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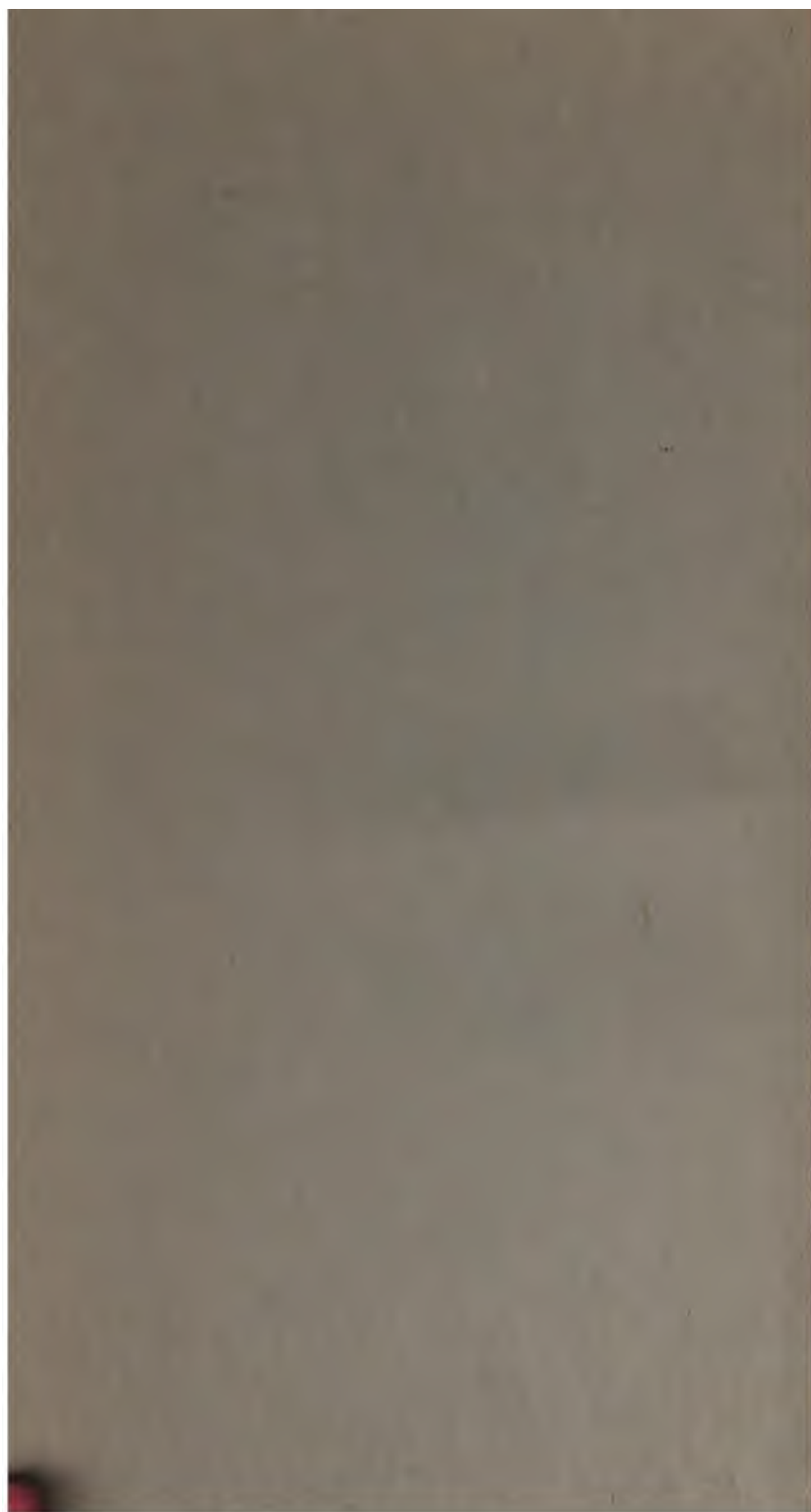
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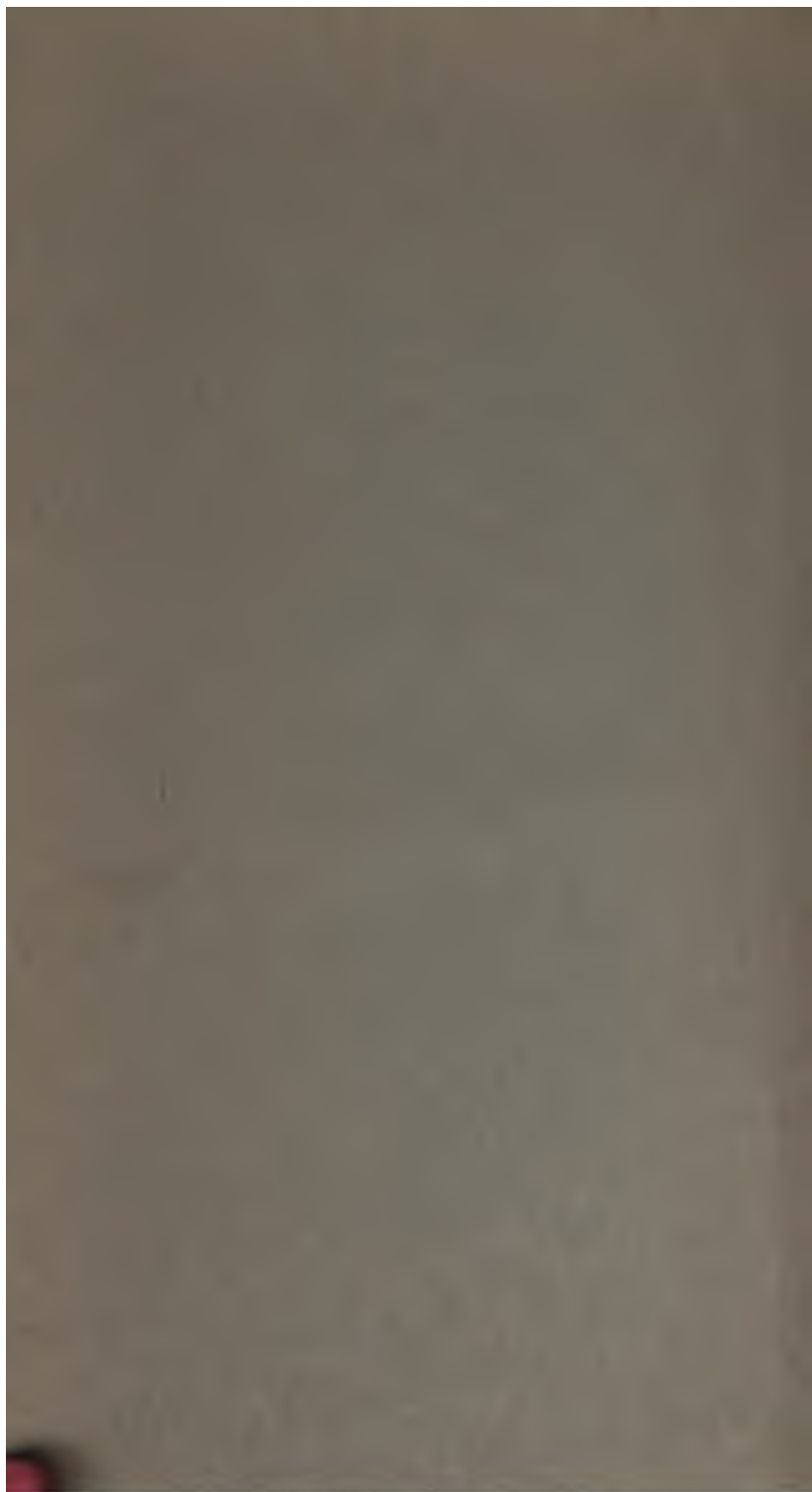


ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS









A
CHINESE FRAGMENT.

CONTAINING

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE PRESENT STATE

OF

R E L I G I O N

IN

E N G L A N D.

WITH NOTES BY THE EDITOR.

.....
*νεμεσήσαιτό κεν άνήρ
Αισχραι πολλ' όρώων, όστις πινύλος γε μέλθει.*

HOMER.

.....
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T O T H E

R E A D E R.

U P O N perusing the following
FRAGMENT, since it came from
the press, the Editor has remarked some
improprieties in the language, of which
the more gross and palpable may justly
be imputed to his own negligence: and
should our *Chinese* be chargeable himself
with the rest (and not some *translator*),
it may be suggested in his behalf, that he
was probably a man who paid more at-
tention to *things* than *words*, and who,
perhaps, had not acquired a very accurate
knowledge of the English tongue. And,
therefore, if his observations should, in the
main, be found *just* and *important*, and ex-
pressed with some degree of perspicuity
and force, the candid reader, it is pre-
sumed, will rest satisfied; without fur-
ther requiring a classical purity of diction,

I

and

and much less the several graces and ornaments of style, from a stranger and a philosopher.

.....

In compiling the notes, the following books have chiefly been consulted, viz.

General History of China, by Du Halde, 4 Vols. 8vo. London, 1736.

Nouveaux Memoires sur l'état present de la Chine, par Le Comte. 2 tomes. A Paris, 1696.

An Account of the Empire of China, by Navarette; and published by Awnsham and Churchill, in the first volume of their Collection of Voyages, &c. London, 1704.

Description du Royaume de Siam, par La Loubere. 2 tomes. A Amsterdam, 1700.

Authentic Memoirs of the Christian Church in China, by Mosheim. London, 1750.

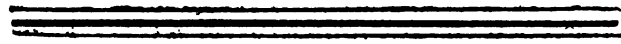
Scientia Sinenfis Latinè exposita, Studio et Operâ Profperi Intorcetta, &c. Parisiis, 1687.

Observations on Man, by Dr. Hartley, 2 Vols. 8vo. London, 1749.

* * * This last writer has been quoted the more frequently, because his reputation happens to stand high with some of our modern philosophers.

The *Divisions* and *Summaries* are also supplied by the Editor.

P. 31, and last line, for *possess* with, read *governed* by.



A

CHINESE FRAGMENT.

CONTAINING AN

E N Q U I R Y

INTO THE PRESENT STATE OF

R E L I G I O N

IN

E N G L A N D.



