Henry by one of Mortimer's archers, stepped before him, and received it in his own breast. The wound was mortal: he expired in the arms of his master, recommending his daughter (an only child, and an infant) to the care of that prince. It is hard to say which most deserves admiration; a subject who died to save his king, or a king, whose personal virtues could render his safety so dear to a subject, whom he had not obliged by any extraordinary favours. The daughter of Hubert was educated by Henry with all the affection that he owed to the memory of her father; and, when she had attained to maturity, was honourably married to William de Longueville, a nobleman of great distinction, on condition of his taking the name of St. Clare, which the grateful Henry was desirous to perpetuate.

3. Monsieur Sedaine, in his "Discourse upon the Qualifications which constitute the Beauty of the Soul," informs us, That a certain gentleman of rank lost a friend, who at his death left debts unpaid, and two children very young. The surviving friend was immediately observed to retrench his household, his equipage, and take lodgings in a small house; from whence he walked every day to the palace, followed by one footman, and performed the duties of his post. He is instantly suspected of avarice, and of bad conduct, and undergoes a variety of calumnies. In short, at the end of two years, he reappears in the world; having accumulated a sum of 20,000 livres, which he applied to the service of his deceased friend's children, and thus rescued a worthy memory from shame, and a helpless offspring from misery and ruin. It is pity the author had not informed us of the name of a man, whose conduct is so honourable to Friendship and humanity.

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4. This heroic action recalls to mind another somewhat like it, which is recorded in history. Eudamidas of Corinth, a very poor man, drawing near his end, his mother and daughter were thereby threatened with indigence and distress: he however was no way alarmed at the news; but, judging of the hearts of Aretæus had Charixenes, his wealthy and faithful friends, by his own, just in the article of death, he made this memorable will. "I bequeath to Aretæus, the maintenance of my mother, and her support under old age, and to Charixenes, I bequeath and appoint the disposal of my daughter in marriage, and giving her the best dower in his power to bestow: and in case, either of my said two friends should happen to die; then I substitute the survivor to perform that which the other should have done, had he lived." This testament being read, they who knew the poverty of Eudamidas, but not his connection with the legatees, looked upon the whole matter as a piece of pleasantry, and went out laughing at the legacies assigned them. But the latter, as soon as ever they heard of it, immediately came, acknowledged, and solemnly ratified what was enjoined them in the will. Charixenes, however, we are informed, died within a few days after; upon which Aretæus, his excellent successor, took upon him the two-fold charge; kept the mother of Eudamidas with a tender and filial care, and in due time married off the daughter of the deceased the same day with with his own daughter, and gave her an equal portion of his effects. The celebrated Nicholas Poussin's pencil has immortalized this great action; painting Eudamidas at the moment when life seems expiring, and he is dictating this memorable last will.

5. There is something in Friendship so very great and noble, that in those fictitious stories which

are invented to the honour of any particular person, the authors have thought it as necessary to make their hero a friend, as a lover. Achilles has his Patroclus, and Æneas his Achates. In the first of these instances we may observe (for the reputation of the subject in question) that Greece was almost ruined by the hero's love, but was preserved by his Friendship. The character of Achates suggests to us an observation, which we may often make, on the intimacies of great men; who frequently choose their companions rather for the qualities of the heart than those of the head; and prefer fidelity in an easy, inoffensive, complying temper, to those endowments which make a much greater figure among mankind. I do not remember that Achates, who is represented as the first favourite, either gives his advice, or strikes a blow, through the whole Æneid. A friendship which makes the least noise, is very often the most useful; for which reason I should prefer a prudent friend to a zealous one.—*Spectator*, no. 385.

6. Seneca, taking notice of Augustus Cæsar's lamenting upon a certain occasion, the death of Mecænas and Agrippa, observes, "That he who could instantly repair the destruction of whole fleets and armies, and bid Rome, after a general conflagration, rise out of her ashes even with more lustre than before, was yet unable, during a whole life, to fill up those lasting vacancies in his Friendship." A reflection, than which nothing can more beautifully illustrate the excellence of this noble passion.

7. If men would place their first ambition upon the virtue of their actions, and attempt things only because it is their duty to attempt them, grace of action would naturally attend the integrity of their hearts, and a becoming deportment crown their honest designs. A young man of quality, we are told,

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by a sudden accident became an accomplished orator in one day. The occasion was this: A gentleman who had chastised a ruffian for an insolence towards a kinswoman of his, was stigmatised with very outrageous language in a certain company, where the young nobleman happened to be present. When his friend's name was thus maltreated from man to man, the ingenuous youth discovered the utmost pain to those who sat near him; and having more than once said, "I am sure I could fight for him: why then can't I speak for him?" at last he stood up. The eyes of the whole company were upon him; and though in his confusion he appeared utterly to have forgot what he rose to speak, the generous motive with which they all knew him to be actuated procured him such an acclamation of voices to hear him, that he expressed himself with a magnanimity and clearness, proceeding from the integrity of his heart, which made his very adversaries receive him as a man whom they wished their friend. The best way to do a thing as you ought, is to do it only because you ought.

8. It is related, as one of the chief excellencies of Mr. Bonnel, late Accomptant-General in Ireland, that he was a most sincere, faithful, and zealous friend, and had all those qualities which could render his Friendship desirable; firmness and resolution, candour and openness, prudence, generosity, and love. He declined no trouble, no hazards to serve his friends; he assisted, he advised them in all their doubts and difficulties, and constantly prayed for them. And he had one property of a true friend, very rarely to be met with, because true Friendship is so! which was, always to deal plainly with his friends, and tell them what he disliked in their conduct; but this he did not in a haughty imperious way, but with the prudent endearments and tenderness, as well as sincerity of a good man, in such a

manner, as by his reproofs to oblige them, and to fix them faster to his Friendship. See his *Life*, p. 231.

9. The very ingenuous and amiable Bishop Berkely, of Cloyne in Ireland, was so entirely contented with his income in that diocese, that when offered by the Earl of Chesterfield (then Lord Lieutenant) a bishopric much more beneficial than that he possessed, he declined it with these words: "I love my neighbours, and they love me. Why then should I begin, in my old days, to form new connections, and tear myself from those friends, whose kindness is to me the greatest happiness I enjoy." Acting in this instance like the celebrated Plutarch, who, being asked, why he resided in his native city, so obscure and so little? "I stay," said he, "lest it should grow less."

10. At the battle of Roucoux in 1746, a serjeant of the regiment of Flanders, named Vidal, giving his arm to the prince of Monaco (who was wounded) in order to lead him to a place of safety. had that very arm broken to pieces by a musket ball. Without betraying the least emotion, this dauntless horo only changed his arm, "saying, "Take this, my prince; the other is now good for nothing."

11. Psammenitus, king of Egypt, was taken prisoner by Cambyses, and carried out of his own kingdom into Persia. The victor more keenly to insult and afflict their wretched parents, ordered the young princess, Psammenitus's daughter, and all the other young ladies of quality, whom he had brought captive, to go dressed in the habit of slaves, carrying water on their backs. While the rest of the Egyptians were quite distracted at this spectacle, Psammenitus remained very calm, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. Soon after, Cambyses ordered his son, the young Egyptian prince, with several of

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the young noblemen his companions, to be led forth tied together by the necks, and bridled like horses, with bits in their mouths. Psammenitus, upon this additional shock, was the only person who refrained from tears: but, happening to espy a certain familiar friend of his go about begging, in a naked, starving condition; upon calling to his friend, he burst into a flood of tears, beating his head after the manner of the barbarians. Cambyses hearing the singularity of his behaviour, demanded to know the reason why he remained silent and unmoved upon viewing the calamity of his children, and was all on a sudden so much afflicted at seeing the distresses of a poor old man. "O son of Cyrus, answered Psammenitus, domestic miseries arrived to this violent height, are more grievous than to admit of tears. But to see my friend, reduced from a state of ease and affluence to this extremity of distress and want, in the very verge of life, this is an object that commands my tears."

12. Monsieur du Chatelet, a privy-counsellor to Louis XIII. very earnestly soliciting the pardon of M. de Montmorency; the king said to him, "I verily think you would have lost your arm for Montmorency."—"Sire," said he to his sovereign, "I would willingly have lost both, as being useless in your Majesty's service, so I might but be able to save one, who has gained so many battles for you. It is not interest, Sire, it is Friendship, which implores your mercy." Can it be wondered that such pleading should obtain all it asked?

13. While M. de Bouteville was under prosecution, the same M. du Chatelet drew up a case in his defence. Cardinal Richelieu, enraged at the use which Chatelet had made of his eloquence, reproached him with having employed it to condemn the justice of the king. "O pardon me," said M. du Chatelet,

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"I have wished to justify the king's mercy, if he has the kindness to extend it, towards one of the most valiant men of his kingdom."

14. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and a faithful friend is known in adversity:" the following is a pleasing instance. When Dean Swift was at Sir Arthur Acheson's, at Market-hill, in the country of Armagh, an old gentleman was recommended to him, as having been a remarkable cavalier in the reigns of Charles II. James II. and William III. who had behaved with great loyalty and bravery in Scotland, during the troubles of those reigns, but was neglected by the government, although he deserved great rewards from it. As he was reduced in his circumstances, the Dean made him a handsome present; but said, at the same time, "This trifle, sir, cannot support you long, and your friends may grow tired of you; therefore I would have you contrive some honest means of getting a sum of money sufficient to put you into a way of life for supporting yourself with independency in your old age." To this Captain Creichton (for that was the gentleman's name) answered, "I have tired all my friends, and cannot expect any such extraordinary favours,"—"Sir, replied the Dean, I have heard much of your adventures; that they are fresh in your memory: that you can tell them with great humour; and that you have taken memorandums of them in writing." The Captain answered, I have; but no one can understand them but myself. "Well, then, sir, rejoined the Dean, get your manuscripts, read them to me, and tell me none but genuine stories; and then I will place them in order of time for you, prepare them for the press, and endeavour to get you a subscription among my friends, as you may do among your own." The Captain soon after waited on the Dean with his papers, and related to

him many adventures, which the Dean was so kind as to put in chronological order to correct the style, and make a small book of them, entitled, "The Memoirs of Captain John Creichton." A subscription was immediately set on foot, by the Dean's interest and recommendation, which raised for the Captain above 200*l.* and made the remaining part of his life very happy and easy. These "Memoirs of Captain Creichton," are inserted in the 13th volume of the Dean's works, and stand an immortal monument of polite and disinterested Friendship.

15. "The Stage," says Mr. Addison, speaking of the employment of time, "might be made a perpetual source of the most noble and useful entertainments, were it under proper regulations. But, the mind never unbends itself so agreeably, as in the conversation of a well chosen "Friend." There is indeed no blessing of life, that is any way comparable to the enjoyment of a discreet and virtuous friend. It eases and unloads the mind; clears and improves the understanding, engenders thoughts and knowledge, animates virtue and good resolution, sooths and allays the passions, and finds employment for most of the vacant hours of life. Next to such an intimacy with a particular person, one would endeavour after a more general conversation, with such as are able to entertain and improve those with whom they converse; which are qualifications that seldom go asunder." See *Spectator*, no. 93, also numbers 385, 399; and the *Christian's Magazine*, vol. iv. p. 481.

16. Two persons being on their journey to *Delphos*, were set upon by thieves; and while one of them was no farther solicitous than how to make his escape, the other was killed. The survivor continued his travels; but when he came to the Oracle, the God rejected his address, expelled him the temple,

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and reproached his cowardice and base desertion of his friend, in the following manner :—

Do not, presumptuous wretch! these rites profane,
Nor with polluted gifts our altars stain;
Nor prudent fears, and threatening fate pretend;
False to thy God, thy honour, and thy friend!
These claim thy blood in any danger near,
And must condemn that base and guilty fear,
Which of a coward made a treacherous murderer.
Henceforth dare to be just and brave; for know,
He that declines to ward it, gives the blow.

17. Friendship is well defined, "A strong and habitual inclination in two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other;" and Aristotle affirms of real Friendship, that it is a soul which inhabits two bodies. Spencer speaks of each kind of life with great justice, but attributes the highest praise to Friendship. And indeed there is no disputing the point, but by making that Friendship take place between two married persons; in which most happy case, it is a something transcendantly delightful; which is not absolutely one or the other; but is more than both, and cannot be expressed. The poet's words are these :—

Hard is the doubt and difficult to deem,
When all three kinds of love together meet,
And do dispart the heat with power extreme,
Whether shall weigh the ballance down;
To wit,
The dear affection unto kindred sweet,
Or raging fire of love to woman kind,
Or zeal of Friends, combin'd by virtues meet:
But, of them all, the band of virtuous mind,
Methinks the gentle heart should most assured bind.
For natural affection soon doth cease,
And quenched is with Cupid's greater flame;
But faithful *Friendship* doth them both suppress,
And them with mastering discipline doth tame,
Through thoughts aspiring to eternal fame.
For, as the soul doth rule this earthly mass,
And all the service of the body frame;
So love of soul doth love of body pass,
No less than perfect gold surmounts the meanest brass."

18. Never perhaps was there a more sincere and elegant Friendship, than that which subsisted between Scipio and Lælius. The former was one of the greatest generals and best men that Rome ever produced; the other, for his probity and prudence was distinguished by the surname of "the wise." They were almost of the same age and had the same inclination, benevolence of mind, taste for learning of all kinds, principles of government and zeal for the public good. If Scipio took place in the point of military glory, his friend had perhaps the superiority in respect of eloquence. But let us hear Lælius himself upon so interesting a subject:—"As for me, of all the gifts of nature or fortune, there are none, I think, comparable to the happiness of having Scipio for my friend. I found in our Friendship a perfect conformity of sentiments in respect to public affairs; an inexhaustible fund of counsels and supports in private life; with a tranquillity and delight not to be expressed. I never gave Scipio the least offence to my knowledge, nor ever heard a word escape him that did not please. We had but one house, and one table at our common expense, the frugality of which was equally the taste of both: for in war, in travelling, in the country, we were always together. I do not mention our studies, and the attention of us both always to learn something. This was the employment of our leisure hours, removed from the sight and commerce of the world." Is there now anything comparable to a Friendship like that here described? "What a consolation is it," says Tully, "to have a second-self, to whom we have nothing secret, and into whose heart we may pour out our own with perfect unreserve? Could we taste prosperity so sensibly, if we had no one to share with us in our joy? And what a relief is it in adversity,

to have a friend still more affected with it than ourselves?"—But what more highly exalts the value of the Friendship in question, was, its not being founded at all in interest, but solely in esteem for each others virtues. "What occasion," says Lælius, "could Scipio have for me? Undoubtedly none; nor I for him. But my attachment to him was the effect of my high esteem and admiration of his virtues; and his to me arose from the favourable idea he entertained of my character and manners. This Friendship increased afterwards on both sides, by habit and commerce. We both, indeed, derived great advantages from it, but these were not our views when we began to love each other. Nothing upon earth can be so desirable as such an amity. But in vain do we seek it among the ignorant, the vain, the selfish, or men of loose and profligate principles. We must soon be ashamed of loving the man whom we cannot esteem. It is David and Jonathan, it is Damon and Pythias, Tully and Atticus, Scipio and Lælius, and such only who can truly taste and dignify pure Friendship; and such only can say with Ovid, "Nos duo turba sumus:" We two are a multitude. See Cicero *de Amicitia*, and Stretch's *Beauties of History*, p. 259.

19. His late Royal Highness Frederick Prince of Wales,—who amongst his other great qualities, was the patron of merit, and the friend of mankind,—was frequently visited by persons of distinguished abilities, with whom he contracted a strict intimacy. Among these, Mr. Gl—— (who is as justly celebrated for the amiableness of his character, as for the qualifications of an orator and a poet) had a considerable share in his esteem. One day the prince observed at his levee that he had not seen this gentleman for some time, and asking if he was well, was

told that Mr. Gl—— was under difficulties on account of some losses in trade, which had so discouraged him, that he was ashamed to appear in his Highness's presence. The prince replied, "I am sorry for it;" and presenting a bank note of 500*l.* to a gentleman who stood by, added, "Carry this to Mr. Gl—— as a small testimony of my affection, and assure him from me, that I sympathise in his affliction, and shall be always glad to see him."

20. In the time of the proscription by the triumvirate at Rome, a grievous punishment was denounced against any person who should conceal or any way assist the proscribed; as, on the other hand, great rewards were promised to those who should discover their hiding places. Marcus Varro, the philosopher, was in the list of persons proscribed; at which time, his dear friend Calenus tenderly received and concealed him several days in his house; and though Anthony came often thither to walk and converse, yet was Calenus never affrighted, nor changed his mind, though he daily saw other men punished or rewarded, according to the purport of the bloody edict.

21. Camerarius observes, That at Rome were to be seen these verses engraven on an urn:—

D. D. S.
Urna brevis geminum, quamvis tenet ista cadaver,
Attamen in cœlo spiritus unus adest:
Viximus unanimes, Luciusque et Flavius, idem
Sensus, amor, studium, vita duobus erat.

That is,
Though both our ashes this small urn inclose,
Yet, as one soul in heaven we repose:
Lucius and Flavius living were one mind,
One will, one love, and to one course inclined.

22. That ancient philosopher whose precept it was, "to converse with our friends, as if they

might one day become our enemies," has been justly censured by Scipio, as advancing a very ungenerous maxim; nor would he believe it could have been uttered by Bias, one of the seven sages, but rather by some groveling or ambitious sophist, engrossed solely by the things of interest and blind self-love. However, to remember that we must one day most certainly be divided from those friends we now so dearly love, is a reflection, methinks, that should enter with us into this and all our tender connections of every kind. Death, says Seneca, falls heavy upon him, who is too much known to others, and too little to himself; and Pontanus, a man celebrated among the early restorers of literature, thought the study of our own hearts of so much importance, that he has recommended it, like a sincere friend, even from his tomb. "Sum *Johannes Jovianus Pontanus*, quem amaverunt bonæ, musæ suspexerunt viri probi, honestaverunt reges domini: jam scis qui sim, vel qui potius fuerim. Ego vero te hospes, noscere in tenebris nequeo, sed teipsum ut noscas rogo." "I am *Pontanus*, beloved by the powers of literature, admired by men of worth, and dignified by the monarchs of the world. Thou knowest now who I am, or, more properly, who I was. For thee, stranger, I who am in darkness cannot know thee, but I intreat thee to know thyself." We hope every reader of these Anecdotes will consider himself as engaged to the observation of a precept, which the wisdom and virtue of all ages have concurred to enforce; a precept dictated by philosophers, inculcated by sages, and ratified by saints. See *Rambler*, no. 28.