INTRODUCTION.

***** There are some articles *A short view of Christianity contrasted with the religion of China* in this system which strike me with wonder. I see a God distinct from his works, existing self-sufficient and alone from eternity: I see Creation at the de-

B

creed

creed period springing forth at his command: I see man placed in a paradise of delights, invested with dominion, and adorned with innocence: I see him incurring guilt, banished into a desert world, and followed with a long train of wretchedness: I see his hopes encouraged with promises of deliverance: In the fulness of time, the Deliverer appears, works miracles, teaches virtue, dies, ascends above the heavens, and sheds on his disciples a mysterious power, to instruct, comfort, and guide them in their successive generations, until he return in the character of Judge, to pronounce finally on the whole human race.

Whether the supreme principle TIEN or CHANG-TI be the material heaven itself, or only its animating soul or form; or a Being unoriginated, all-perfect, and the free Producer of all other beings, is a

point in dispute with our philosophers *.
Of man's primitive innocence and felicity,
and

* This was likewise warmly agitated in the last and the beginning of the present century, between the Jesuits [who have been chiefly concerned in the Chinese mission] and their adversaries. Du Halde [a Jesuit] tells us [Vol. I. p. 16, 17.] of the ancient Chinese, That the chief object of their worship was denoted by the name *Chang-ti*, i. e. *Supreme Emperor*; or *Tien*, which, according to the interpreters, means the same thing, though it is also frequently taken for the material heavens: *Tien*, say they, *is the Spirit that presides in heaven, because heaven is the most excellent work produced by the first cause.* "But did they regard (adds our author) this *Tien* as an intelligent Being, Lord and Creator of heaven, earth, and all things? Is it not likely that their vows and homage were addressed to the visible and material heavens, or, at least, to a celestial energy void of understanding, inseparable from the identical matter of which they are composed? But this (he concludes) I shall leave to the judgment of the reader, and content myself with relating what I meet with in the classical books." *Navarette*, and many others, strongly maintained the latter point: And in 1704, Pope Clement XI, issued a Bull, forbidding, "That the two Chinese words, *Tien* and *Chang-ti* should any longer be applied to *God*, but instead of them the term *Tien-chu*, which signifies *Lord of Heaven*, should be introduced." But nei-

and of his lapse, I perceive some faint traces † in our classical volumes ‡; and I would

ther this nor the other Papal prohibitions which followed had much effect, and the matter has slept for many years. See Le Comte, Tom. II. p. 141.—Voltaire's Hist. Gen. Chap. II.—Navarette, p. 21, 22.—Mosheim Eccl. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 224 to 226.—And authentic Memoirs of the Chr. Church in China, p. 27. [By the same.]

† “The whole doctrine of Confucius” [says Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 298.] “tended to restore human nature to its former lustre, and that first beauty it had received from heaven, and which had been sullied by the darkness of ignorance, and the contagion of vice.” And again, [Vol. III. p. 303.] “The whole science of princes and the grandees of a kingdom (according to the same philosopher), consists in cultivating and perfecting the reasonable nature they have received from *Tien*, and in restoring that light and primitive clearness of judgment, which has been weakened or obscured by various passions, that it may be afterwards in a condition of labouring to perfect others.” Or, as the same is expressed by Le Comte, [Tom. I. p. 414.] “La nature humaine (disoit Conf.) nous est venue du ciel tres-pure, tres-parfaite; dans la suite l'ignorance, les passions, les mauvais exemples l'ont corrompue; et pour être parfaite, il faut remonter au point d'on nous sommes descendus.”

These

would gladly understand the frequent saying of Confucius §, *That the HOLY ONE*

These passages seem to point to something more than was distinctly understood by their author. See also *Scientia Sinensis*, Lib. I. p. 1.

‡ Those of the highest rank are called the *five volumes* by way of eminence, and are looked upon by the Chinese as the source of all their learning and morality.

Their main drift seems to have been to secure peace and tranquillity in the state by a regulation of manners, and an exact observation of the laws; for the attainment of which, the ancient Chinese judged two things chiefly necessary to be attended to, viz. the influence of religion, and the plan of a wise government.

There are likewise four other volumes entitled *classical*, three by Confucius, and one by Mencius his disciple, which are a kind of commentary upon the former, and stand next in reputation. See Du Halde, Vol. I. p. 16. and Le Comte, Tom. I. p. 395—401.

§ Confucius was born about the year 551 before the Christian æra, a little before the death of Thales, one of the seven sages of Greece. He was cotemporary with Pythagoras, and Socrates appeared not long afterwards.

In

In his childhood, instead of the levity and playfulness of that age, he was distinguished by a grave, modest, and serious air, which drew the regard of all who knew him, and excited their expectation of his future eminence.

He had scarce reached his fifteenth year, when he applied himself to the study of the ancient books, and furnished his mind with maxims the most proper to regulate the heart, and inspire the people with the love of virtue. He was only once married, and he appears to have had only one son.

When he was more advanced in years, he attempted reformation in the several little subordinate kingdoms, of which the empire consisted, and which seem at that time to have been over-run with all kinds of disorder: he therefore every where inculcated, as well by his own example as by his doctrine, modesty, disinterestedness, sincerity, equity, temperance, and contempt of riches and pleasure.

His extensive knowledge, and the splendor of his virtues, soon made him universally known: he was frequently invited to accept of some of the highest offices in the magistracy, which he refused with a view of being more at leisure to propagate his doctrine and reform mankind.

However, at the age of fifty-five, he accepted a principal charge in the kingdom of *Lou*, his native country: In less than three months, the general face of things was

was changed; the prince, the grandees of the kingdom, and the people, had respect to none but him. This alteration was so sudden and happy, that it created jealousy in the neighbouring princes, who were apprehensive that the king of *Lou* would soon become too powerful if he continued to follow the counsels of so wise a man. They therefore at length succeeded by their stratagems to alienate him from Confucius, who finding him thus grown-deaf to his remonstrances, threw up his employment, left the court, and sought in other kingdoms for minds better prepared to receive his maxims.

He passed through many provinces to no purpose: The austerity of his morals made his politics dreaded, and the ministers of the princes were not willing to countenance an associate who might soon probably overturn their credit and authority. Thus wandering from place to place he came into the kingdom of *Ching*, where he found himself reduced to the greatest necessity, yet without abating in the least of his usual constancy.

In this manner did Confucius, from a minister of state, return to his former character of a private sage, devoting himself entirely to the instruction of the people, and taking frequent and painful journies on this account; nay, we are told, he was sometimes seized with a desire of crossing the ocean in order to spread his doctrine in the most distant climates. His zeal however extended to persons of all ranks in his own country, to the learned and ignorant, to peasants and princes; in short, his lessons were common to all conditions, and were proper for each in particular.

It is therefore no wonder that he gained many disciples. They reckon three thousand more particularly attached to his person and doctrine; and among them were five hundred, who exercised with honour the highest offices in various kingdoms.

But his zeal again met with fresh opposition. After the death of the prince of *Tcheu*, one of his admirers, he became all on a sudden, through the envy of the courtiers, the scorn of the vulgar, and the subject of their songs and satires. But Confucius appeared always equal to himself, and lost nothing of his usual tranquillity amidst this unworthy treatment from a people by whom he had been received just before with general applause. Nay, after his life had been attempted by *Huan-ti*, a great officer in the army, being urged to save himself by flight, he observed that the cause he defended was such as left him no apprehensions on his own account. *If TIEN*, said he, *protect me, of which he has just given a sensible proof, what need I fear the rage of Huan-ti?*

And to crown his character, his modesty was equal to his other virtues. He neither praised himself nor could endure to be praised by others, but rather lamented the shortness of his attainments. If any one admired his doctrine, he was careful to remit all the honour to the ancients.

A few days before his last sickness, he told his disciples, with tears in his eyes, That he was overcome with grief at the sight of the disorders which reigned in the empire: *The mountain, said he, is fallen; the high machine is demolished;*

demolished; and the wife are departed; meaning, that the edifice of perfection which he had endeavoured to raise was almost overthrown. He began from that time to languish, and the seventh day before his death turning himself towards his disciples: The kings, said he, refuse to follow my maxims, and, since I am no longer useful in the world, it is necessary I should leave it.

After these words, he fell into a lethargy, in which he remained seven days, and then expired in the arms of his disciples, in his 73d year. Upon the first news of his death, *Ngai-Cong*, who then reigned in the kingdom of *Lou*, burst into tears, saying, *The TIEN is not satisfied with me, since he has taken away Confucius.*

They built his sepulchre near the city *Kio-fou*, on the banks of the river *Su*, where he was accustomed to assemble his disciples, which has since been inclosed with walls, and, at this day, has the appearance of a small town. He was lamented by all the empire, and his followers went into mourning. These sentiments of veneration have been increasing ever since; a kind of temples are erected to his memory through all the provinces, and are inscribed in large characters, *To the Great Master; To the Chief Doctor; To the Saint; To him who has instructed Princes*: And here the learned meet at certain seasons to do him honour. In a word, he is considered by the Chinese, as the great master and doctor of the empire. See *Du Halde*, Vol. III. p. 293—303. and *Le Comte*, Vol. I. p. 405—419.

* Accord-

*should appear in the West, as an obscure intimation of a Restorer. **

* According to a tradition universally received among the Chinese, he was often heard to repeat these words, *Si fang yeou ching gin*, the meaning of which is, *that in the West the Most Holy was to be found*. And it is recorded that *Ming-ti* the fifteenth emperor of the family of *Han*, was so struck with this declaration, and the image of a man who appeared to him in his sleep, that he sent two of his grandees towards the West, whence the vision seemed to have come, with orders not to return before they had found this Holy Person, whom heaven had given him some knowledge of, and till they had learned the doctrine which he taught.

But the messengers, discouraged with the dangers and fatigues of the journey, stopped in some place by the way, where they found the idol of a man called *Fo* or *Fœ*, who had infected the Indies with his monstrous doctrine about 500 years before the birth of Confucius. They instructed themselves in this superstition, and upon their return to China, spread it throughout the empire.

This happened in the year 65 after Christ, about the time when *St. Thomas* preached the gospel in the Indies, so that had these mandarins duly observed their orders, China might probably have shared in the labours of this apostle. See *Du Halde*, vol. III, p. 300-1. and *Le Comte*, Tom. I. p. 416-17.

Cu-si

Cu-fu [grandson of Confucius] upon mentioning the excellency of true virtue, and the difficulty of attaining it, speaks of this *Holy One* in very remarkable terms: Idcirco (says he) cum ejusmodi virtus sit adeò sublimis & obtentu difficilis, expectandum est quoad veniat ejusmodi *summè Sanctus Vir*; & tum demum sperari poterit, ut adeò excellens virtus illo Duce ac Magistro in actum prodeat, atque ab hominibus opere perficiatur. Upon this passage the annotator modestly observes, Quis ille sit de quo philosophus hîc loquitur, alii (si placet) statuant: ego quidem sicut asseverare non ausim quòd hæc profatus sit impulsu Spiritûs illius, quo moventè Sibillæ quondam de Christo vaticinatæ sunt; ita et negare sic profatum esse haud quaquam sanè velim. Certè constans inter Sinas fama est Confucium identidem dicere solitum, *Si Fam Yeù Xim Gin*: Hoc est, in Occidente est (vel erit) *Sanctus*. Sinis autem Judea occidentalis est. Scient. Sinenfis Lib. II. p. 78.

As this subject is a little curious I cannot help citing the following passage from Huetius [Dem. Evang. Prop. 7. § 32]: Non inter Judæos solum, sed Ethnicos etiam—magni alicujus Regis, sanctitate & potentiâ conspicui, resque humanas in meliorem statum reposituri, obscura quædam spes concitata sit. Profectò evolventi mihi excerpta quædam è libro secundo magni illius Sinenfium philosophorum principis Confutii—summa incessit admiratio, cum hæc legerem verba Confutii, Regem ad virtutem adhortantis: *Legibus cæli ac terræ facta ejus consentiunt, neque vereri debet, ut cum Sanctus ille expectatus advenerit, idem tum virtuti ejus, ac dum regnaret, honas habeatur.*

Whence

But still it must be confessed, that the Wonderful and Mysterious have been often employed to abuse the credulity of mankind, and he who considers this, can hardly be forward to regard them purely on their own account. Hence the extravagant exploits of *Fœe*, † and the magical impostures

Whence Huetius concludes, Ergo jam ad Sinas Veteris Testamenti oracula pervaserant.

The reader may do well to compare a very remarkable passage in Plato's second Alcibiades, at the close; he will also find it quoted by Dr. Clarke in his Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Rel. Prop. 7. §. 2.

† Some have questioned whether he was a man or a demon: We are told that he was born in a part of the Indies probably near Bengal, that his father was king of the country, and that his mother, who died soon after his birth, dreamt upon conceiving him, that she had swallowed a white elephant, and that this is the reason of the honour paid by the Indian kings to these animals, to procure which they often go to war.

As soon (it is said) as this monster was brought into the world, he sprang upon his feet and walked seven paces, pointing with one hand to the heavens and with
the

impostures of the *Tao-see* † never made upon my mind any serious impressions.

the other to the earth, pronouncing distinctly the following words, *There is none but myself in heaven or on earth that ought to be adored.*

At the age of seventeen he married three wives, whom at nineteen he forsook together with all worldly cares, and withdrew into a solitary place where he put himself under the guidance of four philosophers called by the Indians *Joghi*; at thirty he fancied himself wholly inspired by the divinity, and commenced *Fo* or *Pagod*; he then applied himself with much zeal to propagate his doctrine, *the devil* [says my author] *always helping him out at a dead lift*, so that by his assistance he performed many wonderful things which served to strike the people with dread, and procure great veneration to himself. The Chinese have described these prodigies in several large volumes, and represented them in cuts, See Du Halde, vol. III. p. 35-6 & Le Comte, tom. II. p. 153-5.

† *Lao-Kiun*, who was born a few years before Confucius, was the founder of this sect. His books remain to this time, and though probably much corrupted by his followers, still contain many excellent maxims upon virtue, the avoiding of honour, the contempt of riches, and the happiness of such, who abstracting their attention from the world, retire into themselves.

He

He is said to have been particularly addicted to chymistry, and the pursuit of the philosophers' stone, and he was pretended to the discovery of a liquor that would render immortality.

His great object however, like that of Epicurus, seems to have been inward tranquillity; and hence his followers, in praising his doctrine, affected a *quietism*, which superseded, as they said, all the functions of the soul; and if this happened to be disturbed by the fears of death, they had recourse to the liquor of immortality.

By degrees they went into all the follies of magic and sorcery. They pretended (for instance) to exhibit their spirits and their idols in the air; to make a pen-
cil write of itself answers to proposed questions; and to show in a vessel of water the fortunes of individuals, or the future condition of the empire; with a thousand sorts of the same nature.

They had a great number of temples before the Christian era. And under the dynasty of *Tang* their priests were dignified with the title of *Tien-see*, i. e. *heavenly deities*; who still, says Le Comte, continue in such credit, that there are few among the Chinese who will not listen to their pretensions.

Lao-kiun is said frequently to have repeated this saying, *Tao* [or Reason] *both produced one, one both produced two, two have produced three, and three have produced all things.* See Du Halde, vol. III. p. 31-34 and Le Comte, vol. II. p. 149-51.

Nor

Nor would the prophetic and miraculous claims of JESUS have so strongly attracted my notice without the consideration of his morals and theology. 'Tis here I am seized with admiration. 'Tis his doctrine of benevolence, of humility, of self-denial, of internal sanctity; and above all, his vindication of the unity and perfection of the SUPREME BEING, and his universal government, that fixes my attention and commands my reverence.

These appear to have been the doctrines chiefly asserted by *Confucius* and our ancient sages. I acknowledge they are come down to us involved in much obscurity, especially so far as they relate to the nature and attributes of the SUPREME BEING: But his universal government is maintained in the most evident manner.†

Life

† In one of the ancient books *Tien* is described as the principle of all things, absolutely independent, almighty,

Life and death, adverse and prosperous events, the fates of individuals and communities are referred to TIEN: And we are directed to a dependance on his power and wisdom, and a submission to his will, in all our concerns. It may be conjectured, that in the early ages of the empire, TIEN had his minister in the chief of every family*; and that it was not 'till after

ty, omniscient, presiding with unalterable rectitude at the head of the universe. And in particular he is represented as exercising the strictest government over mankind, as inspecting the hearts and conduct of individuals, rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked, and as elevating or casting down kings according to their character and administration; and in short, conducting all the affairs of this world to wise and just ends, without any impeachment of human liberty.

This persuasion was so common, that princes, naturally jealous of their own honour, never attributed the success of their government to themselves, but referred it to the LORD OF ALL. See Du Halde, vol.III. p.17 and 20.

* It is probable the *true God* was worshipped in this manner for some time after the flood in all parts of the world.

after a course of gradual degeneracy that the priestly office became appropriated to the person of the emperor§: And then no wonder if we find the primitive religion soon either extinct or reduced to a barren speculation. In this island I observe a numerous order of men consecrated to the LORD OF HEAVEN, to present to him the public supplications and praises, and to declare his law to the people. But we have no ministers of truth†. The *Hochang*‡ and *Tao-see* meet with no opposition; their temples are crowded, their persons venerated, and their followers deluded and impoverished. **

§ This is said to have happened under the fifth Emperor *Tchuen-bio*, who made a law that none but himself or his successors should offer sacrifices to the *Lord of heaven*. See Du Halde, vol. I. p. 279.

† See Note §. p. 21.

‡ These are the priests of *Föe*, by the Europeans called *bonzes*.

** How the simple people are abused by these impostors

tors, is strikingly seen in two instances related by Le Comte from his own knowledge, which, for their curiosity, I shall here give the reader: I was called, says he, one day to baptize a sick person, an old man of seventy, who liv'd upon a small pension allowed him by the emperor. When I entered his room, he said, I am obliged to you, my father, that you are going to deliver me from a heavy punishment: That is not all, replied I, baptism not only delivers persons from hell, but initiates them into a state of blessedness. I do not comprehend, answered the sick man, what it is you say, and perhaps I have not sufficiently explained myself; I must inform you, that for some time I have subsisted on the emperor's bounty, and the *bonzes*, who are particularly acquainted with what passes in the next world, have assured me, that out of gratitude I shall be obliged to serve him after death, and that my soul will infallibly pass into a post horse to carry dispatches out of the provinces to Court; accordingly they exhort me to perform my duty well in this new capacity, not to stumble, nor wince, nor bite, nor hurt any body, and at the same time to eat little and be patient, in order by these means to excite the compassion of the *deities*, who often convert a good beast into a man of quality, and make him a considerable mandarin: I own, father, said he, that the thought of this makes me shudder, I dream of it every night, and sometimes fancy myself harnessed and ready to start at the first stroke of the whip; I then awake in a violent sweat, and am hardly able to determine whether I am a man or a horse; but alas! what will be the case when I am a horse in reality? This then, my father, is the resolution I am come to: I am told that those of your religion

glion are not subject to these miseries, that they continue to be men in the next world, as they are in this; I therefore beseech you to admit me among you; for though I am told your religion is severe, I am resolved, notwithstanding, to embrace it, since at any rate I had rather be a Christian than become a beast. I could not help pitying, says Le Comte, this discourse of the sick man, but reflecting that God makes use even of simplicity and ignorance to lead men to the truth, I took occasion to undeceive him of his errors, and to direct him in the way of salvation; I gave him instructions a long time, and at length (says he) he believed, and I had the consolation to see him die, not only with the most rational sentiments, but with all the marks of a good Christian. Le Comte tom. II. p. 165-7.

The second instance is no less singular in its way. I met one day (says my author), in a certain village, with a young *bonze* of an engaging appearance, and very likely to speed in collecting alms; he stood upright in a close chair pointed thick in the inside with sharp nails, so that he could not stir without wounding himself; two men hired for the purpose carried him with much gravity into the houses, where he besought the people to have compassion on him.