23. Eusebius and Pamphilus were Christian friends, whose love was so close and intense, that their historian says, as if in allusion to the language

of the sacred writer, Deut. xiii. 6, that *they seemed to have but one soul between them;* and when the martyrdom of the latter had separated them from the presence of each other, and put a stop to the former exchange of good offices between them; yet it did not put an end to their league of love and amity, but the survivor copied the pattern, assumed the name, and wrote the history of his former dear companion; and continued to enjoy his friend in a sense and method which Heathen principles could not have taught or supported.

SERMON XVII.

ON THE RIGHT AND INDUSTRIOUS EMPLOYMENT OF TIME

PART I.

Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise; which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.—PROVERBS vi. 6, &c.

WONDER not, my young friends, that I enumerate amongst those *pleasures* which I would recommend to you as substantial and sincere, "the right and industrious employment of Time." You perhaps, judging either from the report of corrupt nature, or the false mirror of fashionable life, might rather suppose that pleasure to be found in dissipation and indolence in the whirl of gaiety, and in the round of amusement. But let us listen awhile to the voice of reason and reflection, and no doubt we shall soon be convinced, that as no possession in the hands of mortals is more valuable and important than *time*, so no satisfaction is more grateful and real, than that which arises from a retrospect of time, well and industriously employed.

The wise man in the text refers us to the Ant, not only as an example of "Industry," but of "the provident use of time;" for she, with infinite and unwearied assiduity, *gathereth* her little store; and she gathereth it *in the summer, in the harvest*, im-

proving wisely the season for her supply; and thus rejoiceth in the winter over the fruits of her well-timed application and pains.

It is a lesson, my young friends, worthy your most serious consideration; for from the meanest insect, from the lowest reptile you may gather instruction: *Ask now the beasts, and they will teach thee,* says Job, *and the fowls of the air, and they will inform thee**. Man, like the Ant has his summer, his harvest, his season for laying up a store to rejoice and refresh his soul, at a time when all power of providing will be utterly precluded: and if haply he neglect or misemploy that season, wretched indeed will be his penury and his suffering; a winter of indigence and woe!

What a motive, my young friends, to improve this important season, which is happily now in your power: you will find it no less your indispensable *duty*, than your highest *wisdom*, and truest *pleasure*.

That it is your "indispensible duty," you cannot doubt a moment, when you consider the end for which all *time* is given you. Certainly not to squander away in foolish, frivolous, or vicious pursuits, not to waste in doing nothing or in doing ill; but to be employed in such a manner as becomes a probationer for eternity, on the stage of this short and precarious life, Contemplate yourself in this right view, and you will be convinced, that as of all the talents delivered to man, by his great Lord and master, time is the most considerable; so is he under the highest obligations to improve that precious deposit. Indeed, upon the due improvement of it depends the performance of all his duties; and consequently, the misuse of time will necessarily defeat all the great ends which HE benevolently proposed, who gave to man this time, this important

* Job xii. 7.

season to work out his salvation, and secure immortality. One cannot therefore well conceive a greater offence against God, than a waste or misapplication of those moments, which he hath destined to the noblest uses, the best ends; and which (infinitely to enhance the value) once lost are recoverable no more. Suffer your youth to glide away unimproved! —suffer that harvest of future life to pass uncultivated ungathered! alas, my friends no power or might in mortality can recall the favourable season! In the sad winter of desolate life, we can only lament our unthrifty neglect, or vile prodigality! and the end of all will be, most probably, not only the bitter remonstrances of upbraiding conscience here, but the still more bitter remonstrances of that conscience for ever; that *worm which never dieth!*

Inferior, it is true, but not less real are the obligations we are under to improve our time, from the debt we owe to society, to our friends. We live not for ourselves, we cannot live for ourselves; united in society with our fellow-mortals, we owe them reciprocal returns for the advantages which we receive from their union and intercourse: and so far as we refuse or withhold these returns, we offend against the laws of society, and make ourselves unworthy of its benefits*. But how is it possible that they shall discharge their duty, and perform the necessary offices of their place and station, who indolently waste or wickedly misemploy the moments, which ought to be occupied in the necessary and worthy functions of life! Cicero hath

* Unum debet esse omnibus propositum (says Cicero, *de Offic.* lib. 3), ut eadem sit utilitas uniuscujusque et universorum: quam si ad se quisque rapiat, dissolvetur omnis humana consortio.—Alteri vivas oportet (says Seneca, Ep. 48), si vis tibi vivere: hæc societas diligent et sanctè observanda est, quæ nos omnes omnibus miscet et indicat aliquod esse commune jus generis humani.

well observed that every hour hath its proper duty*. If we would improve our time, and discharge the debt we owe to society, as well as to ourselves, we shall be careful to fulfil that duty; to employ ourselves in the exercise of every virtue and every office which our situation enjoins and requires.

And what *wisdom* can be greater! Candidates for a blissful immortality, a short period is allotted us to prove ourselves worthy: a discharge of duty is the right improvement of that period; and that discharge not only secures the high felicity set before us, but in the mean time, peculiarly conduces to our present welfare and satisfaction. Who then that is wise would neglect to secure to himself such exquisite advantages? If in matters of a temporal concern we freely brand with the mark of Folly those who, by neglect of proper opportunities, or through indolence and inattention, forfeit advantages which would render their worldly circumstances easy and comfortable, how much rather should we fix that stigma upon those, who, by a wretched abuse of the present short season of life, forfeit an eternity of consummate happiness? And can we conceive, that such an happiness is to be obtained without any attention or labour on our parts? that it will be lavished upon us, however we neglect or despise it? What example have we of a similar kind to encourage us in such an idea? What do we see or know of earthly things, desirable and great, which are thus obtained? St. Paul well observes, that "Every one who striveth for an earthly crown, for a corruptible reward, is temperate in all things;" in all things fulfilling the duties required, and improving every moment of the time assigned for his preparation to the contest. How

* Nullam tempus vacare officio potest.

much rather then ought we, must we thus strenuously apply ourselves to the duties enjoined, and do all we can to husband well this "short and precarious" season of trial, if we wish to appear truly wise, and to gain the prize of eternal blessedness!

For wisdom urgeth us no less strenuously to the same conduct, from the "shortness and precariousness" of this important period: which, were we certain of enjoying its utmost extent, is but a point compared to eternity: and yet of this point, we can never assure ourselves, so many thousand avenues are daily opened to the vast regions of immensity! Who then would omit to improve the opportunity, by Almighty goodness put into his power, and to live to day as one that knows he may be summoned on the morrow to an immortal life!

Only consider, my young friends, what manner of persons we should each of us become, if we were informed by truth infallible, that within the space of *twenty days* we must give up time, and enter on Eternity! Could we do other than seriously, and with all our power, apply ourselves to the duties which would recommend to the happiness of that eternity? Now as we are all created to be eternal, to live in an endless succession of ages upon ages, where thousands and millions of thousands of years, will have no proportion to our everlasting life with God; so with regard to this eternal state, which is our real state, twenty days is as poor a pittance as twenty years. And who can presume to promise himself twenty years! How wise then to live, as thus comparing time with eternity! For since an eternal state is as certainly ours as our present state, it is plain that we cannot judge rightly of any particular time as to us, but by comparing it

with that eternal duration, for which we are created. If you would know what five years signify to a being which is to exist an hundred, you must compare five to an hundred, and see what proportion it bears: so if you would know what twenty years signify to a son of Adam, you must compare it, not to a million of ages, but to an eternal duration, to which no number of millions bears any proportion; and then you will judge right by finding it *nothing*, a mere drop in the great ocean of eternity! Upon the footing then of this state of the case, consider only how you would condemn the *folly* of a man, who should lose his share of future glory, for the sake of being rich or great, or praised or delighted in any enjoyment, only one poor day, before he was to die! But if the period will come, when a number of years will seem less to every one of us, than a day does now; what a condemnation must it then be, if eternal happiness shall appear to be lost, for something less than the enjoyment of a day!

"Why does a day seem a trifle to us now? It is because we have years to set against it. It is the duration of years which makes it appear as nothing. What a trifle then must the years of a man's age appear, when we are obliged to set them against eternity? when there shall be nothing but eternity wherewith to compare them! This will be the alarming case of each one of us, as soon as we depart from this temporary scene. We shall be forced to forget the distinctions of days and years, and to measure time, not by the course of the sun, but by setting it against an endless duration! As the fixed stars, on account of our being placed at such a distance from them, however large in themselves, appear but as so many points to us; so when we, placed in eternity, shall look back upon all time, it will ap-

pear but as a moment, a very point of existence!"* Alarming reflections! Will they not be sufficient to convince us, my young friends, how poorly they think, how falsely they estimate, how unwisely they act, who are less careful of an eternal state, because they may be at some distance from it, than they would be, if they knew they were within a few weeks or days of it? And yet who of us can assure himself that he is even within so long a space as a few days of it? In a few hours perhaps the dire arrest may come: on this moment depends eternity! Wilt thou then, O man, be guilty of so glaring a folly as to abuse or neglect this moment, this season, this harvest of thy hopes? *Go to the Ant, thou* insensible, *consider her ways, and be* WISE.

It would be easy to show the wisdom of a due improvement of time, from a variety of other considerations; we might urge besides "its shortness and precariousness," the many unavoidable and necessary interruptions, to which a right improvement of it is subject; the large portion of it constantly devoted to the services of animal nature, to the preservation of our body in life and health: and we might urge from thence the obligations we are under to consult for our superior part, for our soul's health and vigour, to which surely we ought to dedicate all the time we can improve, from the demands of animal and inferior nature. But I pass by these considerations, just briefly to recommend the wisdom of rightly improving your time, from a motive more especially interesting to you, my young friends: the period of improvement is short; it is that only which you happily have in your power. For we cannot choose the time of life wherein to avail ourselves of our natural endowments, and to reap all the advantages designed us in them. In

* See Law's *Serious Call.*

youth, our bodies easily receive whatever mien or motion: where is the sound so difficult which our tongues cannot be then taught to express? But if we are advanced to manhood, before these qualifications are attained, how fruitless, or at least how difficult will be the endeavour to attain them? Exactly similar is the case with our understanding, our will and our passions. There is a season,—the important season now in your possession,—when a plenteous harvest of useful truths may be gathered; when our passions will readily submit to the government of reason; when right principles may be so fixed in us, as to influence every important action of our future lives*. But this season, this seed-time of our hopes, extends neither to the whole, nor to any considerable length of our continuance upon earth: it is limited to a few years of our term; and if throughout these we neglect it, error and ignorance, vice and misery, according to the usual course of things, are entailed upon us: our will becomes our law; our lusts gain a strength which we shall afterwards vainly oppose: and wrong inclinations are so confirmed in us, that they defeat all our endeavours to correct them.

How wise then, my young friends, to seize this precious opportunity, and to lay up a store of future happiness and peace! For this will be found not only your *duty* and your *wisdom*, but your highest *happiness*. It is with a view to that happiness, with a view to your real pleasure, more especially, that I wish to recommend the proper employment of your time. It is a self-evident maxim, that the better we are, the happier we must be: angels are happier than we, because they are holier: God is perfect happiness, because he is perfect goodness. Now the more diligently we discharge the duties of our sta-

* See p. 15.

tion, the better we are: but this discharge of duty constitutes the right improvement of time: by plain consequence therefore the more carefully we improve our time, the more we increase our happiness. Conscience bears a cheerful testimony to the propriety of our conduct, and proclaims a jubilee to the self-approving mind: serenity smooths our brow, and smiling satisfaction conducts us joyfully along the road of life. Every moment pleasingly occupied, presents some useful prospect to our view: no painful lassitude, no irksome weariness, no tedious melancholy broods over the slow and heavy-dragging hours; nor are we urged to frivolous dissipation, or to vicious engagements, to "murder" that time, which hangs heavy on the hands of the poor being, whose utmost span below is threescore years and ten, but who after this short course is run, hath to live an immortal spirit, from eternity to eternity.*

That life, that eternal life, so formidable to the dissipated and vicious, affords a fresh source of most abundant happiness to the wise improver of the present transitory scene. Here he beholds the full, the ample rewards of all his present pains, and patient perseverance. High above the obstructing and opposing difficulties of a sinful world, he looks to that celestial region, where trial shall cease, though fruition never shall;—the fruition of God, and of the pleasures prepared for those who love him. Animated by this exalted hope, he is solicitous to redeem, to buy up, to improve every moment of this short and passing period: thinks nothing of real value in it, but what tends to the

* There cannot surely be a greater inconsistence than to lament the shortness of life, while we complain of the length and tediousness of Time. "Fulfil but your duties; live for eternity; and you will never find time irksome, or think life too short."

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important design for which it is given him, the glory of God, and the salvation of his soul. And in this view, he considers good or evil with an almost equal indifference; his heart, though truly thankful for the one, being never improperly attached to it; and for the other, he is able to say with full triumph, in the words of the sacred writer, *Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us an eternal and exceeding weight of glory!*

Such is the happiness both in present possession, and in future prospect, which a right improvement of your time will certainly impart. Need I then, my young friends, exhort you to this duty? which is no less bound upon you by motives of your own interest and pleasure, both in this world and the next, than by motives of highest obligation to the sovereign giver of all your time. I enter not into the particular methods by which you are to improve this precious talent. I enlarge not on the temporal advantages arising from such improvement; these will come more properly under the next discourse, when we speak of *industry:* suffer me, however, to offer two or three general rules, which may prove useful to direct your conduct.

Take care then, first, that you employ your time, and that you employ it innocently. To be idle and unemployed, is a sign not only of a weak head, but of a bad heart. And as it is one vile abuse of time, which is given us for action, and action of the utmost moment, so is it one sure method to lead us to other and worse abuses. For he who is idle and wholly unoccupied, will ere long, without question, be occupied in mischief. You must therefore take care, that you *employ* your time; but then you must take as much care to employ it *innocently*: and by innocent employment is meant all the proper duties

of your station, and all those inoffensive and short relaxations, which are necessary either to the health of your bodies, or to the enlivening and invigorating your minds.

We live in an age when words are strangely perverted and abused, as well as things; and when the softest terms, as we have before remarked.* are often given to actions, which deserve other appellations, and which, through those terms, lull and deceive the soul into destruction. Thus, we call by the name of "innocent amusements" all those dissipating public and private pleasures, which reign so prevalent, which increase so fast, and the love whereof may justly be termed the characteristic of our age. If we are created only for dissipation and pleasure, this infatuating circle of delights may be trod with security, and called innocent with propriety: if we are really candidates for an eternal state, it will be difficult, I fear, to show the innocence of that love and attachment to diversions, which take up the life, the time, the thoughts of those engaged in them; and which absolutely precludes from every right and honourable use of those talents which God hath committed to our trust. You, my young friends, desirous of improving your time, will never term, can never think such dissipations innocent: but while you find some degree of relaxation necessary, and inoffensive and social amusements in a high degree useful, will be careful not to offend in the excess even of these; remembering that duty, not dissipation, is the great end of a Christian's existence; and that of all characters the most insignificant is that "of a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God."

But observe we, Secondly, That it is not enough that we *employ* our time, and employ it *innocently*;

* See p. 197 and 255.

we must be careful to *improve* it as much as we can, and to redeem it from all that improper waste, and those unnecessary consumptions, in which men are apt to be too lavish of it. There are five things in which a terrible waste of time is too commonly made: in sleep, in meals, in dress (each absolutely necessary, yet each, alas! how much abused by us), in idle and impertinent visits and useless conversation when in company, and in vain and romantic thinking when alone. If a man were seriously to sit down—even those amongst us, my beloved, who have not been addicted to any heinous vices—and to consider how the greatest part of his time has stolen away, it would at once shock and surprise him! The portion would be found very small, which he could be said to have lived: and how much smaller still the portion employed in proper uses, and dedicated to His glory, who is the Lord of our life, and the giver of all our time!

Would you, therefore, my young friends, be able to give a better account to your Almighty master, you must husband with strictest economy the moments now happily in your power, and cut off as much as you may from those unreasonable and extravagant expenses of time. Nature is certainly contented with a moderate portion of sleep; and as it is the lowest of all animal enjoyments, the dignity of that nature should arouse you on the one hand, to a conquest over it; as, on the other, should the unspeakable advantages which you will derive from early application in the morning to duty and to business. Health will be as well or better preserved, if we do not sit long and luxuriously at our meals: a very little time will serve to apparel us with decency and propriety: and we may divert ourselves, enjoy our friends, and perform all the necessary civilities which our situation in

life requires, without making it an employment. And for those whose occupations call them to labour, they may well cut off all needless expenses and waste of time, by industry and application in their several professions. Then a cheerful moment of honest relaxation, and a much more cheerful moment of sincere devotion, will cause all their time to pass off light and easy.

But, Thirdly, my young friends, you must be careful not only to employ your time, and to employ it innocently; not only to cut off and retrench all superfluous waste of it; but "all that time, which you gain by retrenching, you must study to improve, by employing it to the best and noblest purposes*." This is the principal point you are to aim at, if you would effectually improve your time; you must be anxious to employ it in the best and noblest uses, in subserviency to your own eternal welfare; that is, with a constant eye to the glory of God, and the good of mankind: for herein consists our duty, and for this end was all our time given us.† And let me recommend that in the management of this great deposit, in

* Mr. Addison, speaking of the time spent in religious exercises, says, "The man who lives under an habitual sense of the Divine presence, keeps up an habitual cheerfulness of temper, and enjoys every moment the satisfaction of thinking himself in company with his dearest and best of friends. The time never lies heavy upon him; it is impossible for him to be alone. His thoughts and passions are the most busied at such hours, when those of other men are most unactive. He no sooner steps out of the world, but his heart burns with devotion, swells with hope, and triumphs in the consciousness of that presence which everywhere surrounds him; or on the contrary, pours out its fears, its sorrows, its apprehensions to the great supporter of its existence."—*Spectator*, no. 93.

† Bishop Beveridge's resolution (and let it be observed, those resolutions were formed when he was about twenty years of age) respecting time, is as follows: "I am resolved, by God's grace, to redeem my time past, in using

the practice of these rules, and in your right employment of your time, you be careful to proportion that time wisely, and according to the weight and importance of the work or business in which you engage: allotting such a part of it for this business, and such a part for that, so as not only to leave no intervals for unlawful or unnecessary actions to intrude themselves, but to have every hour assigned to its due employment. How great advantages, how great comforts arise from such a regular and exact distribution of time, I could speak, my young friends, from my own experience, with the fullest assurance and satisfaction.