I am, said he, shut up in this chair for the good of your souls, and am resolved never to go out 'till all the nails are purchased, [they were above 2000] they are but *sixpence* each, and not one of them but will draw down extraordinary blessings upon your houses; for I

am

Lamentable prospect to a philosopher !
 To behold the empire overspread with
 profane

am not now soliciting for the bonzes, who may expect your charity on other occasions, but for the god *Fœe* himself, to whose honour we are about to build a temple.

I then passed near him, (proceeds my author,)—and as soon as the bonze saw me, he made me the same compliment as to the rest : I told him he was very unhappy to give himself such useless torment, and advised him to leave his prison, and go to the temple of the true God to be instructed in divine truth, and to submit to a penance less severe and more salutary.

He replied, without the least emotion, that he was obliged to me for my counsel, but his obligation would be greater, if I would buy a dozen of his nails, which would certainly procure me a fortunate journey.

Here, said he, turning himself on one side, take those, which upon the faith of a bonze are the best in my chair, because they give me the least pain, however they are all of the same price.

He pronounced these words (adds *Le Comte*) with an air and action, which might have provoked my risibility, had not the consideration of his wretched blindness rather excited my compassion. P. 171-3.

I should almost think (with our author's leave) that this young bonze was more a knave than a superstitious fanatic.

profane structures erected to subordinate spirits, or to the dead, and scarce a temple in honour of TIEN§! To see multitudes of enthusiasts and impostors with unwearied diligence diffusing their pernicious doctrines, while the wise maintain an impious silence! O ye disciples of Confucius! Where is the zeal of your Master? Why does it not animate you nobly to go forth, and whether in tem-

§ There is one at least in which the emperor himself offers sacrifices as the minister of *Tien*. *Hoang-ti* who is reckoned the third in succession from *Fo-bi*, is said to have first erected a temple for this service.

Hence, though innumerable temples are dedicated to geniusses or spirits which are imagined to preside over every part of nature, as also to Confucius, and their ancestors in general, the true *God*, if indeed he is meant under the names *Chang-ti* or *Tien*, has neither temples, priests nor any public worship, besides the above-mentioned. See Du Halde, vol. III. p. 22. Navarette. p. 213. Hist. des Religions, par Jovet, tom V. p. 462-4, & Description de Siam, par La Loubere, tom. I. p. 396-400.

ples or upon ~~the~~ to publish the law of truth!

Thus benevolent ~~the~~ Christian Legislator: Ured, the ~~the~~ in the face of danger ~~the~~ he elevated his voice to the ~~the~~ *Ear of man, the Lord, and to the ear of the Lord of your power.* Is there any thing of equal force and authority ~~the~~? Again he proclaims, *Thy law is my law as thy-
lo!* A remembrance which ~~the~~ all that is excellent in our world. These are doctrines which flow from the springs of nature. You ought not ~~the~~ to love their common parent ~~the~~ and are ~~the~~? And is not our political system founded upon this principle? ~~the~~ we have not only

|| The Chinese government ~~the~~ is found-
ed upon the mutual relation of parent and children.
The

duly extended it to the universal empire of TIEN. Had JESUS then a larger view than *Confucius*?

But what is the best system without means to enforce it? Is the authority of Confucius equal to this effect? Or what is more: Is the beauty of virtue sufficient to secure its practice? A few sublime spirits indeed may pretend this, but the fact is unquestionably otherwise with the bulk of mankind. And hence the superstition

The prince is considered as the father of the empire; and every subordinate governor, of the particular province or city, over which he presides: And hence arises the great veneration and ready obedience rendered to all the imperial officers.

Why hath TIEN, say the Chinese, placed the emperor on the throne? Is it not to be our parent? and therefore he ought not to inspire his children with terror, but to attract their love by his virtue and goodness. Their books are full of this sentiment. See Du Halde, vol. II. p. 17 and 32 —and Le Comte, tom. II. p. 22-3.

of *Fœt* by insisting on future rewards and punishments, has a great advantage over

† To what we have said of this impostor, it may be proper to add a word or two concerning the doctrine of his followers, which to suit both the vulgar and the more refined, is divided into the exterior and interior; a distinction well known to have been frequent in ancient Greece and Egypt.

According to the former it is held, that virtue and vice are essentially different in their nature; that there will be a future state of rewards and punishments; that the God *Fœt* was born to save mankind, by expiating their sins, and instructing them in their duty; that there are five precepts particularly to be observed, the first is, not to kill any animal; the second, not to steal; the third, not to be guilty of impurity; the fourth, not to lye; and the fifth, to abstain from wine.

But especially it is enjoined to shew kindness to the bonzes, and to build them monasteries and temples; and to take good heed at the funeral ceremonies of their relations, to burn such a number of silk garments as may accommodate them in the next world, and so much gilt paper [or paper-money] as will serve to bribe the eighteen guardians of the infernal regions: And all who neglect these precepts and injunctions, are told they have nothing to expect after death, but to transmigrate into

over the wisdom of Confucius. † Nor is the Christian system left to its native extent into vile animals, such as mules, dogs, rats, or others yet more contemptible.

The interior doctrine is a kind of atheism founded on the declaration of *Fœe* just before his death. He then told his disciples, that being about to leave them, he would reveal the mystery of his doctrine, which till that time, he had concealed in parables and metaphorical expressions: *Learn then, said he, that the principle of all things is emptiness and nothing; from nothing all things proceeded, and into nothing all will return, and this is the end of all our hopes.* But this is a secret seldom communicated to the bonzes themselves, and only to the great geniuses of their order. See Du Halde, vol. III. p. 36-9 and 50—Navarette, p. 87.

† It is true, says Du Halde, that though the canonical books often exhort men to fear *Tien*, and place the souls of the virtuous near *Chang-ti*, yet it does not appear that they have spoken clearly of future punishments. However, says he, it cannot be doubted but the *Confucians* believe the separate existence of the soul after death; and to show that this was the opinion of Confucius himself, we are told of his affirming to his familiar disciples, that for several years he had seen in a dream the celebrated *Tcheo-kong*, son of *Yen-vang*, to whom the empire was indebted for so many excellent instructions; and it is said that

that the learned *Tchu-ki*, who flourished under the dynasty of *Song*, being asked whether Confucius spoke of a dream or a true apparition, answered without difficulty, that he meant a true apparition; though *Tcheo-kong* at that time had been dead six hundred years.

But Navarette is of the contrary opinion, and in support of it offers a great variety of arguments and testimonies. Among the latter he tells us, That Doctor *Li Sung Jo*, who was a disciple of Confucius, and president of the court of Exchequer, advanced several times, in conversation with him and his companions, *That after death there was neither reward nor punishment, but that men returned to the vacuum from whence they came.* And being told that there is an eternal, living, and omnipotent God, who rewards every man according to his deeds, in a future state of happiness or misery, he positively denied there was any *such* God, heaven or hell; declaring that these were things never heard of in his sect. And another learned Chinese, in a conversation with Navarette in particular, assigned the omission of a future retribution by the followers of Confucius, as the principal cause why the multitude were so little induced to the practice of virtue.

“ Il est vrai [says Voltaire] que leur religion [viz. the *Confucian*] n'admet point de peines & de recompenses éternelles.”

The reader, if he think it necessary, will pursue the enquiry, and judge for himself. See Du Halde, vol. III. p. 28.—Navarette, p. 218—24. and Voltaire, *Hist. Gen.* ch. II.

cellence;

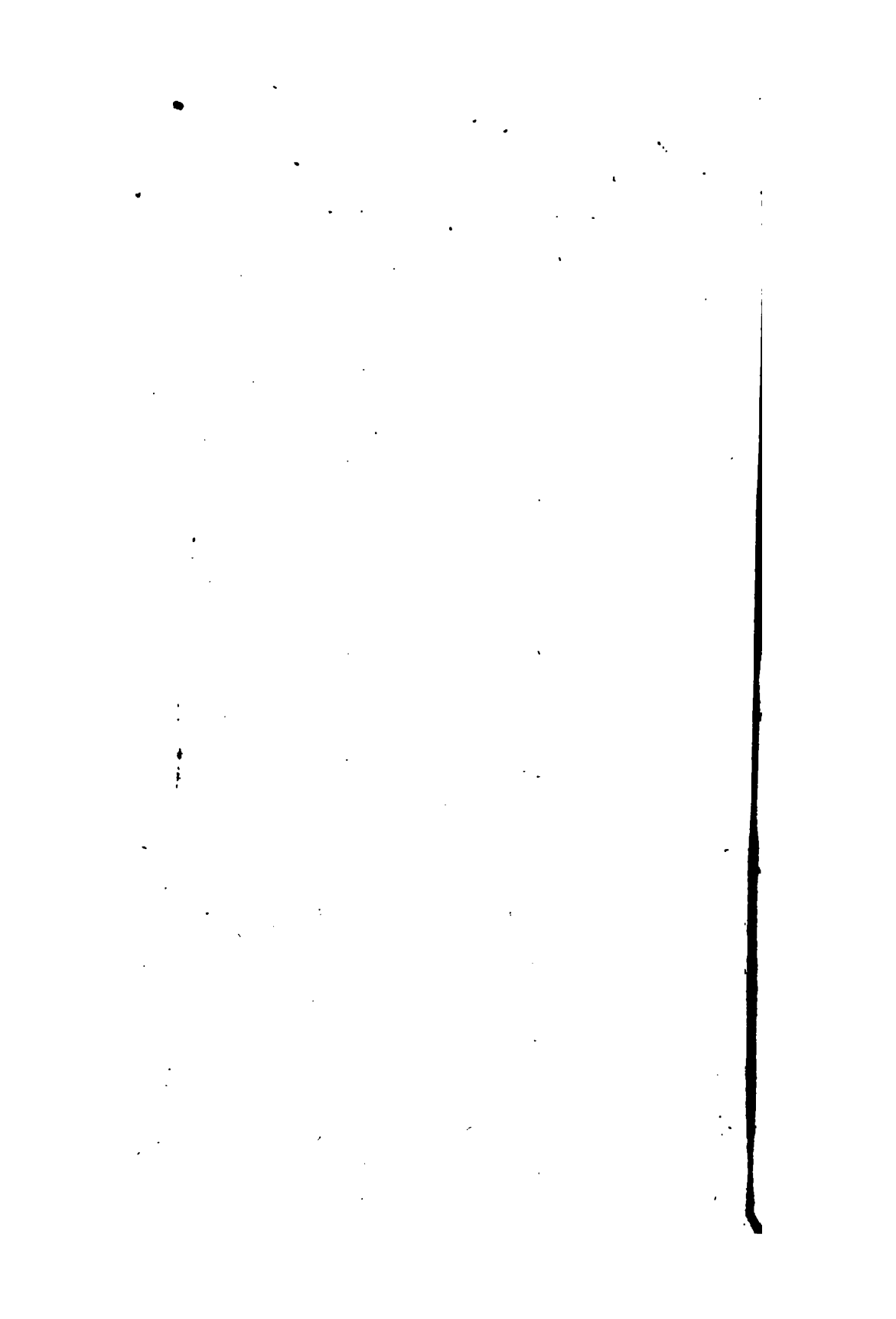
cellence; it comes likewise armed with the hopes and terrors of a future state.

But the circumstance by which it stands chiefly distinguished from all the religions that have come within my observation, is, that *a certain power* is engaged to accompany it to the end of time. A power not merely productive of external wonders, which are said to have ceased shortly after its first promulgation; but a power operating on the minds of men, and giving interior efficacy to its doctrines. Is this an idea that would ever have been conceived by an ordinary understanding? Methinks it carries a sublimity which affords a presumption of its divine extraction. And does not the condition of man call for such an influence? How difficult for the happiest genius, furnished with all imaginable advantages, to arrive at truth, especially in religion!

How then shall the mass of mankind, with uncultivated faculties, and occupied with providing the means of subsistence, be able to compass this grand object! And after truth IS perceived, how often does it fail of its proper effect! Surely these are considerations which might induce a wise man to enquire with all possible diligence and impartiality into a system, which comes with such offers of assistance to his reason and moral powers, as may enable him both to know and to discharge his duty.

But instead of examining this system at present in a way of general argument, I shall proceed to view it in a particular example. I have before me a great people, still high in the rank of nations, blessed with a civil polity that may rival our own, distinguished for science and every art that can embellish life, of refined manners,

manners, and of a spirit peculiarly brave and generous. The religion of JESUS (as their records manifest) has been established among them for more than a thousand years, and is become an essential part of their civil constitution. I would therefore, on this occasion, enquire into the state of this religion, as at present subsisting among a people of such political consequence, and so highly cultivated, and after their profession of it for so many ages.



SECTION
I.

AN

E N Q U I R Y

INTO THE PRESENT STATE OF

R E L I G I O N, &c.

S E C T I O N I.

THE character of a people is much The general
strain of conver-
sation in this
country. seen in the tenor of their ordinary discourse. An individual indeed may so ingeniously act his part as to appear in this respect, as in most others, very different from what he is; but this can hardly be supposed of a great nation. Are they possessed with a military genius?

SECTION I. genius? It will in some degree inspire every topic. And on the other hand, if a literate spirit predominate, as in our Empire, it will discover itself after the same manner. And we may equally infer that in proportion as religion prevails it will tinge the public conversation. And I must own this is the first instance I have met with of a people where this infusion was not sensibly perceived.

I have observed that when Religion happens to be introduced in their social interviews, it mostly casts a gloom over the assembly. Perhaps an interval of silence succeeds. By degrees, as their resentments abate, and their former vivacity returns, insinuations are thrown out that the subject is unpleasant, and not at all calculated for good company; or (which is the same thing) for persons
of

of taste, sense and breeding. If the hint is taken, all is well; otherwise, many sprightly remarks are made on the side of liberality, free enquiry, and universal charity, and against those odious things called bigotry, superstition, and a narrow spirit. And when thus in train, you will hear them often declare, *That any religion is good if joined with sincerity.*

SECTION
I.

And so it seems I have travelled half the globe upon a false presumption. I had conceived that religious truth was of infinite moment, and now at length I am informed, *That error will do as well if sincerely embraced.* A position which probably we shall meet with again in the course of our enquiry.

In consequence of their large principles it is difficult to discover the peculiarities of their religion. Either they

D are

SECTION

I.



are little known or their mention is studiously avoided. If you continue to urge them, they will probably refer you to a certain sermon upon a mountain,* which I confess to have read with admiration. But if you press them more particularly respecting the state of man, his wants and his resources; they are content to tell you, that man is an infirm creature, placed in circumstances of trial, but that his feeble and honest efforts will be crowned with success. But what have we here peculiar to any system? This is the common and uncertain language of nature in all countries, and which I had heard long before at the extremity of the East.

It would then appear, that all we can fairly collect from their general discourse is this, That possibly in some re-

* Probably the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of St. Matthew's gospel.

mote age Christianity has been sincerely embraced by their ancestors, but that now little of it is retained, bating a few fragments of its phraseology; and methinks even these are likely to vanish in a short time. For I have observed that polite persons are cautious how they admit a word or idiom borrowed from their sacred Authors; since, unless it be done with exquisite taste, as when some *uncouth antique* is skilfully contrasted with modern elegance, it favours of a low understanding and illiberal manners. And a foreigner who should mistakenly form his language upon the volume eminently stiled the *Bible*,§ as containing their *holy scriptures*, would probably be treated very unlike a gentleman. I know not but he might sometimes run very serious hazards by

SECTION
I.
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§ Or *the Book*, for so the Greek word signifies.



SECTION  
I.

exciting resentments where he meant the sincerest compliments. Should he imagine for instance, that the title of *saint* is still considered as an honourable distinction, and upon this idea should happen to utter your *sainthood*, for your *lordship*; the consequence might turn out very unpleasant. And how surpris'd must he be to find that the word *saint* is now English for a FANATIC or a SCOUNDREL. Such a difference in language seems to argue a strange revolution in their religious sentiments!

SECTION  
II.

## SECTION II.

**B**UT it may be said, that the reli-<sup>Public</sup>gion of a nation is not to be ef-<sup>worship.</sup>timated from their table-talk, or their chat in the market, but rather from their public solemn worship: Let us allow the objection for a moment, and turn our eyes to these assemblies. And what do we there observe? A people handsomely appalled 'tis true, but with so little appearance of devotion, that it might be imagined they had met together out of pure formality. Indeed were we only to regard the *language* of their confessions and prayers, which they unitedly offer up to the Deity, we should take the matter to be much  
D 3                      otherwise.

SECTION  
II.

otherwife. They bewail as with one voice their extreme wickedness\*; the blindness and hardness of their hearts;† their own utter helplessness;‡ and most earnestly implore divine forgiveness||

\* *We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep—and there is no health in us.* General Confession in the Common Prayer Book.

† *From all blindness of heart; and afterwards, from hardness of heart, Good Lord deliver us.* In the Litany.

‡ *Because—we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace.* See the Collect the 1st Sunday after Trinity.

ALMIGHTY GOD, *who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.* Collect 2d Sunday in Lent.

O Almighty GOD, *who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men.* Col. 4th Sunday after Easter.

|| O LORD *have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.* General Confession. O GOD *have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.* See the Litany.

and

and assistance; \* And to crown their humility, they presume not to solicit the least favour in their own name, or in any reliance on their own merits, but in the name and merits of JESUS : † For what (say they) can miserable sinners expect on their own account but the severity of divine vengeance? § This, and more than this, they declare in the sight of heaven, of their own

SECTION  
II.

\* O GOD—*mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts.* Col. 19th Sunday after Trinity.

O LORD, *from whom all good things do come, grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guidance may perform the same.* Col. 5th Sunday after Easter.

† For CHRIST'S' sake. Passim.

§ *Enter not into judgment with thy servant O LORD, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* Intro. to the Com. Prayer.

*From thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation—*  
O God LORD deliver us. Litany.

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accord,

SECTION  
II.

accord, without any political compulsion, which seems to put their sincerity out of question.

But to a philosopher, I apprehend, all this will be of small consideration. It is easy for men in words to degrade their own understanding and virtue, and they may possibly take a pride in so doing; but the true test is in their general conduct. What signify the most solemn declarations *that they are humbled under a sense of their ignorance, and are earnestly desirous of knowledge*, if they disdainfully neglect the means of information? And how is a careless attendance once in seven days at a place called a Church, sufficient to obviate a charge of this nature? At least, how will it evince the truth of such protestations? I had always understood that Wisdom was of difficult attainment, and that  
her

her sincere and humble followers were used to court her with diligence and respect: I had imagined that the books of Creation and Providence, with the commentaries of wise men, frequently engaged their studies: But with what ardour should I have conceived them to have applied to a volume in which God had revealed his law to mankind! Now I discover but faint traces of these characters in the British nation. And again, what signify their doleful complaints of their *evil hearts and ways*, and their want of moral powers to produce a thorough reform, since I find them employing the same sophisms and pleas which are usual with the most unenlightened of mankind, in behalf of their delinquencies? If the offence be not of a flagrant nature, they will endeavour to make out that *wrong* is *right* or near upon it, and thus try to

SECTION II.

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## SECTION

## II.



confound the colours of vice and virtue. If the case will not admit of this, their next expedient is penitentially to confess it was a *lapse* indeed, but imputable to mistake, to surprise, to any thing but *an ill intention*; for *Thank God* (will they often say,) *my heart is upright notwithstanding all my miscarriages*. And if this prove still unsatisfactory, they will probably conclude in asking pardon of heaven, and offering vows of reformation. Methinks even Pagans (as they style us) must discern such glaring inconsistency, and its hypocrisies must shock their moral sense.

SECTION  
III.

## SECTION III.

IT must be owned however there are <sup>Profanations</sup> prodigious numbers who have some <sup>of the Sab-</sup> claim to the praise of consistency and frankness of character; and this they acquire by being pretty uniformly profane. They withdraw themselves almost entirely from public worship, and so avoid a repetition of *forms* which but ill suit with their temper or private sentiments. They think themselves tolerably virtuous and wise and scorn to declare the contrary. Or being persons of pleasure and spirit, they cannot endure to loiter away a tedious hour in *saying their prayers*, and perhaps a quarter more under a drowsy lecture.