Thus then, if you would act agreeably to duty, to wisdom, to happiness, you must husband the present season; you must improve the present short and precarious period allotted for your future and eternal provision. You have that season now: but you have only the present Now. Mortals exist for the present; the past is gone and dead; it is "with the years beyond the flood:" the future is not come, is uncertain; it may never come. The present only, but the present always is in our power. Yet, strange contradiction!—mortals rarely, if ever, live for the present: all human life is spent either in retrospection on the past, or in concern and preparation for the future*. This is the height of folly. On the contrary it is true wisdom, and leads to true happiness, to live for the present, that is, to improve the time we have in hand, for that is ours; to employ it to the best uses, and to work out our salvation *to-day, while it is called to-day, lest the night come wherein no man can work.*

a double diligence for the future:—to employ and improve all my gifts and endowments, both of body and mind, to the glory and service of my great Creator." See his *Private Thoughts.*

* See M. Paschal's *Thoughts on Religion.*

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Be this then your care, my dear young friends who yet, through the mercy of God, are in the bloom and flower of life, and have the strength and perfection of your time before you. This, this is the important season, wherein to perform acceptable duty. Provide then for yourselves an inexhaustible store of comfort; offer to God the services of your youth: so shall you enjoy in the winter of age the felicities of a peaceful mind, and an approving God; real, substantial, all-sufficient *pleasures*. Nay, and if found ripe for glory, before you are ripe in years, —for God measures not life by length of days, but by the fulness of those days in virtuous and holy deeds,—if early found ripe for glory, and cut down in the blossom of your age, thus prepared your change shall be blessed; eternity and gladness shall crown and reward you. And, fully to convince yourselves of the vanity and misery of time spent in worldly pleasures and pursuits, in doing evil, or in doing nothing, only, in conclusion, take with me a brief view of some of your fellow-creatures thus occupied around you!

See that sordid son of avarice, who "rises up early, late takes rest, and eats the bread of carefulness!" he, it must be owned, is diligent enough in husbanding his time. But for what end is all this diligence, all this solicitude? It is to gain an increase to his earthly stores; it is to add something more to a heap, already too large for his enjoyment, and which will sink his soul deep into endless perdition. But this so much engrosses all his time, his thoughts, his heart, that God and heaven, and his immortal soul can be spared none of either, or at best, but little; and that (as he spares to everything) very grudgingly: all is lost, this groveling earth-worm thinks,—all which is not given to gain!

See again, yon eager son of pleasure: he is fear-

ful lest the moments should escape: he has much to do; time is precious, he will tell you; he must haste away, he cannot be detained at all; he could not stay to perform any benevolent office; any religious duty, not if it were to save his soul. And why all this anxiety, all this haste?—an appointment of pleasure; a meeting of gaiety or luxury: wine or women solicit his attendance; and thus miserably he employs all that time which was given him for the great purpose of securing his soul's salvation.

Equally solicitious, though devoted to another service, this mans's whole time and thought are engrossed by the ambitious pursuit of worldly pomp and splendour. Here he conceives all happiness to centre: and continually searching for that happiness, while continually disappointed in the search, you will not wonder that he can spare no leisure, as he can find no satisfaction in a serious application to the important business, for which alone he was created;

Turn we our view from those thus busily occupied in wrong pursuits, to those who have no pursuits at all; from those who misemploy their time in doing evil, to those who equally misemploy it in doing nothing*! What listless wretched beings; in

* The nature of these discourses precludes a too particular enumeration of characters; however, just to specify, what I cannot enlarge upon, I subjoin a passage from Dean Bolton's "Employment of Time," which may lead to a clearer idea of my meaning. He supposes that in a vision, a Gymnosophist* examines the men in our country how they had passed their morning; "Many of them acknowledged, that the morning, properly speaking, had been near gone before their eyes were opened: many of them had only risen to dress, to visit, to amuse themselves at the drawing-room or coffee-house: some had by riding or walking been consulting that health at the beginning

* See *Anecdotes*, p. 470.

what a doze of indolent stupidity pass their yawning useless days? mere burdens as they are to their mother earth; living merely to consume her fruits, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to trifle; some of them you may observe vapourish and uneasy, dissatisfied and melancholy: complaining, that they know not how to "kill the tedious hours of this short life:" and applying for old days, with an industry, which well directed would almost canonize them for saints,

of the day, which the close of it would wholly pass in impairing. Some, from the time they had got on their own clothes, had been engaged in seeing others put on theirs; in attending levees, in endeavouring to procure by their importunity, what they had disqualified themselves for by their idleness. Some had been early out of their beds, but it was because they could not, from their ill-luck the preceding evening, rest in them; and when risen, as they had no spirits, they could not reconcile themselves to any sort of application. Some had not had in their power to do what was of much consequence: in the former part of the morning, they wanted to speak with their tradesmen, and in the latter, they could not be denied to their friends. Others truly had been reading;—but reading what could neither make them wiser or better; what was not worth their remembering, or what they should wish to forget. Several appeared with an air, expressing the fullest confidence, that what they had to say for themselves, would be to the philosopher's entire satisfaction. They have been employed, as virtuosi should be;—had been exercising their skill in the liberal arts, and encouraging the artists. Medals pictures, statues, had undergone their examination, and been their purchase. They had been inquiring what the literati of France, Germany, Italy, had lately published; and they had bought what suited their respective tastes. When it appeared, that the completing a Roman series, had been his concern, who had never read over in his own language a Latin historian. That they who grudged no expense for originals, knew them only by hearsay from their worst copies: that the book-buyers had not laid out their money on what they ever proposed to read, but on what they had heard commended; and what they wanted to fit a shelf, and fill a library, which only served them for a breakfast room.—The sage pronounced this class of men, the idlest of all idle people; and doubly blameable, as wasting alike their time and their fortune." See p. 360. &c.

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to the paltriest diversions, the meanest and the most irrational; such as are attended with the worst consequences in many cases, and lead to bad consequences in all. And this, all this merely "because they know not how to dispose of their time;" that is, because they do not know that every moment they live, they are to live for eternity;

Look only at examples like these, and the misery, the folly, the impropriety of abusing your time, will appear in the most glaring light; and will lead you, my young friends, I trust, to a better application of the season before you. A true concern for religion will soon teach and direct you to such an employment of yourselves, as will render time by no means burthensome: you will never complain of its length; its shortness only will strike and alarm you: and the proper use of time will, of itself, tend more and more to convince you, that man was not born merely to fill up a little space on this transitory earth; to indulge his bodily passions, to live and to die, like the beasts which perish. No; he was born to co-operate in the great work of his salvation with that Redeemer, who died on the cross to procure the means of grace, and to set the hope of glory before the sinful sons of men. That glory eternal depends upon the right improvement of the present time. If we wish to enjoy that glory, we must use this time as becomes rational and short-lived beings. If we disregard that glory, we may then live in the disregard of all things beside. You, I persuade myself, have better sentiments for you have better hopes. God of his grace inspire you with true wisdom, and enable you to improve the present time, that you may enjoy all the blessings and glories of that which is to come!

ANECDOTES *to enforce the Employment of Time.*

1. "We all of us complain of the shortness of time," says Seneca, "and yet have much more than we know what to do with. Our lives are either spent in doing nothing at all, or in doing nothing to the purpose, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them." In short, that noble philosopher has described our inconsistency with ourselves in this particular, by all those various turns of expression and thought, which are peculiar to his writings.

2. The allusion of human life to trees, leaves, &c. is familiar with the most celebrated poets. Homer's famous speech of Glaucus, *Iliad*, b. vi. ver. 181, is too generally known to need a recital; and the same thought may be found in Ecclesiasticus, xiv. 18, almost word for word. That fine fragment, however, of Simonides, extant in Stobæus, is so very strikingly adapted to the present subject, that we cannot withhold it from the reader; and contains such beautiful instruction, as we would wish to leave upon his mind.

"Wise was the Chian, when he said, to show
The instability of men below,
'Ah! what a wondrous likeness may we trace
Between the falling trees, and mortal race!'
Yet, yet, how few the solemn truth receive!
Vain in pursuit, and high in hope they live:
A thousand fruitless schemes their thoughts engage,
Alike forgetful or of death or age:
Toiling, while health and strength their powers supply,
With busy, restless, fond anxiety!
Ah fools and vain; and will they not be wise,
Nor know that youth's fair flow'r soon fades and dies,
And life's quick moment like a shuttle flies!
But thou, my friend, a better lesson learn,
And, hence instructed, mind thy great concern:
To virtue's generous acts thy soul apply,
In good more active,—as so soon to die!"

3. It was a memorable practice of Vespasian, the Roman emperor, throughout the course of his whole life. He called himself to an account every night for the actions of the past day; and as often as he found he had slipped any one day without doing some good, he entered upon his diary this memorandum, "Dim perdidi;" "I have lost a day." The above fine instance is thus noticed by our great moral poet, in the *Night Thoughts*:—

"On all-important time, through every age,
Though much, and warm the wise have urged, the man
Is yet unborn who duly weighs an hour.
"I've lost a day"—the prince who nobly cry'd,
Had been an emperor without his crown;
Of Rome!—Say rather, lord of human race.
He spoke, as if deputed by mankind.
So should all speak: so reason speaks in all.—
Where is that thrift, that avarice of TIME,
(O glorious avarice!) thought of death inspires
As rumour'd robberies endear our gold?
O time! than gold more sacred! more a load
Than lead, to fools! and fools reputed wise;
What moment's granted man, without account!
What years are squander'd, wisdom's debt unpaid!—
Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
And seems to creep decrepit with his age;
Behold him, when passed by; what then is seen,
But his broad pinions swifter than the winds?
And all mankind in contradiction strong,
Rueful, aghast; cry out on his career." Night II.

4. Alfred the Great was one of the wisest, the best and most benificent monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre of this realm; and his example is highly memorable. "Every hour of his life had its peculiar business assigned it. He divided the day and night into three portions of eight hours each; and though much afflicted with a very painful disorder, assigned only eight hours to sleep, meals, and exercise; dexoting the remaining sixteen, one half to reading, writing and praying, and the other to public business:" So sensible was this great man that time

was not a trifle to be dissipated, but a rich talent entrusted to him, and for which he was accountable to the great Dispenser of it. And surely, if a person like him, in the highest station of life, amidst all the temptations of ease, and affluence, and pleasure, was thus careful to husband time, and fill up the fleeting moments of life with some useful employ, how very inexcusable must it be in those, who have not such allurements, to murder their days, by indolence and dissipation! "An idle body," says Mr. Addison, "is a monster in the creation; all nature is busy about him." How wretched is it to hear people complain, that the day hangs heavy upon them! That they don't know what to do with themselves! How monstrous are such expressions among creatures who can apply themselves to the duties of religion and meditation; to the reading of useful books; who may exercise themselves in the noble pursuits of knowledge and virtue, and every hour of their lives make themselves wiser and better than they were before.

5. We are told of Queen Elizabeth, That except when engaged by public or domestic affairs, and the exercise necessary for the preservation of her health and spirits, she was always employed in either reading or writing; in translating from other authors, or in compositions of her own; and that notwithstanding she spent much of her time in reading the best writings of her own and former ages, yet she by no means neglected that best of books, the Bible: for proof of which, take her own words. "I walk," says she, "many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I plucke up the goodlisome herbes of sentences by pruneing; eat them by reading; digest them by musing, and laie them up at length in the hie seate of memory, by gathering them together; that so

having tasted their sweetness, I may the less perceive the bitterness of life." See her MSS. in the Bodleian Library, no. 235.

6. When Socrates, in Plato's Phædo, has proved the immortality of the soul, he considers it as a necessary consequence of the belief thereof, "That we should be employed in the culture of our minds; in such care of them as shall not only regard that term, to which we give the name of life, but also the whole which follows it; in making ourselves as wise and good as may be; since on it our safety entirely depends; the soul carrying hence nothing with it, but its good or bad actions, its virtues or vices; and these constitute its happiness or misery to all eternity." How might many a Christian redden, to think that this is the language of a Pagan mind; a mind unenlightened with the bright splendours of gospel truth, and equally ignorant of a Saviour's merits, and of a Saviour's example!

7. Seneca, in his letters to Lucilius, assures him that there was not a day in which he did not either write something, or read and epitomise some good author: and Pliny in like manner, giving an account of the various methods he used, to fill up every vacancy of time, after several employments which he enumerates, observes, "Sometimes I hunt; but even then, I carry with me a pocket-book, that whilst my servants are busied in disposing the nets and other matters I may be employed in something that may be useful to me in my studies; and that, if I miss my game, I may at least bring home some of my thoughts with me, and not have the mortification of having caught nothing."

8. An Italian philosopher expressed in his motto, that "Time was his estate." An estate indeed! which will produce nothing without cultivation; but will always abundantly repay the labours of in-

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dustry, and satisfy the most extensive desires, if no part of it be suffered to lie waste by negligence, to be overrun with noxious plants, or laid out for show, rather than for use. The duties of man, as Dr. Johnson finely observes, are such as human nature does not willingly perform, and such, as those are inclined to delay, who yet intend sometime to fulfil them. It was therefore necessary that this universal reluctance should be counteracted, and the drowsiness of hesitation wakened into resolve. That the danger of procrastination should be always in view, and the fallacies of security be hourly detected. To this end all the appearances of nature uniformly conspire. Whatever we see on every side reminds us of the lapse of time and the flux of life. The day and night succeed each other; the rotation of seasons diversifies the year; the sun rises, attains the meridian, declines and sets, and the moon every night changes its form. The day has been considered as an image of the year, and the year as the representation of life. The morning answers to the spring, and the spring to childhood and youth; the noon corresponds to the summer, and the summer to the strength of manhood. The evening is an emblem of autumn, and autumn of declining life. The night, with its silence and darkness, shows the winter, in which all the powers of vegetation are benumbed; and the winter points out the time when life shall cease, with all its hopes and pleasures. If these parts of time were not variously coloured, we should never discern their departure or succession; but should live thoughtless of the past, and careless of the future; without will, and perhaps without power to compute the periods of life, or to compare the time which is already lost, with that which may probably remain. And yet it is certain that these admonitions of nature, however forcible, however

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importunate, are too often vain: and that many who mark with such accuracy the course of time, appear to have little sensibility of the decline of life. Every man has something to do, which he neglects; every man has faults to conquer, which he delays to combat. But,—let him who proposes his own happiness reflect, that while he forms his purpose, the day rolls on, "and the night cometh, when no man can work."

9. Augustus Cæsar, a few moments before his death, asked his friends who stood by him, if they thought he had acted his part well; and upon receiving such an answer as was due to his merit, "Let me then," said he, "go off the stage with your applause;" using the expression with which the Roman actors made their exit, at the conclusion of a dramatic piece. Mr. Addison's remark on this incident is worthy of himself: "I could wish," says he, "that men, while they are in health, would consider well the nature of the part they are engaged in; and what figure it will make in the minds of those they leave behind them: whether it was worth coming into the world for; whether it be suitable to a reasonable being: in short, whether it appears graceful in this life, or will turn to an advantage in the next? This kind of scrutiny would give them a true state of themselves, and incline them to consider seriously what they are about. One day would rectify the omissions of another, and make a man weigh all those indifferent actions, which, though they are easily forgotten, must certainly be accounted for." *Spectator*, no. 317.

10. Plato somewhere advises his friend Archytas to consider, "That we are not born for ourselves alone; that our country, our parents, and our friends, have their respective claims upon us." The following story is not inapplicable. "Among the

Indians," says Apuleius, "there is an excellent set of men called Gymnosophists: these I greatly admire; though not as skilled in propagating the vine, or in the arts of grafting or agriculture. They apply not themselves to till the ground, to search after gold, to break the horse, to tame the bull, to shear or feed sheep or goats. What is it then that engages them? One thing preferable to all these. Wisdom is the pursuit as well of the old men, the teachers, as of the young their disciples. Nor is there anything among them that I do so much praise, as their aversion to sloth and idleness. When the tables are overspread, before the meat is set on them, all the youths assembling to their meal are asked by their masters, in what useful talk they have been employed from sun-rising to that time? One represents himself as having being an arbitrator, and succeeded by his prudent management in composing a difference; in making them friends, who were at variance. A second had been paying obedience to his parents' commands. A third had made some discovery by his own application, or learned something by another's instruction. The rest give an account of themselves in the same way. He who has done nothing to deserve a dinner, is turned out of doors without one, and obliged to work, while the others enjoy the fruits of their application."

11. Epictetus has a fine chapter to inculcate the improvement of our time and talents. "Remember," says he, "that the world is a theatre, and that your part in this drama of life is determined by the poet.* Upon Him it must depend whether you shall act a long or a short one; whether your character shall be high or low. If therefore he assign you that of a beggar, take care to fill it well; if a cripple, or a prince, or a private obscure man, or what-

* Ποιητης, the great *Maker* and *Framer* of all things.

ever it be, make the best of it. For consider, that the acting of the part assigned you commendably, depends upon yourself: this is your business; but the giving out of the parts, and choosing the actors, is not yours, but another's province."

12. How different is the view of past life, in the man who is grown old in knowledge and wisdom, from that of him who is grown old in ignorance and folly? The latter is like the owner of a barren country, that fills his eye with the prospect of naked hills and plains, which produce nothing either profitable or ornamental. The other beholds a beautiful and spacious landscape, divided into beautiful gardens, green meadows, fruitful fields; and can scarce cast his eye on a single spot of his possessions, that is not covered with some beautiful plant or flower. See *Spectator*, no. 94.

13. "One comfort of age," says Sir William Temple, "may be, that whereas young men are usually in pain, when they are not in pleasure, old men find a sort of pleasure, whenever they are out of pain: and, as young men often lose or impair their present enjoyments, by raving after what is to come, by vain hopes or fruitless fears; so old men relieve the wants of their age, by pleasing reflections upon what is past. Therefore, men in the health and vigour of their age, should endeavour to fill their lives with reading, with travel, with the best conversation, and the worthiest actions, either in their public or private stations, that they may have something agreeable left to feed on when they are old, by pleasing remembrances." See his *Essay on Health and long Life*, Works, vol. iii. p. 300.

14. Procrastination, or delay, is well defined, "The thief of Time;" it not only steals us from duty, but from ourselves. To-morrow, may the procrastinator say,—to-morrow is still the fatal

time when all is to be done, or to be rectified: to-morrow comes, it goes, and still I please myself with the shadow, whilst I lose the reality: unmindful that the present time alone is ours; the future is yet unborn, and the past is dead; and can only live,—as parents in their children,—in the actions it has produced. The time we live ought not to be computed by the number of years, but by the use which has been made of them. It is not the extent of the ground, but the yearly rent, that gives value to the estate.

15. We will conclude these Anecdotes, with recommending to our readers (in the excellent words of the *Guardian*) this short self-examination, "What have ye been doing?" And if every one of them seriously lays his hand upon his heart, and considers what he is doing, it will check him in all the idle, or, what is worse, the vicious moments of life; will lift up his mind, when it is running on a series of indifferent actions; and encourage him in those which are virtuous and laudable. In a word, it will very much alleviate that guilt, which the best of men have reason to acknowledge, in their daily confessions; of "leaving undone those things which they ought to have done, and of doing those things which they ought not to have done."