Other



SECTION  
III.

Other engagements must therefore be fought out, in order to pass these vacancies of life more agreeably to their taste.

The day consecrated to religion, called *Sunday* or the *Sabbath*, is the dreary portion of their time. There is a *boding* of it all the day preceding. In the morning you may observe a provident gentleman or merchant posting into the country; as the day advances their numbers thicken; and in the evening chariots and horse pour from the metropolis on all sides, to convey its pious citizens to their *villas*, where they may saunter and indulge their genius without any check from the appearance or sound of devotion.

I find that this western world, extremely unlike the countries of the East, is subject to frequent revolutions  
of

of opinions and customs. It appears, that within a century past, an absence from all public Worship on the Sabbath, without some very urgent plea in excuse, would have been looked upon as deserving censure; and the offence would have been thought highly aggravated by either spending the time at home in amusements, or abroad in ceremonious visits; and still more in proceeding on journies without evident necessity.† And yet *now* this *consecrated day* is particularly marked out for studied dissipation and *polite travelling*. I observe that the people of fashion are a species of *birds of passage*. The times of emigration are accordingly the approaches of Winter and Summer; the places their city and country mansions;

SECTION  
III.

† See the *sense* of former Parliaments upon this subject in Burn's Ecclesiastical Law, under the titles *Lord's Day* and *Public Worship*.

and

SECTION  
III.

and the auspicious day on which usually they take wing is by a particular law of their religion, appointed for sacred rest. And not only on these occasions, but also in their ordinary journies, the Sabbath has no privilege. Whether it is, that in the abundance of their occupations, they are straitened for time, or because they would distinguish themselves from the vulgar, or that they choose thus openly to affront the religion of their country; I leave for others to determine.

And thus during the course of a hundred years, the Christian Sabbath has been degenerating into a day of fauntering and riot; the churches have been gradually deserted, and at length are become a kind of holy *dormitories*. †

† “I am aware,” says a late stage buffoon, “that some arch wag will object, that we have of our own growth

S E C T.

SECTION  
IV.

## SECTION IV.

**B**UT it may be said, Religion is not <sup>Family Wor-  
ship.</sup> an ostentatious thing, that it does not affect to appear in public places, or even in the *house of God*; and I readily grant that a vain parade of itself is very remote from its true genius. Let us look for it therefore in the houses and retirements of individuals.

growth an ample provision of *rockers*, and refer us for proof to our several churches and chapels, during the hours of eleven and two of a Sunday, where the sleep-compelling power will be experimentally demonstrated to exist in its full force." See a play called *the Orators*.

Men of this character seldom take such liberties, as it would not answer their purpose, unless there be some foundation in the fact; or at least without having *appearances* on their side.

It

SECTION  
IV.

It is probable that in early antiquity every family was *a church* or religious community, whose domestic chief was at the same time its *sacred minister*, and the true God the only object of worship ||. And never methinks will pure Religion revive and flourish in the world until this primitive order is restored, and every man is again *priest* as well as *king* in his own house. Let us then examine how far this is the case in Britain.

|| This I think is the common opinion of the learned both among Jews and Christians. "At first (says Shuckford) there was a general agreement about religion in the world; and if we look into the particulars of the heathen religion, even after they were much corrupted, we may evidently find several practices as well as principles, sufficient to induce us to think, that all the ancient religions in the world were originally the same." And in the next page: "We find (says he) that among the heathens for many ages, the original appointment of the head of every family to be the priest and sacrificer to his family was inviolably maintained." See his *Connection*, Vol. I. p. 313, 14; and *Du Halde*, Vol. III, p. 15, 16.

In

In the last century this domestic system appears generally to have prevailed, with this difference, that the nobility and those of large fortune retained ministers of religion, styled *chaplains*, to officiate in their stead, while others discharged the duty in their own persons. †† But now scarce any, whether *noble* or *plebeian*, can be found, who either personally, or by deputy, minister to their households in things sacred \*. You might

SECTION  
IV.



†† “Till the breaking out of the civil war in the year 1641—family devotion was kept up all over the nation, and the Deity worshipped by prayer every morning and evening; the master of the family (where there was no minister), always officiating therein.” Life of Prideaux, p. 61, 62.

\* “It is now (says a writer yet living) about a century ago we were mad with pretences to piety; for piety it ought not to be called. After this religious frenzy or mad hypocrisy had had its play, we returned back to the primitive plan of true reformation: But overshooting the mark, we went into the other extreme, and religion was quite put out of

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SECTION  
IV.

might long dwell with them under the same roof, and not only be at a loss to determine the *nature* of their religion, but whether they had any *at all*\*\*. For if you set aside a *minute formula*, called *saying grace*, before their principal repast, (which however in the politeness of the age

countenance. Tired of such kind of usurpation, Religion took her seat again, and the reign of more regular equal piety succeeded, *when people thought it a duty to worship GOD in their own houses*, as well as at church; and to be assured that their prayers should be offered up to him with uninterrupted assiduity, every great family had a chaplain, and every little one a stated time for prayer. *This custom is still observed in some large families in a few counties in this kingdom; but the number upon the whole, I fear, is small: I am not happy enough to hear of more than FIVE about London, and one of them is an archbishop's.* Hanway's Reflections, Essays, &c. London, 1761.

\*\* "I believe it may be laid down as a certain fact, that no master or mistress of a family can have a true concern for religion, or be a child of God, who does not take care to worship God by family prayer. Let the observation of the fact determine." Hartley's Observations on Man, Vol. II. p. 36.

§ "As

age is much fallen into disuse, and when observed is strangely muttered over §); there is hardly a trace left of family devotion. In the morning they rise, and in the evening retire, at least in their social

SECTION  
IV.

§ “As to the practice of *fanatics*, (says a writer just quoted) praying over their meat till it was cold; this being enthusiastic, if not hypocritical, we are fallen into the contrary extreme, and refining upon the too great formality of former ages, are become a *graceless* generation. *Grace*, as it is vulgarly called, is either not said *at all*, or *only said*. You must have often observed that the common words, *For what we are going to receive the Lord make us thankful*, are hurried over as a matter of *form*, seldom heard by *half* the company, and never regarded by a *quarter* of it. Even your middling sort of people, whose fortunes give them no title to be fashionably religious, are fashionable enough in this respect. Is not this absurd? Is it not *trifling* with the *Almighty*? We see in this instance a *coldness* and *indifference* to religious concerns, which is almost become the characteristic of the nation. It is indeed the contrary extreme to *superstition*; yet it is an evil of so *dangerous* a nature, that we ought to *shudder* at the thought of it.” Hanway’s Journal of Eight Day’s Journey, Vol. I. p. 271.



SECTION  
IV.

social capacity, *as if there were no God in the world.* And though even a venerable clergyman should be present, his official service would generally not be requested; and to offer it himself would be deemed, (according to all the established laws of politeness and good sense) an outrage on *decorum*, and a piece of fanatic effrontery ††.

†† Dr. Prideaux insisted, that prayer was so much the duty of the clergy, that every one of the order should not only be diligent in offering it up unto *God* every morning and evening with his own family; but that in whatever other family he should at any time happen to lodge, he ought to tender his services in the same capacity (if they should not be otherwise provided), and exhort the family to join with him; and should they refuse to hearken to him therein, said the Doctor, *let him look on that house as unfit for a clergyman to resort to, and avoid it accordingly.* See his life, p. 71.

How many houses would lie under a clerical interdiction according to this rule!

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SECTION  
V.

## SECTION V.

**B**UT still it may be said, that al- Private De-  
votion.  
though they seldom resort to *pub-  
lic worship*, and scarce discover any signs  
of religion in their houses, we cannot  
hence infer the charge of impiety; since  
they may possibly practise their devo-  
tions in privacy. But allowing this,  
still the charge remains in a high de-  
gree; for we are not released from one  
duty by performing another. But upon  
what ground can we urge this plea in  
their favour? Do they offer it them-  
selves? No: This would favour of re-  
ligious ostentation; from which they  
most certainly stand exempted §§; and  
many

§§ "We have in England (says the Spectator) a  
particular bashfulness in every thing that regards re-  
ligion.

SECTION  
V.

many of them in their extreme modesty, would even blush to lie under a suspicion of *praying to their Father in secret*. And indeed the allegation appears improbable from the nature of things; for it is hard to conceive the ordinary conversation not to receive a *tinge* from *habits of private devotion*; and we have seen how little this infusion can be discovered. If it be yet suggested, that although they omit *vocal* prayer both in their families and retirements, they notwithstanding may be in the habit of praying mentally and from the heart; I confess, if this is the case, it is what

ligion. A well-bred man is obliged to conceal any serious sentiment of this nature, and very often to appear a greater libertine than he is, that he may keep himself in countenance among the men of mode. Our excess of modesty makes us shame-faced in all the exercises of piety and devotion. This humour prevails upon us daily." Spect. No. 458.

I should have least expected of any thing in the world: It would contradict all appearances, which argue a cold, gross, and depressed genius in religion; and besides I much doubt the possibility of this pretended refinement\*. So that on the whole it seems extremely questionable, whether the body of this people practise any kind of devotion, except on the seasons, and in the manner, we have before observed †.

SECTION  
V.

## S E C T.

\* “There cannot be a more fatal delusion than to suppose that religion is nothing but a divine philosophy in the soul; and that the foregoing theopathic affections may exist and flourish there, though they be not cultivated by devout exercises and expressions.” *Hartley’s Observations on Man*, Vol. II. p. 331.

† “If I should not (says Mr. Wollaston) say my prayers at such a certain *hour*, or in such a certain *place* and *manner*, this would not imply a denial of the existence of *God*, his providence, or my dependence upon him: nay, there may be reasons perhaps against *that particular* time, place, manner. But if I should never pray to him or worship him at all, such

## SECTION

## V.



## SECTION VI.

*Neglect of the Bible.*

**B**UT their neglect of the volume containing the sum of their Religion, and to which they ascribe Divine authority, is singularly astonishing. The writings of Confucius, and *the five volumes*, are held by the most considerable part

a total omission would be equivalent to this assertion, *There is no GOD who governs the world, to be adored:* which, if there is such a Being, must be contrary to truth. Also *generally and notoriously* to neglect this duty (permit me to call it so), though not quite always, will *favour*, if not directly proclaim the same untruth. *For certainly to worship GOD after this manner, is only to worship him ACCIDENTALLY, which is to declare it a great accident that he is worshipped at all, and this approaches as near as it is possible to a TOTAL neglect.* Beside, such a sparing and *infrequent* worshipper of the *Deity* betrays such an habitual disregard of him, as will render every religious act insignificant and null." Religion of Nat. Delin. p. 25. Octavo.

part of our Empire in the utmost veneration; they are studied, commented, and appealed to on all occasions; and are the ordinary road to reputation and power ||: And yet they are only looked upon as the productions of *wise men*. The *Shafter* of the Banians \*, the *Zendavesta*

SECTION VI.

¶ The only way in China, says Du Halde, that leads to riches, honours, and offices, is the study of the *canonical books*, history, the laws, and morality; and this he tells us has been a fundamental constitution of the empire for above 4000 years. See Vol. III. p. 63, 64.

\* See an account of this book in Mr. *Lord's Discovery of the Banian religion*, in the sixth volume of Churchill's collection of voyages and travels. *Shafter* signifies *the book of the written word*, and according to the opinion of the Banians, as related by Mr. *Lord*, was delivered by God to *Bremaw*, upon the occasion, and in the manner following:

“ God knowing that there would be but evil government where there was not the establishment of his worship and fear; after the world was replenished anew, bethought himself of giving them laws to restrain that evil in them that was the cause of the destruction of the former age.”

SECTION VI. *davesta* of the Perfecs\*\*, and the *Korim* of the Mohammedans, make indeed higher pretensions;

“Descending therefore on the mountain *Mero-purbatee*, he called *Bremaw* to him, and out of a dark and dusky cloud, with certain glimpses of his glory, he magnified himself to *Bremaw*, telling him that the cause why he brought destruction on the former age, was because they did not observe the instructions contained in the book delivered to *Brammon*. So delivering a book out of the cloud into the hand of *Bremaw*, commanded him to acquaint the people with those things contained therein. So *Bremaw* made known the sanctions and laws to the dispersed generations.” See Chap. viii. in Mr. Lord.

I have quoted this story for the sake of its resemblance to the account of the delivery of the *Law* to *Moses* on mount *Sinai*; from which it was probably derived.

\*\* The *Zendavesta*, or *Zend*, signifies the *fire-kindlers*, implying, that all who duly meditated upon it might kindle in their minds a true love to *God* and his holy religion. This book *Zoroaster* feigned to have received from heaven; and it is still preserved in the old Persian language and character; and in every oratory and fire-temple, even to this day, there is a copy of it kept, out of which, on certain stated times, the priests read a portion to the people. It contains many things which

pretensions; but then they are treated with answerable deference. 'Tis here only, in this land of superior light and liberal thinking, I remark this absurdity: A *Volume* presents itself, challenging a divine original, and proclaiming inconceivable and endless rewards and punishments, according to its reception. And what is the consequence? After an admission of its claim, and a formal consent with its conditions, it is negligently thrown aside, and abandoned a prey to vermin. I know this is frequently the case; for I have acted the intellectual spy, have entered their houses, and have noted these *antiquated records* cast in some obscure corner, defiled with  
dust,

which apparently were copied from the Old Testament. See Prideaux's *Connection*, Vol. I. p. 223, to 226. Octavo, 1720. And Mr. Lord's *Account of the Religion of the Persees* in the sixth volume of Churchill.

SECTION  
VI.



SECTION  
VI.

duft, mangled and rent, and half-devoured. And I must reſtri&#223;t even this, to the houſes of the poor, of the middling citizens, and of the vulgar quality; for in the palaces of the *Grande&#223;es*, you may make long ſearch ere you light on the *relicks* of a Bible §.

§ I might here congratulate the reader on a return of that happy ignorance, for which a great modern philoſophic hiftorian celebrates the times juſt before the Reformation; when, if he rightly computes, there were ſcarce TEN GENTLEMEN in Europe who had the Bible. *La plupart des Ch&#223;tiens vivaient dans une ignorance heureuſe. Il n'y avait peut-&#223;tre pas en Europe DIX GENTILSHOMMES qui euſſent la Bible.* See Volt. Hift. Gen. Chap. cvi.

S E C T.

SECTION  
VII.

## SECTION VII.

IT is therefore not the least strange, *Want of zeal in propagating the gospel.* that under such a spirit of indifference, they discover no zeal in propagating their religion. For although they have an *order of men* consecrated to its service, which may seem to argue the contrary; it is to be remembered that this *order* was instituted many ages ago, that it has long been without credit, and is nearly held at present an incumbrance to the Community. And were it not for the plea of prescription, and its political conveniency, in all appearance it would quickly be abolished. But supposing its former influence still to subsist, it would chiefly be limited to  
this

SECTION  
VII.

this island. And is so little regard due to the rest of the world? Shall no *messengers of peace* be sent to nations who *fit in darkness and in the shadow of death*? If they really believed their religion to be of infinite importance to mens future happiness, as well as highly conducive to their present comfort (as they pretend it is); and possessed the sentiments of common humanity; they would ply every method, they would exhaust every resource, in order to communicate the *glad tidings* to every human being. And though we should allow them in former periods to have furnished out *missions* of this benevolent nature, it will only the more condemn their present negligence. The zeal of their continental brethren, 'tis true, carries them over sea and land, and even into the heart of our Empire §§.

I have

§§ The Roman Catholics have displayed much more

I have seen them † at the Emperor's palace, but without courting their acquaintance, or attending their ministrations, from an unfavourable opinion I had conceived (I hope unjustly) of their character and intentions. I want<sup>d</sup>

SECTION  
VII.



more zeal than the Protestants in propagating their religion. See some account of their establishments for this purpose, in Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 203, to 206.

† The Jesuits, who have chiefly occupied the Chinese mission, seem to be here intended. They first made their way into the empire about the year 1583, and having introduced themselves at Court, soon became the emperor's favourites, by serving him, it is said, in every capacity from the highest to the lowest; down from a minister of state, to a watchmaker or a turner. At length their influence was such, that in 1692, they obtained an edict granting a general toleration in favour of Christianity. This however was revoked about 30 years afterwards by *Yong-tching* successor to *Cam-hi*; but was again, in a good measure, restored by *Kien-long*, who acceded to the empire in 1737. See Du Halde, Vol. I. p. 496, to 504. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 218, to 220. And Auth. Mem. of the Chr. Church in China, p. 57, to 59.

SECTION  
VII.

ed the knowledge of uncorrupted Christianity, and impelled by this motive, I have traversed the ocean, fondly supposing, that in this fortunate island, every common passenger would be able and forward to point me to *the way of salvation*: But I quickly discovered my mistake; my enquiries meeting with little satisfaction, and even but seldom being entertained with ordinary politeness or humanity.

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SECTION  
VIII.

## SECTION VIII.

*The luxury of  
English tables.*

**B**UT perhaps they are a nation that teach by *example of life and manners*. Hail then, thou happy people, that hast adopted the noblest mode of instruction,  
by

by thus exhibiting Religion in its reality, after the World has been so often abused by sanctimonious shews and pretences! But let us try this *example* in a few instances.

SECTION  
VIII.

The most relaxed of our moralists, consider a *temperate use of the world* as essential to a happy life, and demanded by the dignity of our nature. But is this a quality that makes impression on a Chinese or an Indian, upon their entrance into this island? It ought, methinks, to be a prominent feature, that should strike their earliest observation, and characterize a Religion, that is held not to be of this world, and whose business is to subdue every worldly passion and appetite.

Now I must own, that from all which I have seen of the *life and manners* of this people, I am in no wise impressed with

SECTION  
VII.

an idea of severe morality. I have observed the luxury of their tables, not without admiring its disparity with *beastly* abstinence. An Indian or Chinese is satisfied with his *pot of rice* †, while an Englishman

† This is well known to be the common food of the east. A *Siamese*, says *La Loubère*, is contented with a pound of rice daily, which he gets for a farthing at most, together with a little dried fish which costs him about the same. And hence, he observes, there is nothing heard in their houses every night but singing. See Tom. I. p. 106.

Though rice greatly abounds in China, yet according to Navarette, the cheapest food is that which is called *Tou-fu* (i. e. paste of kidney beans), and is commonly used by all ranks, and by the emperor himself.—That Chinese, says he, who has *Tou-fu*, herbs, and rice, wants no other sustenance.—Twenty ounces may be had for a half-penny. See Navarette, p. 278, 279.

This temperate kind of living in the east, is no doubt chiefly the effect of climate and superstitious opinions, and especially of the doctrine of transmigration, which so generally prevails in that quarter of the world. And at the same time we may observe, that the Chinese at least, often feed more *grossly* if

Englishman cannot dine without laying the four quarters of the world under contribution; and after the materials are furnished, they must yet undergo many elaborate processes before they are adapted to a Christian palate. So that the homely business of eating has encreased the number of the sciences, and is provided with its train of learned Professors.

SECTION  
VIII.

if not more luxuriously than the people of Europe.  
See Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 237.



SECTION  
IX.

## SECTION IX.

*Levity of  
dress.*

IT is not beneath the dignity of the gravest Moralist, so far to survey the *exterior* of life, as it reflects light upon the human character. We will proceed then from their *tables* to their *ward-robcs*. And as the matter of dress depends chiefly on custom, and custom on innumerable associations, of which many perhaps (could we trace them), would be found rather *vain* than *criminal*, we ought to be reserved in our censures, and ready to allow very different *modes* to be alike consistent with *nature* and *decorum*. And yet in the present case, there are some circumstances which strike me unfavourably. In our eastern world there is at least a *consistency* and *distinction* in this article,

article, which I find wanting in this country. We wore the same forms of drefs with our remote ancestors until the late revolution †; fo that had they returned to us after a thoufand years in the garb of their own times, they would have been ftill *in fashion*; which it feems would hardly be the cafe in this ifland

SECTION  
IX.