SERMON XVII.

ON THE INDUSTRIOUS EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

PART II.

Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise: which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.—PROV. vi. 6, 8.

"IT is enough, we have observed, to employ our Time, we must employ it well;" we cannot employ it well, unless we give to *industry* the hours which we mean to improve for our present and eternal welfare. Here too again the little *ant* supplies us with an instructive lesson: for she not only husbands, with provident wisdom, the short season allotted for gathering her supply; but, with unwearied industry and attention, applies every moment of that season to the business for which it is given. But not the ant alone! all *nature*, my young friends, loudly preaches this virtue to you: which has besides the awful sanction of *revelation* to enforce its practice! together with the clearest dictates of *reason*, of present and of future happiness.

Perhaps it may seem some objection to this position, that labour and toil were enjoined upon our first father, as the punishment of his disobedience, and as part of his curse. But let me ask, can we conceive, that if Adam had never transgressed, he would have passed a life of indolence and inactivity,

without any application or exercise of his mental or bodily powers? Short as is the history of his perfect state, it gives us no room for and such imagination; but on the contrary informs us, that the *Lord God put the man*, whom he had formed, *into the garden of Eden to* DRESS and to KEEP it*; which certainly, at the least, implies, that he was not to be void of some occupation and employment: nay, and the reason given, why the Lord caused the earth at first to produce spontaneously plant and herb is, that there was *not yet a man to* TILL *the ground*.† That ground, most probably, in its primeval state, would have answered freely and luxuriantly to the tiller's care: free from those noxious thorns and weeds which require so much attention to eradicate, its cultivation would have been easy and pleasant, and its produce certain; nor would there have been occasion for that painful tillage, those constant fatigues of the laborious husbandman, so necessary now obtain its precious bounties. But to suppose that man in Paradise and perfection, would have had no business for his hands, no call to diligence and activity, is no less absurd, than it seems contrary to all our ideas of human nature and this sublunary world. Indeed we have no conception, we can have no conception of total inactivity in rational beings, of any, even of the most exalted kind. Accordingly we find the sovereign Father himself, as well as his blessed Son, engaged in a variety of works of creation, of providence, of redemption. *My Father worketh hitherto*, saith Christ, *and I work*‡. And the eternal Spirit is represented in the sacred records to us, as unceasingly operating in the great business of human salvation, illuminating and sanctifying the souls of men.

If from the Deity we descend to the highest order

* See Gen. ii. 15. † Gen. ii. 5. ‡ John v. 17.

of celestial beings, to Angels; we find them too described as the most active messengers and ministers of their God, continually employed in performing the important mandates of their Almighty King, "servants of his, and doing his pleasure;" for which they are peculiarly calculated, as excelling in strength; swift as the winds, bright and executive as a flame of fire *.

Nor are we to conceive, when we drop this cumbrous load of flesh, and the corporeal calls to industry cease, that in the future and blessed state which we hope to inherit, inactivity shall take place, and a vacancy from all employments ensue. We are told of the blessed in heaven, that they REST *not day and night*, praising God, and celebrating his glory †. Now though, amidst our present dark and confined apprehensions, we can form but very incomplete and imperfect ideas of the future world; yet from the very nature of rational existence we certainly may draw some probable conclusions: and, well assured of the negative felicities of that world, which we are informed will be wholly exempt from the distressful evils of mortality, from sin, from sorrow, from pain, and from death; which will no more oppress us with the importunate demands of hunger, thirst, or sleep, those mighty invaders of our present time, and thought, and pains; we may remain satisfied, that its positive blessings will be sufficient to fill up the powers of our souls, and to afford continual and delightful occupations, equal to the enlargement and activity of our faculties.

But if God, if Angels, if beatified saints, unite to inculcate the necessity and consequently the happiness of employment and industry; you will find the great lesson, my young friends, no less forcibly impressed, from the consideration of your

* See Heb. i. 7; Ps. xviii. 10. † Rev. vi. 8.

own nature, and of the world around you. Man cannot even exist, much less exist in health and safety, and still much less in convenience and elegance, without the exertions of industry. Providence hath so formed us, that as diligence and exercise are indispensably requisite to the improvement of our minds, and the health of our bodies; so nothing can be attained for the advantage of the one or of the other, without that exercise and diligence. Leave the mind uncultivated; apply no pains or attention to its information and instruction: suffer the body to rest in torpid indolence, and inactive sloth: and the latter will not be more miserable and diseased, than the former will be stupid, vicious, and unhappy; while both will represent a foul and stagnating lake, whose putrifying waters, useless to every end of life, produce only noxious and poisonous vermin. On the contrary, like the clear river,—which refines as it flows, gladdening and fertilizing every land through which it glides,—is that man, who with diligence and industry fills up the duties of his station; accumulating to himself the best advantages, while of the utmost service to society in general. And as that society could not subsist without activity and industry, and as we all are so much interested not only in its subsistence, but in its regular and proper subsistence; it follows that our call to industry and activity in our proper sphere, is no less loud, no less important, than our call to support ourselves in being, and in all the blessings which we derive from commerce and communication with our fellow-mortals.

But not our own nature, which owes its growth, its improvement, its health, its pleasures, and its comforts to diligence and industry; not society, which owes to them its being, its continuance, its

advantages; not these alone enjoin the duty. *Go to the Ant, thou sluggard;* go to the animal world, and read there in plainest characters, the reproof of those, who dare disclaim the dictates of their nature, *hide their hands in their bosom, and refuse to labour!* Let the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field instruct thee: active for their own preservation and welfare, they are diligent to provide their food, and to exert their best talents in defence of themselves and their young. Nor can any degree of blameable or prejudicial indolence, be charged to any one species of the brutal kind. I had forgot: for the reproof of the slothful and lazy, providence hath created one animal, * the very opprobrium of the race; to hold forth, as in a glass, the detestable scorn of a vice, which brings to misery and distress, and *shall clothe a man with rags.* †

From the divine, the angelic, the rational, the animal nature, I might proceed to the inanimate world; and show, how by a constant recurrence of agency and activity the whole round of material creation is carried on and supported. "The heavenly bodies are ever moving with constancy and punctuality, to perform their several courses; and are hereby, at least, of service to us, whether they answer any higher, farther purpose or not. The elements composing this sublunary world are likewise in the same useful motion; supporting each other by a circulation of active offices and transmutations. The stagnation of some would prove the destruction of all, at least as to their use, though not existence. And though these all act involuntarily,

* It is the American *Sloth* or Sluggard I mean; the very emblem of the vice whose name it bears: and concerning which I omit to say more, as I have given a long account of it in the *Christian's Magazine*, vol. i. p. 114, to which I refer my reader.

† Prov. xxiii. 21

by an external force impressed upon them, which they cannot resist; yet they fulfil hereby the will of their creator, and manifest it to others; and the argument drawn from such analogy is not weak or inconsiderable. It show that it was the general design of providence, that the welfare of the universe should be carried on by action and employment, and that every part of it should bear testimony against sloth and idleness. Nay, indeed, the very creation of that universe is the fullest testimony against them. A wise and intelligent author must propose some end in the production of things: but this end, whatever it was, could never be promoted by indolence and sloth. Non-activity is the next degree to non-existence; and could no more answer any useful purpose. A production of stupid, unmoving, passive beings, could be no other than a general chaos; which could prove of no farther utility, than as affording matter for future motion, harmony and order." *

Thus all nature through all her works loudly proclaims the necessity and the advantage of activity and diligence. And perfectly consonant to the instruction of this great volume of the Creator's works, are the dictates of that other BOOK, stamped with the infallible signature of his divine authority. It would be endless to quote particular passages: I need only refer you to the book of Proverbs: and I do with singular pleasure refer you to it, as conscious of the many advantages which will follow from an attentive perusal of that most instructive book; where you will find useful admonitions on every topic of wisdom, and many on that of industry, in particular: a virtue of whose utility and importance the royal writer seems especially to have been convinced, and consequently, in the highest degree

* See Dodwell's *Discourses.*

solicitous to enforce its practice. Nor can any thing be conceived more forcible and pointed, than a variety of the images and expressions which he employs to decry and ridicule the opposite vice. Take one example, as a specimen of the rest: "I went by the field of the SLOTHFUL, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding: and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."*

In perfect conformity herewith, a much greater than Solomon, both by his precepts and example, discourages the slothful and useless, the idle and unprofitable; those who improve not their talents, nor keep their lamps trimmed and burning; while he marks out emphatically the advantages of Diligence and application, by declaring, that *unto him who hath* (and improveth what he hath) *shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: while from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have.*† And to give the strongest authority to his precepts, his whole life was one scene of action and industry: *He went about doing good.* Unwearied in the blessed office, he denied himself even the necessary refreshments of nature, that he might administer to the spiritual and temporal necessities of mankind, and fulfil the great duties of his important mission. *My meat,* said he, *is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his*

* Prov. xxiv. 30.

See Matt. xiii. 12, and the Parables of *The Talents, The Ten Virgins, The Unprofitable Servant,* &c.

*work.** And as he was thus, in the solemn business of his administration, a pattern of industry to all his followers; so it has been thought by some, that he chose to be born of laborious parents, and to occupy himself for the major part of his life in the honest duties of their calling, not only to give mankind a striking example of humility, but of diligence and application to the proper duties of their sphere.

His immediate disciples and followers trod closely in the steps of his bright example: indeed the business in which they were engaged called for the utmost exertion of their powers; nor was the gospel to be propagated without unfainting labour, perseverance and activity: hence the exhortations ran, that they *who laboured in the word and doctrine, should be counted worthy of double honour.* And one of the most illustrious of those labourers, whose own unparalleled industry gave him abundant authority to enforce the virtue, as in a variety of other places, so in the following, strongly exhorts to its practice: *Yourselves know*, saith he, *how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample to you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you that* IF ANY MAN WOULD NOT WORK NEITHER SHOULD HE EAT. *For we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies. Now them who are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*† Can any words more forcibly inculcate the necessity

* John iv. 3, 4. † 2 Thess. iii. 7, &c.

of honest and laborious industry upon Christians? Can any words more forcibly and clearly reprove the absurdity and wickedness of those, who under pretence of Christianity, devote their lives to sloth and idleness; to the dream of useless contemplation, and the dronish inactivity of a cloister?—And once more, let me ask, can any words be imagined less like those of a cheat and impostor, than this solemn appeal of our apostle to his own laborious and disinterested conduct;—his purpose to show himself an example of a virtue, so beneficial to the true interest of man?

For not *nature* and *revelation* only, *reason* too, especially as directing us to pursue our present and future good, in its strongest force obliges to the industrious employment of our time and our talents.

Yes, my young friends, would you enjoy either happiness of mind or body, would you live comfortably in this world, or wish to enjoy the eternal glories of the next; you must fly from the base enervating indulgences of sloth and indolence, and give yourselves up to the ceaseless, self-rewarding toils of honest industry. Think not this any hardship, any difficulty proposed to you: think not, with the giddy and inconsiderate, application a burden, and diligence a seclusion from pleasure. Yet, were it so, is not the attainment of everlasting peace and rest well worthy all the pains which we can bestow in this short period of life?—for what are twenty, what are threescore years, when compared to an eternity!* This however, is so far from being the truth, that *Labour* itself becomes the highest pleasure† to the virtuous mind, especially as it bestows the most valuable gratifications. It is in this view especially, that I would recom-

* See p. 450.

† "Labor ipse Voluptas," says the poet.

mend the practice to you: and consider a moment, what blessing, what satisfaction is there which time or eternity bestows, attainable without industry? Health, honour, riches, wisdom, cheerfulness, self-enjoyment, approbation of conscience and approbation of God, are the noble train which always accompany this distinguished virtue; not to speak of the security from a number of spiritual and temporal evils, which they share, who live beneath the shelter of its banners.

Health, that prime blessing of the human life, is not to be possessed, or if possessed will soon be forfeited, without industry and exercise: they string the nerves, improve the constitution, prevent diseases, give strength and vigour: they create an appetite for enjoyment, as well as enjoyment for the appetite; and qualify for much higher states of pleasure, than the slothful indulgence of the sensualist and epicure can never attain. And what the wise man observes, with regard to the refreshment of that rest, which is earned by toil and business, holds good of every bodily enjoyment: *the sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much.**

Honour too is the natural consequence of industry: *Seest thou a man diligent in his business?* says Solomon, *he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.*† For diligence creates esteem and confidence: it soon attracts the observation, and consequently the regard of mankind. Every one, for their own sake, will choose to be concerned with a person of that character in every office of life. And as this inclination depends not on the generosity, but the interest of mankind, it will certainly and invariably prove highly beneficial to the industrious man. The king of Israel's motive for the advancement of Jeroboam, is founded in reason and

* Eccles. v. 12. † Prov. xxii. 29.

nature; and therefore will ever more or less prevail. Solomon, seeing the young man, *that he was industrious*, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.*

With health and honour come *riches* to the diligent: *The hand of the diligent maketh rich; but the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing.* Industry enables a man to be useful to himself, and frequently to be serviceable to those in distress; places him above all reasonable apprehensions, of want, and qualifies him to assist others. It raises a fortune frequently, and a maintenance almost always, with credit and success; by real use, and therefore with true satisfaction. On this account the delight of enjoying the fruit of one's own industry, is so often and so emphatically spoken of in the Old Testament. *Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: oh well art thou, and happy shalt thou be*†! And surely there is a singular complacency in the consciousness of owing to our own diligence, under Providence, the blessings we enjoy; especially in having promoted some business of public service, as well as of private advantage. The glory is natural and laudable, and gives a relish to the plainest as well as the most sumptuous fare.

But *wisdom* more invaluable than rubies, with whom are *riches* and *honour*, and *whose fruit is better than gold*, this excellent wisdom too is utterly unattainable without industry: for the mind, like the body, requires exercise to its growth and health; and if deprived of that exercise, will stagnate in ignorance, or grow foul with the poisonous productions of vice. While industry not only enlarges our mental faculties, and improves our actual knowledge, but creates, as it were, a new capacity for

* 1 Kings, xi. 28. † Psalm cxxviii. 2.

higher improvements*. It carries us still farther and farther in the pleasing pursuits of wisdom, and inspires a perpetual wish and ardour to know more, the more we become acquainted with her beauty and excellence.

Can it be wondered, my young friends, that *cheerfulness* and *self-enjoyment* are the natural and certain consequences of so well-directed, so advantageous a virtue? The body in health, the character in respect, the circumstances easy, the mind enlarged, —with what complacence and approbation will the conscience give her testimony; and how must the whole man rejoice in the review of the propriety of his conduct, and consequently in the approbation of his God! that God, who as we have observed, throughout his works, teaches the great duty of industry, and with peculiar force impresseth it in the sacred volume of revealed truth; and who, in characters equally legible, hath stamped his awful sanction on its practice, by making it, as it were, the necessary, vehicle of every good to man! while indolence and sloth, those worst defects of the mind, not only sap the foundation of every virtue, and give a tincture of their nature to every action; but deprive of all the comforts of time, and all the glories of futurity. Indeed, the natural and unavoidable consequence of idleness is not mere loss of comfort, but certain acquisition of evil and misery. It exposes to the whole train of vices and mischiefs, to the force of each separate allurement, and to the united strength of all bad dispositions. It is itself a state of temptation; for our nature is so little calculated for mere inactivity, that he who has no pro-

* See Dodwell on *Industry*; to whose excellent discourse I have been much obliged in the latter part of this sermon. See also the *Christian's Magazine*, vol. i. p. 308, and Delany's *Sermons on the Social Duties*, Sermon 17.

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per employment, will of course be wandering after that which is improper; and if doing nothing, will assuredly be led to doing ill. So that in this respect also, as a preservative from spiritual and temporal evils, great is the praise, and inestimable are the advantages of industry.

Youth too is the season when habits of industry are not only most easily acquired, but when we are in every respect best qualified for its exertions. It is the season for action and diligence, which by custom will become delightful, and render sloth as hateful as it is despicable: which will make the present period pleasing, and make the latter part of life cheerful and honourable: blessings utterly unattainable, if this season, this irrecoverable period is neglected and abused! A habit of sloth contracted in early years, cuts off the very disposition to this virtue*: and if Providence awakens men, or necessity drives them to make the attempt, their endeavours are and must be made with much greater difficulty, and much less perfection.

Improve therefore to your own great happiness this important period of your life, by habituating

* This habit is the more carefully to be avoided, as there seems in human nature a strange propensity to it. "There is," says a complainer of idleness in the *Spectator*, "scarce any one person without some allay of it; and thousands besides myself, spend more time in an idle uncertainty, which to begin first of two affairs, than would have been sufficient to end them both. The occasion of this seems to be the want of some necessary employment to put the spirits in motion, and awaken them out of their lethargy. If I had less leisure, I should have more: for I should then find my time distinguished into portions, some for business, others for the indulging of pleasures: but now one face of indolence overspreads the whole, and I have no land-mark to direct myself by. Were one's time a little straitened by business, like water enclosed in its banks, it would have some determined course; but unless it be put into some channel, it has no current, but becomes a deluge, without use or motion." See no. 316.

yourselves, my young friends, to diligence and industry. Consider your time and your talents, as great deposits, entrusted to your care by the sovereign Lord of all things, and as deposits of whose improvement he expects you to give a good account; not for his sake, nor for his advantage, but for your own sakes, and for your own advantage: that having much, the liberal Benefactor may amply reward your fidelity and application, by giving you more, even an abundance of his superlative blessings. Nor think any place or rank in life, any superiority of wealth or station, an exemption from payment of the universal demand of industry. It is the demand of nature, it is the demand of society, it is the demand of reason and of God: and he acts in palpable contrariety to all these, who lives a life of idleness and inutility, a burden to himself, and a nuisance to others. For not the poor hind only, who is compelled to labour for his daily bread; not the children of necessity, who, thrown unsupported upon the lap of earth, are urged to continual industry, for the maintenance of themselves and families: not these only, but every child of man is bound to cultivate this virtue, if he means to enjoy a sound mind in a sound body; to do his duty to society and himself; to improve the faculties which God has given him, and to implant in his soul those divine graces, which shall grow and flourish to perfection in eternity.

If therefore, my young friends, Providence, in his bounty, has happily given you an exemption from servile toil and more laborious pursuits, show your gratitude, by a more diligent and painful improvement of your mental powers. Think it your duty, and as such make it your business, to contribute by your growing virtue and wisdom to the felicity of your fellow-creatures. Industriously and

diligently occupy yourselves in searching for, and communicating good and happiness, as extensively as you may; and be well assured, that in proportion as you thus employ yourselves, and improve your minds, you will advance your own happiness also, and partake of the truest pleasures which human nature can share or impart. Which, &c.

Anecdotes *respecting Industry.*

1. The court of the Areopagites was the most honourable in the city of Athens. In this solemn audience it was most diligently inquired, What manner of life each Athenian led; what kind of income or revenue he enjoyed; and by what means it was that he maintained himself and family. They were taught to follow some honest course of life, as knowing they were to give a public account thereof: and if any man was convicted of idleness, or a reproachful way of life, he had a brand of infamy fixed upon him, or else was driven out of the city, as an unprofitable and pernicious member. By this exemplary procedure they put sloth and indolence out of countenance, and filled their commonwealth with examples of every kind of industry, without fear of incurring the danger of a public accusation. Had we these Areopagites among us, (says one) how many idle fellows, who now live by plunder, by sharping young gentlemen at play, or by setting and drawing in apprentices to rob their masters, would be obliged to lay by the sword they have impudently assumed, together with the title of Gentlemen; and return to the honest trades to which they were brought up, or at least be some other way made useful to the public! In short, what an alteration should we find for the better, did we follow the wisdom of these ancients, in enacting and enforcing laws against idleness; which should make

every man give an account of his time, and be answerable for his way of life.

2. A modern poet has finely pointed out in the following lines, that idleness, whether public or private, is not only unnatural and impolitic, but the fertile source of evil both to individuals and the commonwealth:

> "Nature lives by *toil*;
> Beast, bird, air, fire, the Heavens and rolling world,
> All live by action: nothing lies at rest,
> But death and ruin. Man is born to care;
> Fashion'd, improved by labour. This of old
> Wise states observing, gave that happy law,
> Which doom'd the rich and needy, every rank
> To manual occupation; and oft call'd
> Their chieftains from the spade, or furrowing plow,
> Or bleating sheep-fold. Hence utility
> Through all conditions; hence the joys of health:
> Hence strength of arm, and clear judicious thought;
> Hence corn, and wine, and oil, and all in life
> Delectable. What simple nature yields,
> (And Nature does her part) are only rude
> Materials, cumbrous on the thorny ground:
> 'Tis *toil* that makes them Wealth."

3. It is not to effeminate prayers (says Cato) that the Gods grant their assistance: they have their ears open to the industrious man, who begs their assistance at the same time that he employs his own endeavours. They hate idleness; and the prayers of the slothful are more likely to draw down their indignation than their aid*. Labour and industry are the price which they have set upon the blessings of this world, and those who will enjoy them may purchase them at that rate. Cicero adds, that our make alone will inform us, that we are not placed in the world for our diversion, to follow our pleasures only, and sit as idle spectators. No life, therefore, can be pleasing to God, but that which is also useful to mankind.

* See Æsop's Fable of *Hercules and the Carter*. Fable 56. of Croxall's edition.

4. There are some, says Dr. Johnson, who possess idleness in its full dignity; who call themselves "the Idle," as Busiris in the play calls himself "the Proud;" who boast that they do nothing, and thank their stars they have nothing to do; who sleep every night till they can sleep no longer; and rise only that exercise may enable them to sleep again: who prolong the reign of darkness by double curtains, and never see the sun, but to "tell him how they hate his beams*;" whose whole labour is to vary the postures of indulgence, and whose day differs from their night but as a couch or chair differs from a bed. These are the true and open votaries of idleness, for whom she weaves the garland of poppies, and into whose cup she pours the waters of oblivion; who exist in a state of unruffled stupidity, forgetting and forgotten; who have long ceased to live, and at whose death the survivors can only says, "That they have ceased to breathe."—*Idler*, no. 31.

5. At Athens there were two poor young men, Menedemes and Asclepiades, who were greatly addicted to the study of philosophy. They had no visible means of support, yet kept up their plight and colour, looked hale, well, and in good condition. The judges† had information given them of the retired life of these two, and of their neither having anything to live on, nor apparently doing anything to maintain themselves: consequently, as they could not live without sustenance, it was inferred they must have some clandestine means of subsisting. Upon this ground of information the young men were summoned before the judges, and ordered to answer to the charge. One of the accused, after saying that little credit was given to what a man could urge in his own defence (it being natural to believe that every criminal will either deny or extenuate the

* *Paradise Lost*, b. iv. l. 37. † See Anecdote the 1st.

crimes he is charged with), and adding, that the testimony of a disinterested person was not liable to suspicion; desired that a certain baker, whom he named, might be summoned, and answer for them. Accordingly the baker being come, declared that the young men under examination took it by turns to grind his corn every night; and that for the night's work he every morning paid the young man who ground at the hand mill a drachma, that is, about a groat. The judges, surprised at their abstinence and industry, ordered, as a reward of their virtue, that 200 drachmas should be given them out of the public money.

6. We have heretofore observed, that when the Roman historians describe an extraordinary man, it always enters into his character as an essential, That he was "incredibili industriâ,"—"diligentiâ singulari;" of incredible industry, of singular diligence: and Cato, in Sallust, tells the senate, That it was not the arms so much as the industry of their ancestors, which advanced the grandeur of Rome. So that the founders and regulators of this state, in making diligence and labour necessary qualifications of a citizen, took the same course as the poet mentions Jupiter to have thought of, when he succeeded to the government over the primitive mortals.

———Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
Movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda;
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno*.

This account of the providential utility of some seeming evils, is not only beautifully poetical, but strictly philosophical. Want is the origin of arts: infirmities and weaknesses are the cause and cement of human society. If man were perfect and self-sufficient, all the efforts of industry would be useless.

* Virgil. Georgic. i. l. 121, &c.

A dead calm would reign over all the species. But hence, as the author of the *Essay on Man* observes,

> Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
> The common int'rest, and endear the tie.—
> God, in the nature of each being, founds
> Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds;
> But as he framed a whole, the whole to bless,
> On mutual wants built mutual happiness.

7. That famous disturber and scourge of mankind, Charles XII. of Sweden, used to say, "That by resolution and perseverance, a man might do everything:" Now though we may not entirely agree with his Majesty, so far at least we may venture to observe, That every man may, by unremitting application and endeavours, do much more than, at the first setting out, he thought it possible that he ever could do. Virgil says, "Possunt, quia posse videntur; they can conquer, who believe they can." It behoves us much to distinguish between difficulties and impossibilites, which many people do not. The silly and the sanguine look upon impossibilities to be only difficulties; as on the other hand, the lazy and the timorous take every difficulty for an impossibility. "A greater knowledge of the world, as a celebrated genius observes, will teach young men the proper medium between these two extremes."

8. those who have searched into human nature remark, That nothing so much shows the nobleness of the soul, as that its felicity consists in action. "I have heard," says the Spectator, "of a gentleman, who was under close confinement in the Bastile seven years; during which time he amused himself in scattering a few small pins about his chamber, gathering them up again, and placing them in different figures on the arm of a great chair. He often told his friends afterwards, that unless he had found out this piece of exercise, he verily believed he should have lost his senses.

9. Sir William Temple, in his "Heads for an Essay on the different conditions of life and fortune," pleasantly tells us, of "an old man near the Hague, who," says he "served my house from his dairy, and grew so rich, that he gave it over, bought a house and furnished it at the Hague, resolving to live at ease the rest of his life; but at length, grew so weary of being idle, that he sold it, and returned again to his dairy." See his works, vol. iii. p. 516, 8vo. There are many similar instances to this in more modern days*.

10. "Love labour," cried a philosopher, "if you do not want it for food, you may for physic." He is idle, that might be better employed. The idle man is more perplexed what to do, than the industrious in doing what he ought. Action keeps the soul in constant health, but idleness, corrupts and lusts the mind: for a man of great abilities may, by negligence and idleness, become so mean and despicable, as to be an incumberance to society, and a burthen to himself. "There are but very few," says Mr. Addison, "who know how to be idle and innocent." By doing nothing, we learn not only to do ill, but to suffer it too; and he that follows recreations instead of his business, shall in a little time have no business to follow.

11. Indolence is a stream which flows slowly on, but yet undermines the foundation of every virtue. It were as little hazard to be tossed in a storm, as to lie thus perpetually becalmed; nor is it to any purpose to have within one the seeds of a thousand good qualities, if we want the vigour and resolution necessary for the exerting them. That the necessity of labour ought to be regarded as punishment, is a mean and sordid notion, invented by the effeminate, the lazy, and the vicious. On the contrary, if God

* See the Papers on "Retirement" in the *Visitor*, vol. i.

had prohibited labour, such prohibition might justly have been deemed a token of his displeasure; since inaction is a kind of lethargy, equally pernicious to the mind and body. An effeminate Sybarite, we are told, thanked the gods very heartily, that he had never seen the sun rise in his life. Can there be a more striking emblem of a narrow and unenlightened mind?—of a wicked and unprofitable servant? Well and truly said Solomon, in this view, that "The slothful man is brother to him that is a great waster."—Prov. xviii. 9.

12. "Whenever," says the *Guardian*, "I am disposed to treat of the irreligion of an idle life, it shall be under this head, *Pereunt et imputantur*;*" which is an inscription upon a sun-dial, in one of the Inns of court, and is with great propriety held forth to public view, in such a place, were the inhabitants being in an everlasting hurry of business or pleasure, the busy may receive an innocent admonition to keep their appointments, and the idle not to keep theirs."—*Guardian*, no. 131.

13. Demosthenes an immortal instance of the noblest perseverance—the only virtue that is crowned. He was extremely affected with the honours which he saw paid to the orator Callistratus, and still more with the supreme power of eloquence over the minds of men; and not being able to resist its charms, he gave himself wholly up to it; from henceforth renounced all other studies and pleasures; and during the continuance of Callistratus at Athens, he never quitted him, but made all the improvement he could from his precepts. The first essay of his eloquence was against his guardians, whom he obliged to refund a part of his fortune. Encouraged by this event, he ventured to speak before the people, but

* That is, "They pass away, and are put to account." This inscription is still to be seen in the Temple.

with very ill success. He had a weak voice, a thick way of speaking, and a very short breath; notwithstanding which his periods were so long, that he was often obliged to stop in the midst of them for respiration. This occasioned his being hissed by the whole audience. As he withdrew, hanging down his head, and in the utmost confusion, Satyrus, one of the most excellent actors of those times, who was his friend, met him; and having learnt from himself the cause of his being so much dejected, assured him that the evil was not without remedy, and that his case was not so desperate as he imagined. He desired him to repeat some of the verses of Sophocles and Euripides to him; which he did. Satyrus spoke them after him, and gave them such graces, by the tone, gesture and spirit with which he pronounced them, that Demosthens himself found them quite different from what they were in his own manner of speaking. He perceived plainly what he wanted. and applied himself strenuously to the acquiring of it. His efforts to correct his natural defect of utterance, and to perfect himself in pronunciation, seem almost incredible, and prove (as Cicero remarks) that an industrious perseverance can surmount almost all things. He stammered to such a degree that he could not pronounce some letters; among others, that with which the name of "Rhetoric," the art he studied, begins: he was also short-breathed, as abovementioned. These obstacles he overcame at length, by putting small pebbles into his mouth, pronouncing several verses in that manner without interuption, and accompanying it with walking, or going up steep and difficult places; so that at last no letter made him hesitate, and his breath held out through the longest periods. He went also to the sea side; and whilst the waves were in the most violent agitation, he pronounced harangues, both to strengthen

his voice, and to accustom himself, by the confused noise of the waters, to the roar of the people, and the tumultuous cries of public assemblies. Demosthenes took no less care of his action than of his voice. He had a large looking-glass in his house, which served to teach him gesture, and at which he used to declaim, before he spoke in public. To correct a fault which he had contracted by an ill habit of shrugging up his shoulders, he practised standing upright in a very narrow pulpit, or rostrum, over which hung an halbert, in such a manner, that if in the heat of action that motion escaped him, the point of the weapon might serve at the same time to admonish and correct him. His application to study was no less surprising. To be the more removed from noise, and less subject to distraction, he shut himself up in a small room under ground, sometimes for months together; and there it was, by the light of his lamp, that he composed those admirable orations, which were said by them who envied him, to "smell of the oil;" to imply that they were too elaborate. Demosthenes heard them; and only told them in reply, "It is plain that yours did not cost you so much trouble." He rose constantly very early in the morning, and used to say, that he was sorry when any workman was at his business before him*. We may further judge of his extraordinary efforts to acquire excellence of every kind, from the pains he took in copying Thucydides's History eight times with his own hand, in order to render the style of that great man familiar to him. And his labour was well bestowed; for it was by these means that he carried the art of declaiming to the highest degree of perfection of which it was capable; whence it is

* Cui non sunt auditæ Demosthenis vigiliæ? Qui dolere se aiebat, si quando opificum ante Lucana victus esset industriâ. Cic. *Tusc. Quæst.* l. iv. n. 44.

plain he well knew its value and importance. When he was asked three several times which quality he thought most necessary in an orator, he gave no other answer than "Pronunciation." Insinuating thereby, that qualification to be the only one, of which the want could least be concealed, and which was the most capable of concealing other defects; and that pronunciation alone could give considerable weight even to an indifferent orator; when without it, the most excellent could not hope for much success. As to Demosthenes, Cicero tells us, that his success was so great, that all Greece came in crowds to Athens, to hear him speak; and he adds, that merit so great as his could not but have that effect*.

14. Varia Servilius, descended of a Prætorian family, was remarkable for nothing but sloth and indolence, in which he grew old and odious; insomuch that it was commonly said, by such as passed his house, "Hic Varia situs est:" Here lies Varia: speaking of him, as of a person, not only dead, but buried to all intents and purposes of rational existence.

15. It is said of the elder Cato, that to inflame the minds of his fellow soldiers to the love of industry, labour, and virtue, he used to address them in such memorials as the following:—

"Si cum labore quidpiam recte geris,
Labor recedit, facta recte permanent:
Quod si jocose, nequiter quid egeris,
Abit voluptas; turpe factum permanet."

When what is good you execute with pain,
The pain's soon past, the good deeds still remain.
When slothfully or basely aught is done,
Those base deeds stay, when all the pleasure's gone.

Indeed all the ancient Romans were such haters of idleness, that whereas in their theology, Agenotia,

* Here we cannot but take notice of the effect of good example. Cicero, who thus generously extols the great

who was to stir up to action; Stimula, who was to impel men to diligence; and Strenua, who was to give them constancy and firmness, were all three received as deities, and were worshipped in temples within the city; they would not receive Quies, or Rest, as a goddess in public; but built a temple for her in one of their high-ways, without the city walls. See *Camerar. Opera.* cent. i. c. 15.

16. Dionysius the Elder, being asked if he was at leisure, and had no business to do "the Gods forbid," cried he, "that ever it should be so with me; for a bow, they say, will break if it be overbent: but the mind if it be overslack." *Plut. Mor.*

17. When we observe the lives of those whom an ample inheritance has let loose to their own direction, what do we discover, that can excite our envy? Their time seems not to pass away with much applause from others, or satisfaction to themselves. They are generally employed every morning in finding expedients to rid themselves of the day; chase pleasure through all the places of public resort: and are continually changing one amusement for another, which a few months will make equally insipid; or sinking into languor and disease, for want of something to actuate their bodies, or exhilarate their minds. Whoever has frequented those places where idlers assemble to escape from solitude, knows that this, or worse, is generally the state of the wealthy; and from this state it is no great hardship to be debarred. No man can be happy in total idleness: he that should be condemned to lie torpid and motionless, "would fly for recreation," says Dr. South,

orator of Greece, himself took similar pains in youth, and with similar success, to acquire excellence, and command esteem. We refer for proof of this particularly to *Kennet's Essay on the Roman Education*, p. 28, prefixed to his *Roman Antiquities*.

"to the mines and the galleys." And it is well when nature or fortune find employment for those who would not have known how to procure it for themselves. See the *Adventurer*. no. 111.

18. About fifty years ago, the small territory of Cancar, known in the maritime charts under the name of Ponthiamas, was wholly uncultivated, and almost destitute of inhabitants. A Chinese merchant, commander of a vessel which he employed in commerce, frequented these coasts. Being a man of that intelligent reflective genius, which so characteristically marks his nation, he could not without pain behold immense tracks of ground condemned to sterility, though naturally more fertile than those which formed the riches of his own country; he constructed therefore a plan for their improvement. With this view, having first of all hired a number of labourers, some Chinese, others from the neighbouring nations, he with great address insinuated himself into the favour of the most powerful princes, who for a certain subsidy, assigned him a guard for his protection. In the course of his voyage to Batavia and the Philippine islands, he borrowed from the Europeans their most useful discoveries and improvements, particularly the art of fortification and defence: with regard to internal police, he gave the preference to the Chinese. The profits of his commerce soon enabled him to raise ramparts, sink ditches, and provide artillery. These preliminary precautions secured him a *coup de main*, and protected him from the enterprizes of the surrounding nations. He distributed the lands to his labourers, without the least reservation of any of those duties or taxes, known by the names of services, or fines of alienation; duties which, by allowing no real property, become the most fatal scourge to agriculture, and

suggest an idea, which revolts against the common sense of every wise nation. He provided his colonists at the same time with all sorts of instruments fit for the labour and improvement of their grounds. In forming a labouring and commercial people, he though that no laws ought to be enacted, but those which nature has established for the human race in every climate: he made those laws respected by observing them first himself, and exhibiting an example of simplicity, industry, frugality, humanity, and good faith. He formed therefore no system of laws; but he did more: he established morals. His territories soon became the country of every industrious man, who wished to settle there. His port was open to all nations: the woods were cleared; the grounds judiciously laboured, and sown with rice; canals cut from the rivers watered their fields; and plentiful harvest, after supplying them with subsistence, furnished an object of extensive commerce. The barbarions of the neighbourhood, amazed to see abundance so suddenly succeed to sterility, flocked for subsistence to the magazine of Ponthiamas; whose dominions at this day, are considered as the most plentiful granary of that part of Asia, the Malays, the Cochin-Chinese, the Siamese, whose countries are naturally so fertile, considering this little territory, as the most certain resourse against famine.

19. While health and the flower and vigour of our age remain firm and entire, it behoves every thinking mind to lay them out to the best advantage that so when the latter days take hold of us and despoil us of our strength and abilities, we may have a store moderately sufficient so subsist upon, laid up, in the morning of our life. The Ant, a creature truly provident and laborious, has always been proposed

to us as an instance of industry; both Jew and Gentile illustrate their reasonings on this head, by mentioning this little type of seasonable diligence Solomon (as we have seen) seems to be indignant with the lazy part of his species, and instead of arguing much with them, says, *Go to the Ant, thou sluggard* Æsop has prettily elucidated the point, in his Fable of the *Ant and Grasshopper;* and Horace inspried by his own good sense, or perhaps having Solomon's address, or that Fable in his eye, says elegantly;—"*Exemplum magni formica laboris,*" &c. Sat. I. l. 33.—38. Whoever therefore think fit to spend the prime of their life in useless diversions and unprofitable amusements, must not be surprised if, thus contradicting the dictates of reason and of truth, they find themselves, in the hoary winter of age, in a starving, unpitied, miserable condition.

20. As the great king Artaxerxes was travelling through the wide realms of Persia, a certain man, named Mises, presented him with a pomegranate of a wonderful bigness, which the king admiring, demanded out of what paradise he had gotten it; he answered that he had gathered it from his own garden, and cultivation. The king was exceedingly pleased with the present, and gracing him with royal gifts in return, swore by the sun, "That the same man with like diligence and care, might as well of a little city make a great one." Ælian. *Var. Hist.* l. i. c. 33.

21. A gentleman in Surrey had a farm worth 200*l. per annum*, which he kept in his own hands; but running out every year, he was necessitated to sell half of it to pay his debts, and let the rest to a farmer for one and twenty years. Before the term was expired, the farmer one day bringing his rent, asked him if he would sell his land. "Why," said

the gentleman, "will you buy it?"—"Yes, if it "please you," said the farmer: "How! returned he," that's strange! Tell me how this comes to pass, that I could not live upon twice as much, being my own; and you, upon the half, though you have paid rent for it, are able to buy it?"—"Oh, sir," said the farmer, "but two words made the difference: you said Go, and I said Come."—What's the meaning of that?" says the gentleman. "Why, sir," replied the other, "you lay in bed, or took your pleasure, and sent others about your business; and I rose betimes, and saw my business done myself." See the Fable of the *Lark and her young ones.*

SERMON XVIII.

ON THE HONOUR, PROFIT, AND PLEASURE OF RELIGION.*

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is everyone that retaineth her.—PROVERBS iii. 13—18.

WE boast of our reason, and with justice we boast of it: it is a ray of the Divinity; it is man's distinguishing prerogative. But the higher and more just our boast, the more blameable is our abuse, and the more punishable our disregard, of this reason. It is given us, not only to direct us in the affairs of this life, but to advise us of our future and better concerns; and to suggest that atten-

* I did intend to have given a Sermon on the Advantages and Blessings of Reputation (see page 74); but the volume having already swelled beyond my intended compass, I omit the insertion of it, and refer my young readers to what I have said on the subject, in my Treatise for "the Consolation of the Afflicted," p. 244.

tion to eternal things which their importance deserves. Yet it is but too obvious to everyone's notice—nay, the experience of the generality proves but too fully—how much the serious dictates of reason are despised, with respect to futurity; and how much, in utter contempt of its admonitions, the happiness of the present world is preferred to the happiness of the future one. I should have said, "The imaginary happiness:" for it is an incontestible truth, to which time and wisdom have fixed their invariable seal, that earthly enjoyments alone, of what sort or what degree soever, are incapable of giving solid felicity: and that whoever runs the round of worldly pleasures and pursuits, will find in the end a miserable vacuity in his mind; will find that "vanity and vexation" must be stamped upon them all. This is not the suggestion of fancy, or the gloomy representation of moroseness and melancholy: nor will it follow, because real and substantial bliss is not, cannot be attained from the transitory things of this life, that therefore no real or substantial bliss can be obtained at all. What hath been offered in the preceding discourses, as well as what remains to be urged, will, I trust, sufficiently prove the contrary. But let anyone consult the testimony and experience of all mankind, so far as it can be had, in all ages of the world; let him consider the nature of the human soul, and the Creator's design in forming such a race of beings as we are; let him consider the dictates of impartial reason; and after this, let him listen to the voice of God's revelation; and it will appear to him clearer than the mid-day light, that "as man was never made for time and earth, so nothing merely temporal or earthly can make man truly happy."

Yet man may be happy: happy in a high degree

in this life, foretaste of the complete happiness which is reserved for him hereafter. For as it is absurd to suppose (alas! that our practice should render the supposition less absurd)! that God should create an immortal, spiritual being, merely for the ends of temporal existence, and whose chief good should be placed in worldly and corporeal gratifications;—what need of an immortal soul for this? what need of faculties superior to those of the brute creation? As this very supposition is absurd; so is it no less absurd to suppose, that a God of infinite love and unbounded goodness, should create a race of beings like the human, to pass away their wretched lives here in continual disquietude and ceaseless perplexity. It is absurd to suppose that He hath given us faculties and senses, and yet made the proper gratification of them unlawful and criminal: it is absurd to suppose, that he hath made the condition of our existence tormenting; that he designs to try us with temptations, which our nature cannot withstand, and to make the price of future bliss, the abjuration and extinction of all present.

No; far different is the love of God to his creatures; all his dispensations towards them are mercy and truth: and they who represent him as severe to those creatures, and enjoining tasks hard and nearly impossible to be performed, greatly injure the amiable Author of all bounty, and calumniate that "divine religion," which he hath instituted, and which is the certain introduction of "pleasantness and peace." For it is an unquestionable truth, that to walk in the paths, which he hath enjoined, is to secure to ourselves the most perfect felicity which our present state will admit; and that our misery and unhappiness arise in proportion to our deviation from that "peaceful and pleasant path."

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An observation, my young friends, which must above all others, recommend the religion of Jesus Christ to you, and make you anxious to establish in your hearts, that kingdom of God,* which will procure you at once the highest *honour*, the greatest *advantage*, the purest and most perfect *pleasure*. It is in that view, and as the close of all, I have to offer for your instruction and emolument, that I would wish to enforce upon you the sincere and diligent practice of genuine *Christianity*.

The fine encomium passed upon *wisdom*, by one of the wisest men that ever wrote, which I have made the foundation of this discourse, might serve of itself to prove what I have asserted; for his authority cannot fail to sway much with you, especially when you remember that his writings have received the sanction of divine inspiration. And *he* pronounceth the man happy, who obtaineth *wisdom*: that is, right religion: the true knowledge and love of God.† He assures us, that it is "Advantageous:" "The merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. It is more precious than rubies," continues the elegant Solomon, "and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her." In particular, "length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches;" the ever-durable riches of immortality and glory, and not riches only, but also *honour*;—the honour which comes from God, and which shall reflect from the brightness of his presence upon all his blessed attendants. Nor is it *advantageous* and *honourable* only, it is likewise highly *pleasant*. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness;" pleasantness itself is with her; pure, unmixed, steadfast and satisfying: "all her paths are

* See Luke xvii. 21. † See p. 174.

peace;" even present and eternal peace: "for she is a tree of life," immortal in the Paradise of God,* to them that lay hold of her, and happy is everyone that retaineth her.

Thus you see the three great objects of all worldly desires join to recommend *religion* to you; *honour, profit, pleasure.* These shall be yours, these shall eternally be yours, in their highest perfection, if you are wise enough to lay hold of, and retain this excellent wisdom, this pure and holy religion, which unites to God, and establisheth the kingdom of Christ in the happy heart.

1. In the first place, *honour* shall be yours. Such honour as imperfect sinful creatures like us might contemplate at a distance with wonder; but must consider as near to us, and capable of becoming our own, with the profoundest humiliation. For the eternal and omnipotent Lord of heaven, whose word is life, and whose favour is the fulness of bliss, this adorable God of glory, will not only condescend to admit us to his courts, to hear and grant our petitions; but graciously to become our father, and to adopt us into his family and love. His only begotten Son will vouchsafe to be our advocate; and as in mercy unutterable he died to redeem, so doth he ever live to intercede for and bless us. While we continue in our state of probation, and at a distance from our Father's house, so much doth he delight to honour us, that his eternal Spirit shall be sent forth to dwell with, to guide and comfort us; and his holy angels shall become ministers of protection to the children of their heavenly King. And when emancipated from the present scene, the only Begotten shall welcome us to the fulness of joy, where dwells the Father of goodness and of glory,

* See Gen. ii. 9, and compare Rev. xxii. 2, 14.

and we shall inherit all those privileges, honours, and blessings, which God hath provided for those who love him.

Tell me now, what earthly honours can in any degree equal these of the Christian? Do men glory in the greatness of their birth, and the nobility of their parents?—Lo! the Father of Christians is great above all greatness, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; *And ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty.* Do men glory in the favour of their prince, their access to his person, and his readiness to grant their requests?—Behold we have a free access unto God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ; *Whatsoever*, saith he, *ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* We may open our hearts to him in this time of absence, and shall be heard; hereafter we shall see him, as he is; see him and be for ever with him, partaking his goodness, and sharing his love. Do men glory in exalted places or preferments?—But, what are these, even the most exalted, in comparison of that everlasting recompense of reward, that unutterably blessed mansion, which God hath promised, and which Christ is gone before to prepare for us!

As reasonable creatures we cannot but be sensible of the majesty of God, of our own comparative littleness and imperfections, and consequently of the superlative *honour* which accrues to us, from our alliance with him, and our permission to adore and serve him. Whence then can it come to pass, that we so often find human creatures ashamed of that, which is their greatest honour, their noblest privilege:—ashamed of avowing their conscientious regard to the Deity, and the high sense they have, or ought to have, of the wondrous mercies which Christ hath procured for them? Were we indeed

independent, and could we from our single efforts procure felicity, we might with some show of reason neglect the dread Lord of the universe; though even then it would be weak, to be insensible to the charms of his goodness, and the greatness of his power. But, on the other side, now that to him we owe every breath of life we draw; now that on his will depends every moment of our continuance in being; now that on his disposal hangs all our present and all our future good; how can we solve the unaccountable delusion? what can we answer to our souls, when we are ashamed of, or for worldly reasons neglect, such a God, with such invaluable privileges?

How differently are we used to act in our temporal concerns! how fond to attain the honours, and to procure the transitory favour of transitory beings like ourselves! If princes admit us to the least degree of regard, if eminent nobles and distinguished personages vouchsafe to look upon us with a friendly aspect, how very sensible are we of the honour, and how ready, in general, to declare it too? But when God, the everlasting omnipotent God, whose greatness passeth comprehension, and whose goodness exceedeth all expression and praise; when He humbles himself so far as to invite us to his love; to invite us,— amazing condescension,— even by his only begotten Son! when he encourages us to serve him by promises of the most engaging and interesting nature: when he offers to adopt us into his family, and to give us the glorious inheritance of his children;—we can be insensible to these invitations, these offers, these promises, though we are created only to secure and enjoy them! Nay, and almost blush, in many cases, to be supposed religious, or to mention with due veneration that

Name, which is above every name; and which, to creatures like us, should be our highest honour to mention, our truest delight to speak of, the only subject of our praise! So at least thought St. Paul, when he said *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!—God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!* And there is good reason, why we should thus glory; why we should not be ashamed of that Gospel; *for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth!* A small share of reflection, a little use of that reason which is given us for the noblest purposes, will suffice to make us duly sensible of the exalted *honour* which is done to worms like us, by the attention we gain from the God of glory; by the permission we enjoy of approaching his adorable majesty by prayer and praise, and all his appointed ordinances. Nor shall we ever be backward to avow our whole heart's attachment to him, when we remember his awful declaration, *Whosoever is ashamed of me, and of my words, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, and of the holy Angels.*

I have dwelt the longer on this topic, as some are apt to represent religion as a mean and worthless thing; and because others, not duly reflecting on the inestimable privileges to which Christianity entitles them, are backward to express their approbation of that divine scheme of holiness and peace; that evidence of the greatest goodwill to man; that instrument. in the hands of the Deity, to invest him with *honours* as much superior to the honours of this world, as heaven is to earth, as eternity is to time; honours bestowed by *Him*, who, as St. John expresseth it, *is the Prince of the kings of the earth; who hath loved us, and washed us from our*

*sins in his blood, and will make us kings and priests unto God and his Father, and we shall reign with him for ever and ever!**

2. After this, can we doubt of the *advantages* which will accompany our sincere professions of this dying master's faith? For what advantages can be greater, more worthy our unwearied pursuit, than those specified in the preceding passage; the pardon of our sins, the purification of our nature, and the gift of life eternal and full of glory! Is not the merchandize of these better than of silver, and the gain of them better than of fine gold? Are they not more precious than rubies, more valuable than the most invaluable of earthly things? Yea, what of earthly, mortal, and uncertain, can be compared with heavenly, immortal, and immutable? What is it that men more earnestly covet, than length of days and riches? Is not the wish of almost every carnal heart, "Give me wealth, and give me long life, gracious heaven, to enjoy it!"—Be religious, and this blessing is indisputably yours. Your gain shall be a long life, even a life eternal; and you shall enjoy riches, the never-failing treasures of the celestial kingdom; treasures which wax not old; safely stored beyond the reach of spoil or decay: satisfying, ever-during treasures! Oh, how unlike the wealth of this world; which is painful in the procural, uncertain and unsatisfying in the possession, and in the end false and deceitful; sure to forsake and desert, if not to accuse and condemn us!

For such *advantages*, one might well be content to forego a thousand temporary gratifications: and acting upon those principles which actuate the conduct of mankind in general, surely we should not be backward to bear much present labour for

* Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 10.

the acquisition of so great a future good. The dangers of the ocean and the fatigues of tedious voyages, are borne by the sailor uncomplaining, in hopes he shall at length return to his country, and in a peaceful harbour enjoy the fruits of his toil. Similar reflections might well reconcile us to difficulties and disadvantages, if any such might be supposed to arise merely from our profession of religion. But few and inconsiderable are the difficulties and disadvantages which arise from thence, and not worthy to be compared with those that proceed from worldly causes, from our own imprudence, vice, and folly. Nay, indeed, such is the advantage of the religion of Christ, that it attends us in this world, as well as in the next; and it is our best *interest* not only respecting futurity, but time and this life also, to be sincerely religious.

The advantages of time are, in truth, so inferior to those of eternity, that they scarcely deserve to be named after them; and it would seem almost to wrong your judgments to imagine that you want any other proof of the real profit of religion, than the certainty of its procuring pardon of sins, purification of soul, and everlasting blessedness. Yet, to show the excellence of this divine *wisdom*, as well as the goodness of our God, we may remark, and we are authorized in that remark, by the inspired penman, "that godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come."* Nay, we are assured by truth infallible, by wisdom essential, that "if we first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all things necessary to life and well-being shall be added to us."† If temporal riches and abundance be proper and convenient for us, they shall be

* 1 Tim. iv. 8. † Mark vi. 33.

given; if otherwise, the desire of them shall be taken away, and cheerful content shall supply the place of abundance. We shall be taught to enjoy what we have, with thankfulness and serenity: to resign what we lose, with composure and peace: we shall be taught to improve what we possess, to the best advantage; and to make friends, unfailing friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.

Thus religion is highly profitable, even for this life, as well as for that which is to come; securing to us the best advantages here, and what is infinitely more important, the best advantages hereafter; advantages real, satisfying, sure, and everlasting. It hurts not, it cannot hurt any of our true and proper interests upon earth; it stimulates industry; it encourages application; it enforces the practice of all the social and moral virtues: it renders us most capable to fulfil those virtues, by correcting our passions, and preserving us from the practice and disquietude of vice: it will procure us the most important advantages in this life; it will enable us to enjoy these advantages, with the highest *pleasure*: for "her ways are ways of pleasantness," as well as ways of honour and profit.

III. In whatever view we consider religion, we shall find that it answers the character here given, and affords the purest and highest *pleasure* we can enjoy in this world. I mean not to insist at present upon the future pleasure which it promises; as that pleasure, exalted indeed, is, we know, utterly unattainable without it.

Now it is a point, in which we are all agreed, that the "Mind" is not only the more noble part of us; but that as it is most capable of pleasure, so are its pleasures infinitely superior to those of the body. For so little gratified is the mind very often found

with mere bodily indulgences, that it disturbs the whole peace of the man who pursues them; and allows him to have neither rest nor satisfaction in the pursuit. But, whether you consider religion as engaging the "Understanding," or rejoicing the "Conscience," you will find that it affords the "Mind" the most complete and substantial satisfaction.

For what objects can the *understanding* contemplate more great, more new, more interesting, than those which religion presents! than God, his wonders and works; his mercy and love! Objects, which may well occupy the mind's whole attention; for the more we contemplate, the more we shall love; and the more we love, the happier of course we shall become. And when we reflect, that this is no barren and distant contemplation, which merely amuses, but one that affects our dearest interests; when we recollect that the great God whose glories we contemplated is our Father: that the only begotten Son, whose matchless love we adore with trembling, manifested that love for our sake and for our salvation: that the blessed Spirit, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son, is our comforter and guide; that He, who spread the blue expanse above us, who spoke, and it was done, who commanded, and all creation rose into being, is our shield and our defence, almighty to save, and ever watchful in goodness to comfort and bless; when thus we contemplate the great truths of religion, can the understanding fail to receive the highest pleasure?—If speculation affords the mind any delights, (and what thinking mind is ignorant of its delights?) the highest, certainly, must be received from the consideration of religious truths.

But when these truths are carried into practice,

and the *conscience* gives in its favourable evidence, "Oh well is that man, and happy shall he be!" Conscience undoubtedly is the great repository of those pleasures, which can afford any solid refreshment to the soul: for when this is calm and serene, then properly, but then alone, a man enjoys himself: and he must do this, before he can enjoy any thing else. But it is only the practice of sincere religion which can authorise a man's conscience to speak comfortably to him. It is this which must word the sentence, before the conscience can pronounce it; and then it will do it with majesty and authority; it will not whisper, but proclaim a jubilee to the mind; it will not drop, but pour in oil upon the wounded heart. And is there any pleasure comparable to that, which springs from hence? The pleasures of conscience are not only greater than all other pleasures, but may serve well instead of them: the latter only please and affect the mind in passing, in the pitiful narrow compass of actual enjoyment; they will not bear a retrospect: whereas the pleasure of conscience, and continually entertains with durable reflections*." Look upon the wretch haunted with a guilty mind, amidst all the affluence of this world: and look upon the Christian rejoicing in the testimony of a good conscience, even in poverty and an afflicted state; and say, whether the pleasures of religion are not exquisite and desirable!

I would just remark, that it appears agreeable to every dictate of right reason, and the nature of things, that religion should procure for the soul of man the highest pleasure; and that separate from it no real pleasure should be procured. For if, as we believe, the soul is a ray of the divinity, *breathed forth* from God,† formed for him, and designed to

* See *South's Sermons*, vol. i.

† See Gen. ii. 14.

enjoy him eternally; we may conclude, by the strongest argument, that nothing but God can fill up that soul's desires, and make it completely happy; and that so long as it remains ignorant of God, estranged from, and at enmity with him, so long it must necessarily be unhappy. This reasoning Scripture declares, and long and sad experience hath proved to be true.

Were we to reflect upon every single instance of duty which we owe to God, we should find that the practice was pleasure, and the performance the most ample gratification to the mind. But this would carry me into too spacious a field: I must leave it therefore to your own speculation, and, let me hope, my young friends, to your own experience also; whilst I proceed to observe, that not only from the pleasure it affords the *understanding*, and the comfort it administers to the *conscience*; but from the happy restraint it lays upon the passions and appetites, religion is a source of the highest *pleasure*.

We are all but too well convinced, what evils and inconveniences, what uneasiness and anxiety have arisen to us, from those corrupt appetites which dwell in our hearts, and fight against our peace. Indeed, what greater evil can befal a man, than a slavery to his passions? What a continual torment are envy and malice, are pride and discontent! How dismal in their consequences the indulgence of lust, and the foul deeds of intemperance! How painful and afflicting the familiarity with any one species of vice! Nay, in truth, let us honestly confess that what of unhappiness or misery we share in this life, at least its far greater portion, hath arisen from our own depraved tempers, passions, and vices. We cannot doubt then, but that whatever tends to de-

liver us from the dominion of these, must tend to our highest pleasure. Now the very first step in Christ's religion is to combat, and the whole business of it is to conquer, these irregular and distressing evils; and to plant in their stead virtues, as amiable in their own nature, and as necessarily productive of true happiness, as the opposite vices are odious and abominable, and productive of unquestionable misery.

In this view, therefore, the "ways of *wisdom* are ways of pleasantness, and paths of real peace." It teaches us to love all mankind; to rejoice in their good; to abstain from every defiling practice; to cultivate every excellent virtue. It shows us ourselves, and leads us to that divine humility, which alone would make man blessed. It diffuses a sweet serenity over our souls, and delivers us from all those vexatious terrors, which dwell in the breast, nay, and often murder the whole repose, of vice. It is true—and I remark it with concern,—so rarely are men in earnest, or at least so very lukewarm in their religious endeavours, that they enjoy not all the pleasures which religion would bestow, because they do not resolutely combat all the passions which are the chief obstacles to their abundant peace. But let it be observed, that this is no objection to the full pleasantness which religion offers: men must blame themselves, if they do not perform the conditions on which that pleasantness is proposed. Hence, or through a partial discharge of duty, the comforts flowing from religion are frequently unexperienced: and often, many truly deserving persons are deprived of those comforts, through false and severe representations of that gracious system of love and peace, which is calculated to remove every fear of despondency, to dispel every doubt of the

penitent and sorrowful, and to diffuse consolation and joy over the believing heart.

I must not conceal it too, as another cause why the pleasures of religion are often unknown, that it is no uncommon sight to observe men strenuously combating for "modes of faith," and for "peculiar doctrines," which they call, and perhaps think religion; while they forget the subdual of their evil tempers and vicious passions. Zealous in hearing and talking of the faith, and very warm in their judgments and censures of others, they are not by any means heedful and anxious, as they ought, to improve and amend themselves; and to implant the divine virtues in their hearts: that so they might at once recommend religion by their own amiable practice, and by the happiness visibly produced by it in their own minds and consciences.

For religion is a real and internal thing; and such too is happiness; which if it be not found within our own breasts, we shall search for it in vain through the circle of all earthly enjoyments. And there can be no happiness within, but that which arises from an approving conscience and well regulated affections.* Where these are, happiness must be found. So that it follows by plain consequence, that pure and undefiled religion, which gives joy to the conscience, and a right bias to the affections, must give to man the highest and most perfect pleasure.

But let us advance one step farther, and consider religion, as it relates to our *neighbour*, as well as to

* "He that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit i' the centre and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul, and the foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon."

MILTON'S COMUS.

God and *ourselves*. Now as the religion of Christ teaches us to be quiet, peaceable, benevolent, and charitable; to be punctual and honest, diligent and industrious in our proper sphere; not to intermeddle with the concerns of others, but wherever we have an opportunity, to do good and to administer comfort; it evidently teaches us so to live as to secure the greatest serenity, and to avoid the greatest evils which disturb and vex the peace of social life. Indeed the subdual of our corrupt tempers and passions, lays the foundation not only for peace and pleasure in our own minds, but for peace and pleasure in every intercourse of life. For whence, but from pride and malice, from envy and censure, from busy curiosity and mean self-love;—whence but from indulged lusts, neglect of our own proper business, from idleness, and the daring transgression of divine and human laws, comes all the evil which oppresses society? He therefore who lives a stranger to these, who lives in a practice directly contrary, as he is a blessing to others, so doth he treasure up the purest and most peaceful pleasure to himself. Nor can we well conceive a more amiable—I am sure we cannot form an idea of a happier being, than he who, steadfast in his love to God, and thankful for the mercies of an atoning Saviour, continually endeavours through the grace of Christ to combat and conquer all his evil affections; while in this life he shows forth his gratitude to his God and Father, by good-will to his brethren,—to all mankind; diligent in his station, humble in his mind, compassionate to his fellow-creatures; just in his dealings, friendly in his actions. serene and cheerful in his whole deportment; glad to promote universal harmony and peace, and to make all participate

of that happy *religion*, which he himself professes; of that exquisite *pleasure*, which he himself enjoys!

Such are the fruits of true religion; which deprives of no one rational satisfaction; which forbids no one enjoyment, that a wise or good man would wish to share; nay rather, which heightens every earthly pleasure, and gives the sweetest relish to all those temporal blessings, which the Father of mercy hath graciously provided for his creatures. Tell me then, are not its ways "ways of peace, and pleasantness?" what hath earth to give, which can be compared to the fruit of this tree of life! a fruit which never satiates, never wearies? Enjoy these pleasures, and you may still enjoy them. They are for ever new, and for ever delightful. This cannot be said of any other satisfactions upon earth: all of these satiate and weary, from the bestial joys of the epicure and drunkard, even to the more refined pursuits of ambition and honour. The fruit of this tree of life, this matchless pleasure too, is peculiarly your own; it is not in the power of all the world to rob you of it: he, who has the property, may be sure of the perpetuity also. But this, again, cannot be said of any outward and mortal enjoyments, each of which are subject to the power of innumerable changes and chances: but nothing can injure the happiness which is centered in our own breasts; no, not even time itself: it will live with us even beyond the grave!—Indeed it is then, most truly speaking, that this happiness, this peace and pleasure of religion, shall fully flourish and abound!

Surely, after this, there can be no need to exhort you to the practice of this holy religion, which is thus fraught with consummate pleasure. For if you act consistently, such pleasure must draw you to its enjoyment, and make you anxious for its possession!

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You, my beloved, who have experienced the *pleasures* of that religion, which I have endeavoured to set forth, oh speak in the important cause, and recommend it to others, from your own happy knowledge. In particular recommend it as truly amiable to the *rising generation;* and win by fair representation, the *youth*, the flower of our country, to the blessed, the delightful service of the Lord of love. Tell them how agreeable to right reason and your true interest, you have ever found the rules and dictates of religion; tell them how comfortable and pleasant you have found the exercises of devotion; and with what truth you can say with David, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of ungodliness." Tell them how sufficient you have found the pleasure of religion, to overcome the pains and troubles of sense and the world, to take out the sting of them, and to divest them of their terror. Oh tell them of the abundant consolation which true Christianity hath to administer in every trial and affliction! And tell them, that the closer you have kept to the paths of righteousness, the better progress you have made in wisdom's ways; the more hath your pleasure abounded, the more hath your peace been increased. Tell them, that the sincere and perfect discharge of duty never brought anything but solid and substantial joy; and that pain and disquietude are the certain consequence of every deviation from it! Tell them, what inestimable benefits, what invaluable privileges rejoice your hearts: peace with God, through Christ; communion with him by the blessed Spirit, freedom from the condemnation of sin; from the fear of death; a thankful, sanctified use of all temporal blessings; the heart at ease, the conscience clear, the animated

hope! Tell them of the *pleasure* high, rational, angelical, debased by no future sad and melancholy reflections; a pleasure, made for the soul, and the soul for it; suitable to its spirituality, and equal to all its capacities: a pleasure which grows fresher upon enjoyment, which may properly be called our own; liable to no accident, exposed to no injury, the foretaste of heaven, and the earnest of a blessed eternity!

And will not this representation engage you, "my young hearers," early and diligently to cultivate the knowledge of that divine religion, which will procure you such invaluable *pleasure?* Pleasure is the aim and wish of your age. Behold none is so pure, none is so perfect, none will improve so much; nay, all will satiate, will disgust and weary, except the divine and god-like pleasure which springs from piety and virtue. Oh "get these,—for their price is above rubies,—and happy shall you be!" happy in the favour of your God, happy in the love of your Redeemer; happy in the peace and serenity of your minds; happy in the tender and endearing affection of your parents; happy in the esteem of your friends; happy shall you be in yourselves, and happy shall you make all those connected with you. Therefore, "above all things get *wisdom*, and with all your getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thy head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her, and happy is everyone that retaineth her."

Such are the *pleasures* which *religion* offers: how different, my young friends, from those sordid unsatisfying sensual pursuits, which have hereto-

fore passed under our examination! But who would put in competition the joys of brutes, and the delights of angels! Religion presents the latter: sensuality and sin the former. It is yours to make the choice; and on that choice depends your everlasting fate. The infinite goodness of God proposes the most perfect pleasure here and hereafter to you. You cannot be unhappy, if you serve him with all your soul. If you neglect to do so, whatever your state and condition, high or low, rich or poor; whatever your earthly acquisitions or wants, you cannot in the nature of things be truly happy. Your mind will for ever be restless; for it wants its proper good; and without that good, it must be restless and miserable for ever!

Make then, I entreat you,—as my last, best, and parting counsel,—make a wise choice, my dear young friends! Love the Lord, and he will love you;* cleave early to Him, and he will never forsake you. The more you advance in the ways of truth and virtue, the more perfect and undefiled will your satisfactions prove, and the greater relish will you have of those real and rational *pleasures*, which these sincere endeavours of mine have recommended (let me hope and pray not without effect) to your complete enjoyment.

And "oh ye careful *parents*:—for I cannot conclude without once more addressing you first† and last, as so much of the welfare of our youth, of the rising generation, depends upon *you*; ye careful worthy parents, watchful for the welfare of your darling offspring, solicitous for their happiness, and anxious to secure their peace and pleasure; see where these blessings may assuredly be found; and

* See Prov. viii. 17, and the first Discourse.

† See the latter end of the first Sermon.

with unremitting diligence form the young mind to the love of religion, and to the practice of those amiable duties, which *Jesus Christ* hath enjoined. Guard them from the dangerous and delusive ruin of subtle, fashionable, and insinuating infidelity; from the weak and wild absurdities of staring impetuous enthusiasm. And to that end, draw them by the cords of simple truth and plain reason to the love of God, of duty, and of virtue. Teach them the eternal, the unalterable difference between these and vice; and convince them how much it is their interest, their happiness, their honour, respecting both time and eternity, to obey the gospel of Christ; that is, to live as becomes men. You will reap the pleasing profit of such instructions, in the obedience and the felicity of your children; and laying, by a right, a wise and religious *education*, the solid basis of their future good, you will have no cause to lament, with numbers of those who fatally omit this prime duty in our luxurious dissipated days;—no cause to lament with them the neglect of parental love, and the heart-piercing anguish of filial ingratitude and unkindness. *Which, &c.*

Anecdotes *on Religion.*

1. A young lady being asked, by a friend, the important question, "What is Religion?" it produced the following definition, which we insert in justice to the fair author.

"Religion is a generous lively flame,
That brightens, not deforms the human frame;
In the close covert of the heart it lies,
Beams there, nor sternly threatens in the eyes.
An unaffected ease its actions grace,
Known by the motions of the Soul, not Face.
No scur restraint, no forced concern it wears,
No bidden sighs, no ostentatious tears,

No self-applauding shrug; no censure, strife,
Nor spleen, at all the blameless joys of life;
As wide from these are virtue's native charms,
As settled courage from confused alarms;
As solid reason's calm considerate train
From the wild frenzies of a feverish brain."

2. "It is found by experience," says Dean Swift, "that those men who set up for morality, without regard to religion, are generally virtuous but in part. They will be just in their dealings between man and man, but if they find themselves disposed to pride, lust, intemperance, or avarice, they do not think their morality concerned to check them in any of these vices; because it is the great rule of such men, that they may lawfully follow the dictates of nature, wherever their safety, honour and fortune are not injured. So that upon the whole, there is hardly one vice, which a mere moral man may not upon some occasions allow himself to practise. This may serve to show the weakness and uncertainty of that false principle, 'moral honesty,' which many people set up in the place of conscience, for a guide to their actions." See his *Works*, vol. xi. p. 204.

3. When Protagoras the sceptic, whose strange caprices led him to doubt of everything, even though he saw or felt it, began his book by saying, "As for the gods, whether they are or are not, I have nothing to say;" the magistrates of Athens highly resented this profane trifling with things sacred, banished him out of their city, and condemned his book to be burnt by the common executioner. And afterwards, when he and his friend Pyrrho were asked, why they walked so much alone, they answered, "It was to meditate how they might be good." And being hereupon further asked, what necessity there was for being good, if it were certain

that there is no God; they replied, "It cannot be ascertained that there is no God; and therefore it is prudence to provide for the worst."

4. Epicurus, disdaining the absurd notion of a multitude of gods and goddesses, and detesting that account of them which mankind had taken up gratis, from the poets and other fabulous writers; set his philosophising wit to work to give an account of the beginning and continuance of all things in nature, without the admission of a Deity. Accordingly, he advances a supposition still more fantastical if possible, than all which had gone before; namely, that the world derived its origin from a fortunate confluence of infinite particles of matter, which he called atoms; and this he affirms with a degree of confidence greater than one could have expected on so ludicrous a subject. Yet after all he leaves his scholars to labour under insuperable difficulties about the eternity, the shapes, the first mover of his atoms, and the production of creatures endowed with sense and understanding out of those insensible parts; with many other forcible objections, which utterly invalidate this cobweb hypothesis. His great admirer, Lucretius, however highly commends this philosophical chimæra, and extols its author; but in such daring terms, as will brand and stigmatize him in the opinion of all sober men to the end of the world: for he celebrates Epicurus as the first that dared to encounter the notion of a Deity, and had thereby set the minds of men free from the fear of God, which had so long kept them in awe. And yet we are assured by Cotta, "That so far was he from gaining his beloved ease and pleasure hereby, that no school-boy was ever more afraid of a rod, than Epicurus was of death and a Deity," though in words he seemed to despise

both. "So hard is it," as the learned bishop Stillingfleet observes "for an Epicurean, even after he hath prostituted his conscience, to silence it: but, whatever there be in the air, there is certainly an elastical power in the conscience, that will bear itself up, notwithstanding the weight that is laid upon it, to stifle and kill its clamours."

5. What a blessing to mankind was the ingenuous, humble, and pious Mr. Boyle! what a common pest was the fallacious, proud, and impious Hobbes! Accordingly we find that the former bad adieu to the world with the utmost serenity, honour, and hope; while the latter went out of it in the dark, and with terrible apprehensions of an unknown future. He had been an instrument of the prince of darkness, in poisoning many young gentlemen and others, with his wicked principles, as the Earl of Rochester confessed with extreme compunction and grief upon his death bed. It is remarked by those who critically observed the Author of the *Leviathan*, that though in a humour of bravado, he would speak very strange and unbecoming things of God; yet in his study, in the dark, and in his retired thoughts, he trembled before him. Many appear like Atheists in their mirth, amidst wine and company, who are quite of other sentiments in sickness, and gloom, and solitude. What could make this strange man awake in such terror and amazement if his candle happened to go out in the night? What, but that he was unable to bear the dismal reflections of his dark and desolate mind; and knew not how to extinguish, nor how to bear the light of "the candle of the Lord" within him!

6. Dr. Doddridge, in his Life of that memorable convert, Colonel Gardiner, informs us, "That

his fine constitution, than which perhaps there was hardly ever a better, gave him great opportunities of indulging himself in excesses; and his good spirits enabled him to pursue his pleasures of every kind, in so alert and sprightly a manner, that multitudes envied him, and called him by a dreadful kind of compliment, "the happy Rake." Yet still the checks of conscience, and some remaining principles of so good an education as he had received, would break in upon his most licentious hours; and I particularly remember he told me, that when some of his dissolute companions were once congratulating him on his distinguished felicity, a dog happening at that time to come into the room, he could not forbear groaning inwardly, and saying to himself, "Oh that I were that dog!" Such was then his happiness; and such perhaps is that of hundreds more, who bear themselves highest in the contempt of religion, and glory in that infamous servitude which they call Liberty." See the *Life*, p. 23.

7. It is owing to the forbidding and unlovely constraint with which men of low conceptions act, when they think they conform themselves to religion, as well as to the more odious conduct of hypocrites, that the word *Christian*, does not carry with it, at first view, all that is great, worthy, friendly, generous, and heroic. The man who suspends his hopes of the reward of worthy actions till after death; who can charitably bestow unseen; who can overlook hatred; who can do good to his slanderer; who can never be angry at his friend, never revengeful to his enemy; is certainly formed for the benefit of society. Yet these are so far from heroic virtues, that they are but the ordinary duties of a Christian.

8. Mr. Locke somewhere observes, "That morality becomes a gentleman, not barely as a man, but in order to his business as a gentleman; and the morality of the gospel, says he, doth so excel that of all other books, that to give a man a full knowledge of true morality, I should send him to no other book than the New Testament."

9. Xenophon informs us, that Cyrus, before all other things preferred the worship of the Gods, and a respect for religion. Upon this head therefore he thought himself obliged to bestow his first and peculiar care. He accordingly began by establishing a number of magi or priests, to sing daily a morning service of praise to the honour of the Gods, and to offer sacrifices; which was daily practised among the Persians of succeeding ages. The prince's disposition quickly became, as is usual, the prevailing disposition among the people, and his example became the rule of their conduct*. Cyrus, on the other hand, was extremely glad to find in them such sentiments of religion; being convinced that whosoever sincerely fears and worships God, will at the same time be faithful to his king, and preserve an inviolable attachment to his person, and to the welfare of the state.

10. Antalcidas, a Spartan, being about to enter into holy orders, was asked by the priest, what action worthy of renown he had performed during his life. He replied, "If I have performed any, the gods themselves are acquainted with it." How noble an instance of modesty! how exalted a notion of the Deity! Surely, nothing can be more foolish, than to imagine by the ostentation of our actions to recommend ourselves to that Deity, who, of what-

* "Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis."

ever nature those actions may be, must have the clearest knowledge of their quality and worth.

11. Anaximenes being asked how he could so calmly pursue his studies, confined as he was to a prison, and expecting death; answered, "That his soul was not confined, having as large a walk as the heavens which he studied; nor frighted, having an hope as great as the immortality which he looked for."

12. During the retreat of the famous king Alfred, at Athelney in Somersetshire, after the defeat of his forces by the Danes, the following circumstance happened, which, while it convinces us of the extremities to which that great man was reduced, will give us a striking proof of his pious and benevolent disposition. A beggar came to his little castle there, and requested alms; when his queen informed him "that they had only one small loaf remaining, which was insufficient for themselves and their friends, who were gone abroad in quest of food, though with little hopes of success. The king replied, "Give the poor Christian one half of the loaf. He that could feed 5000 men with five loaves and two fishes, can certainly make that half of the loaf suffice for more than our necessities." Accordingly the poor man was relieved; and this noble act of charity soon recompensed by a providential store of fresh provisions, with which his people returned.

13. Of all the singular virtues which united in the character of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, That which crowned the whole was his exemplary piety to God: the following is related of him, when he was once in his camp before Werben. He had been alone in the cabinet of his pavilion some hours together, and none of his attendants at these

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seasons durst interrupt him. At length however, a favourite of his having some important matter to tell him, came softly to the door, and looking in beheld the king very devoutly on his knees at prayer. Fearing to molest him in that sacred exercise, he was about to withdraw his head, when the king espied him, and bidding him come in, said, "Thou wonderest to see me in this posture, since I have so many thousands of subjects to pray for me: but I tell thee, that no man has more need to pray for himself, than he, who being to render an account of his actions to none but God, is for that reason more closely assaulted by the devil than all other men beside."

14. Eusebius, in his *History*, informs us, that St. John, during his ministration to the western churches, cast his eye upon a young man remarkable for the extent of his knowledge, and the ingenuousness of his mind. The aged apostle thought that he had discovered in him a useful instrument for the propagating of Christianity: accordingly he took particular pains to convert him, and to instruct him in the divine doctrines of his great master; and that he might be still better acquainted with the system of Cnristianity, at his departure he recommended him to the care of a pious old father, who had some authority in the infant Church. The youth continued awhile in the duties of his new profession, and attended with care to the lectures of his venerable tutor. But his former associates, when they found themselves deserted by him, were grieved at the success of the apostle, and exerted their utmost efforts to regain so useful and entertaining a companion. They succeeded in their attempts: the father was forsaken, and his pupil plunged deep into irregularity and vice. The apostle, after some

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time, returned to those parts; and "where" said he, with impatience to his aged friend, "where is my favourite youth?"—"Alas!" replied the good old man, with tears in his eyes, "he is fallen, irrecoverably fallen; he has forsaken the society of saints, and is now a leader of a gang of robbers in the neighbouring mountains." Upon hearing this unexpected and unpleasing account, the apostle forgot his sufferings and his years, and hastened to the place of rendezvous; where, being seized by one of the band, he desired to speak with their captain. The captain being told that a strange pilgrim asked to be admitted to him, ordered him to be brought before him: but when he beheld the venerable apostle, his hopes of amusement sunk, and were changed into shame and confusion; and the hardy leader of a band of robbers, trembled before a poor and helpless old man. He quitted once more the society of wickedness, and lived and died in the service of his Redeemer.

15. The following allegorical "Picture of Ingratitude in a poor Dependant," was drawn by a lady a few years since, and is so suitable to the point in hand, that we make no apology for its length. The reader will readily discover its application to man in general, and his spiritual concerns. "A certain great person was of so noble and generous a disposition, that he delighted to communicate happiness to all around him. Among those whom his bounty raised, we will distinguish one by the name of Orlando. This man he took from a condition low as the mire in the streets, clothed him and fed him, placed him in a convenient habitation, and bestowed upon him an ample provision to support life with comfort and satisfaction; and as he lived in a country where assaults and many accidents were

frequent, this kind benefactor used often to send a party of his own servants (for he kept vast numbers in his retinue) to guard him, particularly whenever he went on any dangerous expedition. When he was sick, or in any affliction, he never failed to visit him, to administer relief and comfort to him: there was not a day, in short, in which he did not confer upon him some new obligation: and as if all this was too little, he faithfully promised him, that if he did not make an ill use of the favours he had already received, he would, after trying him a while in his present circumstances, bestow on him a much greater estate, situated in a most delightful country, where he should live in an elegance and splendour he had then no conception of: and in return for all these mighty obligations, his patron only expected that he should pay him frequent visits; sometimes in public, along with other company, who attended his levee, but more frequently in private: that he should behave himself in a sober orderly manner, neither hurting himself by being guilty of any excesses, nor setting an ill example to others. He also made him steward of some small part of his revenue, which he ordered him to distribute according to his own discretion, among a set of his lower dependants, and assured him that if he discharged this office with dilligence and humanity, he should look on it as a favour done to himself.

And now, would one think it possible that Orlando should in a little time grow negligent and forgetful of this noble friend? that when he was absent from him, he should engross but little of his thoughts, and still less of his conversation? that if by chance he was led to talk of him, he should presently fly off from the subject, as if he was ashamed to mention the person to whom he owed his *all?*

Nay, could one believe that he would even listen with a patient ear, while others spoke disrespectfully of him, and found fault with his acts of bounty, because they were not distributed exactly in that manner which they thought best? He visited him sometimes, it is true, but his visits were short and not frequent; and his behaviour such as plainly shewed that he went because it was expected from him, or out of custom, more than from any real veneration or love to his benefactor. If he asked a favour, either for himself or any body else he did it with such a careless air, as if he did not much trouble his head whether it was granted or not; sometimes he would make professions of gratitude, but with so much coolness and indifference, as showed he was very little sensible of the obligations he had received. All who attended on public days were expected to behave with great decorum and gravity, for on these occasions the least degree of levity was looked upon as a breach of respect to their patron; but Orlando was so far from observing those rules, that he used frequently to be talking and laughing with some of the company, and even in the middle of an address to his friend, he would break off, to take notice of somebody's new suit of clothes, or any other such trifle that happened to catch his eye.

But there was one part of his behaviour more unpardonable than any of the rest, which was his neglect of those persons whom his generous benefactor had entrusted to his care: he seldom visited them, never troubled his head to inquire into their wants; nay, would hardily grant them a small favour when they solicited him. After going on for some time in this manner, if either the admonitions of a friend, or the consciousness of his own mind awakened him to a sense of his ingratitude, he would then vouchsafe

to make some acknowledgments, and to ask his patron's pardon in a supplicating manner; when this inimitable friend, not to be tired out with any provocations, would receive him with open arms, and assure him that if he would be more careful to please him for the future, all that was past should be buried in oblivion: but that if he persisted to abuse his kindness, he would (if he did not withdraw his present bounty) yet certainly disinherit him of the noble estate he had in reversion, which was not to be given him till he had undergone a severe operation, which had so much of fancied terror in it, as made him very willing to keep what he then enjoyed, without looking out for anything better. But this was not permitted him; for at the expiration of a certain term of years, he was either to be in possession of the promised inheritance, or else to be punished for not having deserved it.

Again and again he offended, and yet, such was the forgiving goodness of his benefactor, that upon his humbling himself he as often received him to favour; till at last he sent his grim messenger to acquaint him, that the appointed hour was come, the lease of his house was expired, and he must prepare to enter a new habitation. Though at first he expressed some reluctance yet, the sentence was immediately executed:—But whether he arrived at the delightful country that was promised, or whether he suffered for the folly and carelessness of his past life, is a question yet unresolved. However, thus much is certain, that when he was just going to make trial of so great a change, he heartily wished he had made it the business of every day of his life to please his noble friend." See *the Christian's Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 512.

16. An excellent critic introduces a libertine

speaking in these terms, "When the physician is near my bed, my confessor is my comforter; I know very well how to hinder religion from afflicting me when I am well; but I permit her to console me when I am sick. When I have no longer any thing to hope on one hand, religion presents herself, and gains me over by her promises; I then wish earnestly to give myself up to her, and to die on the side of hope." How many a libertine might we enumerate, who apparently reasons in this manner, thus egregiously deludes himself, and is the dupe of his own licentiousness. And how aptly might we address to such self-deceivers those singular lines, which alas! do too sensibly reach them!

"When the Devil was sick, the Devil a Monk would be;
When the Devil, was well, the devil a Monk was he!

17. While the colleagues of Constantius the Roman Emperor were prosecuting the Christians with fire and sword, he politically pretended to persecute them too; and and declared to such officers of his household and governors of provinces as were Christians, that he left it to their choice, either to sacrifice to the gods and by that means preserve themselves in their employments, or to forfeit their places and his favour by continuing steady in their religion. When they had all declared their option, the Emperor discovered his real sentiments; reproached in the most bitter terms those who had renounced their religion; highly extolled the the virtue and constancy of such as had despised the wealth and vanities of the world; and dismissed the former with ignominy, saying, "That those who had betrayed their *God*, would not scruple to betray their prince" while he retained the latter, trusted them with the guard of his person and the whole manage-

ment of public affairs, as persons on whose fidelity he could firmly rely, and in whom he might put an entire confidence.

18. Notwithstanding our modern sceptics and infidels are great pretenders to reason and philosophy, and are willing to have it thought that none who are really possessed of those talents can easily assent to the truth of Christianity: yet we see it falls out, very unfortunately for them and their cause, that those persons, who are confessed to have been the most perfect reasoners of their time, are also known to have been firm believers. Were it necessary to be more particular on this head, we might mention other examples of the greatest and best philosophers of every age, who have always been the most devout men. Far from being puffed up with the pride of human learning, or ashamed of the gospel of Christ, they have made it their glory, and acknowledged it to contain the only infallible rules of their conduct in this life, and the only foundation of their hope in which is to come. It is said of the great Sir Isaac Newton, that though he entered further into the depths of philosophy than ever mortal did before him, yet he accounted the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy; and never mentioned his Creator's name without an awful pause of adoration, wonder and self abasement.

19. It was the daily practice of that eminent physician, Dr. Boerhaave, throughout his whole life, as soon as he arose in the morning (which was generally very early) to retire for an hour to private prayer and mediation on some part of the Scriptures. He often told his friends, when they asked him how it was possible for him to go through so much fatigue, "That it was this which gave him spirit and vigour in the business of the day." This therefore he recom-

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mended as the best rule he could give; "For nothing," he said, "could tend more to the health of the body, than the tranquillity of the mind; and that he knew nothing which could support himself or his fellow-creatures, amidst the various distresses of life, but a well grounded confidence in the Supreme Being, upon the principles of Christianity." This remark of the doctor's is undeniably just. A benevolent manner of acting, and a true greatness of soul, can never flow from any other source than a consciousness of the Divine favour and assistance.

20. The Emperor Charles V. declared, "That he found more satisfaction, more content in his monastic solitude, and exercies of devotion, than all the victories, and all the triumphs of his past life had ever afforded him, though they made him esteemed as the most fortunate of princes."

21. Bishop Burnet, in his Sermon on the funeral of the honourable Mr. Boyle, says of that excellent man, "He had the profoundest veneration for the great God of heaven and earth that I ever observed in any man. The very name of God was never mentioned by him without a pause and visible stop in his discourse." And elsewere he observes, "It appears from those who conversed with him on his inquiries into nature, that his main design in that (on which, as he had his own eye most constantly, so he took care, to put others often in mind of it) was to raise in himself and others, higher ideas of the greatness and glory, of the wisdom and goodness of God. This was so deep in his thoughts, that he concludes the article of his Will, which relates to the Royal Society, in these words: "Wishing them a happy success in their laudable attempts to discover the true nature of the works of God; and praying that

they and all other searchers into physical truths may cordially refer their attainments to the glory of the great Author of nature, and the comfort of mankind."

22. Wicked men act very differently from this right honourable, this Christian philosopher: they bury their souls in their bodies, and all their projects and designs are bounded within the compass of the earth they tread on. Hence it was the opinion of the academic philosophers, that the souls of wicked men after their death, could not for a long season depart from the graves and charnels, where their mates, the bodies, lay buried; but there wandered up and down in a desolate manner, as not being able to leave those bodies, to which they were so much wedded in this transient life.

25. Mr. Locke, in a letter written the year before his death to one who asked him "What is the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to the true knowledge of the Christian religion?" —gives this memorable reply, "Let him study the holy Scriptures; especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author! salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." —A direction, which he copied from his own practice in the latter part of his life, and after his retirement from business: when, for fourteen or fifteen years, he applied himself especially to the study of the inspired writings, and employed the last years of his life hardly in anything else. He was never weary of admiring the great views of that sacred book, and the trust relation of all its parts; every day making discoveries in it, which gave him fresh cause of admiration. Of this his *Reasonableness of Christianity* and *Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles*, are

sufficient evidence. The death of this great man was agreeable to his life. We are assured by one who was with him when he died, and who had lived in the same family for seven years before, "That the day before his death, he particularly exhorted all about him to read the holy Scriptures, and desired to be remembered by them at evening prayers. On being told that if he chose it the whole family should come and pray by him in his chamber, he answered, he should be very glad to have it so, if it would not give too much trouble; and, an occasion offering to speak of the goodness of God, he especially exalted the care which God showed to man, in justifying him by faith in Jesus Christ; and concluded with returning God thanks, in particular, for having blessed him with the knowledge of that divine Saviour." About two months before his death, he drew up a letter to a certain gentleman, and left this direction upon it. "To be delivered to him after my decease:" In which are these remarkable words, "I know you loved me living, and will preserve my memory now I am dead. This life is as scene of vanity that soon passes away, and affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of another life. This is what I can say upon experience, and what you will find to be true, when you come to make up the account. Adieu!" See his *Posthumous Works*, p. 21, and 328, and the preface to my *Commentary* on the Bible.

24. Mr. Addison (as we learn from the late celebrated Dr. Young's *Tract on Original Composition*) after a long and manly, but fruitless struggle with the distemper of which he died, dismissed his physicians, and with them all hopes of life. He dismissed not however his concern for the living; but sent for a youth nearly related to him, and finely

accomplished, yet not above being the better for good impressions from a dying friend. He came; but life now glimmering in the socket, the dying friend was silent. After a decent and proper pause, the youth said, "Dear sir, you sent for me: I believe, and I hope that you have some commands; I shall hold them most sacred." May distant ages not only hear but feel the reply! Forcibly grasping the young gentleman's hand, he softly said, "See in what peace a Christian can die;" He spoke with difficulty, and soon expired. Through divine grace, how great is man, through divine mercy how stingless is death! —who would not thus expire!

25. It was a saying of Aristotle's respecting virtue, which we may well apply to religion, that it is necessary to the young, to the aged comfortable, to the poor wealth, to the rich an ornament, to the fortunate an honour, to the wretched a support; that it ennobles the slave, and exalts nobility itself.

> "Such blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
> And though a late, a sure reward succeeds."

26. Louis the late Duke of Orleans thus expressed the delight he found in piety and devotion: "I know by experience, that sublunary grandeur and sublunary pleasure are deceitful and vain, and are always infinitely below the conceptions we form of them. But on the contrary, such happiness and such complacency may be found in devotion and piety, as the sensual mind has no idea of."

27. Cardinal Wosey, one of the greatest ministers of state that ever was, poured forth his soul in these words, after his fall from the favour of Henry VIII. "Had I but been as diligent to serve my God as I have been to please my king,

he would not have forsaken me now, in my grey hairs."

28. We cannot perhaps close this work more forcibly, than with the following striking circumstance respecting M. de Voltaire; a man, who after having long, and too justly, been considered as the patron of infidelity; and after having shown himself equally the enemy of every religious establishment; has at length, to the astonishment of all serious minds, and at the close of a long life, of near eighty years, in the most solemn manner given the confession of his faith subjoined; and which is confirmed on the oath of several witnesses who were present.—"I believe firmly," says he, "all that the catholic, apostolic, and Roman Church believes and confesses. I believe in one God, in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, really distinguished; having the same nature, the same divinity, and the same power. That the second person was made man, called Jesus Christ; who died for the salvation of all men; who has established the Holy Church, to which it belongs to judge of the true sense of the Holy Scriptures. I condemn likewise all the heresies the said Church has condemned and rejected; likewise all perverted misinterpretations which may be put on them. This true and Catholic faith, out of which none can be saved, I profess and acknowledge to be the only true one; and I swear, promise, and engage myself to die in this belief by the grace of God. I believe and acknowledge also, with a perfect faith, all and every one of the articles of the apostles' Creed." [which he recited in Latin very distinctly] "I declare, moreover, that I have made this confession before the reverend father Capuchin, previous to his confessing me." If a veteran in the cause of Infidelity thus closes his life and his works, does it not greatly

behove those who have been deluded or misled by his writings, seriously to look to themselves; and bring home this striking example to their hearts, lest they fall into the condemnation which their master seeks thus meanly, at the end, to avoid?—See the genuine letters between him and the Archbishop of Anneci, lately published, p. 45, &c

THE END.

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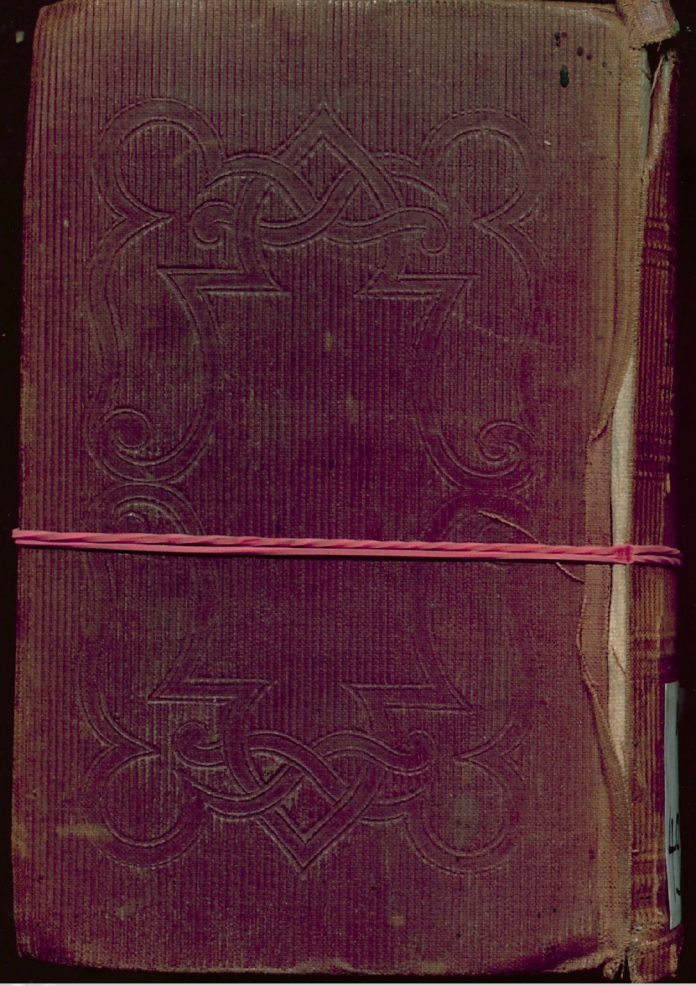

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