† This happened in 1644, when China was fubdued by the Tartars, who introduced their own mode of drefs. What is called *fashion* is a thing hardly known in China, which (obferves our author,) is a fign of good order, and the uniformity of the government, even in the moft trifling matters. See Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 141.

However it muft be confefled, that the Chinefe carried their zeal too far in defence of old cuftoms, when to preferve their hair, they levied a war upon their conquerors, which coft many of them their heads: For as Le Comte properly obferves, however odd they might fancy their appearance after lofing the former, a man by lofing his head becomes much more diffigured. The Ruffians refigned their beards, with lefs difficulty. See Le Comte, Tom. I. p. 290, 291. Voltaire's *History of the Ruffian Empire*, Part I. Ch. x.


SECTION  
IX.

in a thousand days. Besides, in most parts of the east, every class of citizens are in general distinctively *habited* ||; but such confusion of rank prevails here, that if a true gentleman or substantial merchant are at all distinguishable, it is chiefly by the plainness of their apparel, their humanity, and good sense. Now this common fantasticalness, and vanity of appearance, in the most candid construction, argues a great levity in the national character.

*Magnificence  
in houses and  
equipage.*

And if we inspect their magnificent mansions, with all their sumptuous ap-

|| All kinds of colours are not indifferently allowed to the Chinese. None but the emperor and the princes of the blood may wear yellow habits. Sattin with a red ground is affected by certain mandarins on days of great solemnity, but they are commonly dressed in black, blue, or violet. The common people are generally clad in dyed cotton, either blue or black. See Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 142.

pendages, it is difficult to imagine them the *tents of strangers and pilgrims upon earth*. SECTION IX. 

The Chinese in this point of comparison might be thought a race of pigmies, and of an exemplary lowliness of spirit §. Nor is it a single residence that will satisfy a person of rank or fortune; nay, the petty tradesman must have his *villa*, in order to unbend from business and display his *little State*; while the opulent

§ “The Chinese,” says Du Halde, “love to be clean and neat in their houses, but they have none very magnificent; their stile of architecture is not at all elegant, and they have no regular buildings but the emperor’s palaces, public edifices, towers, triumphal arches, the gates and walls of the great cities, piers, causeways, bridges, and pagods. *The houses of private persons are very plain, for they have no regard to any thing but usefulness.*”

“*The houses of the nobility and rich people, if compared with ours, do not deserve to be mentioned; it would be an abuse of the term to give them the name of palaces, they being nothing but a ground-floor raised somewhat higher than common houses.*” Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 144, to 146.

SECTION  
IX.

merchant emulates the prime Nobility of the land. And if we cast an eye on their *vehicles* and *retinues*, the confusion still multiplies, and we may easily mistake a *gambler* for a *lord*, and a *courtesan* for a *lady of quality*. And thus in their *tables*, *dresses*, *houses*, and *equipage*, all order is destroyed, and not only good morals but found polity equally violated.

How far these extravagancies should be restrained by sumptuary laws, I presume not to determine. Liberty is a tender thing, and the liberty of Britons the tenderest of all; and would no doubt be at an end, and the Constitution subverted, if they enjoyed not the noble privilege of ruining themselves. But let them be content with this, without taxing the honest tradesman in support of their folly, or insulting him when he waits upon them oftner with his  
just

just demands, than suits with their affected delicacy. For such things I find are sometimes heard of in this land of Christians!

SECTION  
IX.

S E C T I O N X.

SECTION  
X.

**B**UT what is still more flagitious, and the scandal of their country, is the shocking lewdness that has infected all ranks †; and under the gentle name

*The lewdness  
of all ranks.*

† “The lewdness—of these western kingdoms, is now risen to such a height, as almost to threaten utter confusion. Men glory in their shame, and publicly avow what in former ages was industriously concealed.”——“The sins of this kind are, for the most part, joined with idolatry in the prophetic writings, and made the types thereof. So that the open and avowed practice of them is an open renunciation of our allegiance to God and Christ; and, agreeably to this, *is the principal cause why so many persons reject revealed religion.* But, if we renounce

our

SECTION  
X.

name of *gallantry*, is the rage of the fashionable world. Not even the sanctity of marriage is an effectual bar to this licence, which is often indulged at the expence of honour, fortune, and domestic quiet. Nay, there is one circumstance, which to a Chinese would appear incredible; multitudes of the sex, in spite of their natural modesty, hawk their persons in public, to the disgrace of all civil order, as well as to the annoyance of virtue. What a contrast to the decency and reserve of our manners! Such feminine outrage is unknown to our empire, where, amidst its prodigious numbers, a female is seldom to be observed\*.

This

our allegiance and covenant, we can be no longer under the protection of God." Hartley's *Obl. on Man*, Vol. II. p. 447, 448.

\* I must observe, says Navarette, that having gone through

This enormous debauchery is in good measure to be attributed to their public amusements; their assemblies and theatres in particular. What can more inflame the libidinous passions than promiscuous dancing, which constitutes a chief article of dissipation? And what sanctuaries of virtue must be their *Gardens* and *Rotundos*, where the sexes saunter and converse without restraint? And shall we ascribe those mummeries called *Masquerades*, to effrontery or modesty? And as folly is delighted with change,

SECTION  
X.

Public amusements.

through a great part of *Hang-cheu* (the capital of *Chekiang*) with my two companions, the throng of people was so great that we could scarce make way through the streets. We saw not one woman though we looked about very carefully, only to be satisfied of the great retirement of the sex in this empire. *Would to God*, says he, *the hundredth part of it were observed among us sober Christians!* Navarette in Churchill, p. 18, 19.

The same is said to be the case in Peking. See Du Halde, Vol. I, p. 113.

they



SECTION  
X.

they will at other times practise games which powerfully tend to irritate the malignant part of our nature: Anger, avarice, revenge, and despair, being usually their concomitants or effects †. And what may possibly seem strangest of all, most of these *pastimes* are too sublime for the *vulgar*, and are reserved for *persons of quality, great officers of state, and polite sharpers*.

*The Stage.*

But perhaps the first in influence and supposed dignity among these fashionable entertainments, are the exhibitions

† This disposition to *gambling* was remarkable in our German ancestors, and is described by Tacitus in the following very lively manner:

Aliam (quod mirere) sobrii inter seria exercent, tantâ lucrândi perdendive temeritate, ut cum omnia defecerunt, extremo ac novissimo jactu de libertate et de corpore contendant. Victus voluntariam servitutem adit, quamvis junior, quamvis robustior, alligari se ac venire patitur, ea est in re pravâ pervicacia: ipsi fidem vocant. De Mor. Germ.

of

of the stage; which at length it seems is become a *school of virtue*. And the secret of its *art* is truly admirable. It is not so much in changing the characters of men, as the nature of things; which at first sight indeed appears a more difficult enterprize; but then its accomplishment must in proportion be the more honourable. For instance, in these *theatrical mirrors*, lust and revenge are transformed into gallantry and spirit; pride into dignity; ambition into greatness of mind: And, on the other hand, honesty becomes simplicity knowledge, pedantry; humility, meanness; and religion fanaticism: And thus the transformation is reciprocal. Now who does not see, that the whole business lies, *not* in teaching men virtue, but in teaching them, *That they are virtuous already?* A discovery no doubt at once surprizing and agreeable. But I

SECTION  
X.

SECTION  
X.

fear I am catching the theatrical contagion, and sporting with a subject very serious in its consequences. While a *set of scaramouches* are playing their antics, and uttering their bombast, a spirit of levity is contracted, romantic ideas formed, every moral principle corrupted, and the whole œconomy of life disturbed. The prudent parent and sober citizen see and lament the ravages these fooleries produce, in individuals first, and remotely in society at large. And should it be alleged in their defence, that good documents and moralities are interspersed; I would observe, that this is sparingly done, and for the most part merely to adorn a villain, or disgrace a man of virtue.

SECTION

## SECTION

## XI.

## SECTION XI.

SUCH are the the schools into *Modern edu-*  
which the young gentry are early *cation.*  
initiated; for their preparatory studies  
are quickly dispatched. A smattering of  
a dead language or two, which is often  
lost in a few years; and a very moderate  
acquaintance with one or two living  
ones, is generally the extent of their  
grammatical learning. But supposing  
a young gentleman to have proceeded  
to some literary proficiency, his acqui-  
sitions have no relish of Christianity;  
they are made chiefly from *heathen classics*  
(as they are stiled), and a few christian  
authors who have formed themselves  
upon these models. And this is deemed  
the most refined mode of instruction,  
and infinitely preferable to a dull study  
of

SECTION  
XI.

of divinely-inspired writings, or of others derived from them, which would only serve to deprave the taste, give a low turn of thinking, and utterly disqualify for the *world*.


*The works of  
Confucius  
more regarded  
than the Bible.*

And here again I cannot forbear observing the much higher esteem in which the Chinese hold the works of Confucius, which (next after the elements of their own language) they put into the hands of youth *to be learnt by heart*,\* as preliminary to all their future studies and prospects; being judged equally necessary to form a Scholar and a Mandarin, and the latter in consequence of the former. And can any one imagine they would value them less if they thought them of divine extraction? Would they conclude them, purely on that account, deprived of all their

\* See Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 3.

their former excellencies, and merely calculated to produce fools and obscure citizens? This doubtless is a strain of logic peculiar to this Country, which I find stands distinguished for a singular cast of reasoning, as well as for every other species of originality. The Bible, it seems, has the misfortune not to have been composed by a Philosopher.

SECTION  
XI.



But let us return to our young Gentleman. Before he is well escaped from his grammatical tutors, he is put into the hands of three *learned Professors* of much greater importance, who are to shape, and accoutre, and introduce him gracefully, into the world. The *dancing-master* indeed is often engaged before the child enters upon his *Latin*; but this is a point of chronology of no consequence. Here then lies the *serious* part of his education; the rest is but a trif-

*The serious  
part of Edu-  
cation.*

SECTION  
XI.

He may prove a fool 'tis true, and a profligate; but what then? He will know how to dress well, assume an air, and be admired at an assembly; and this will be sufficient recommendation with all reasonable and well-bred people.

*Finishing of  
education.  
Novels and  
romances.*

And now he has only to skim over a choice set of *Novels* and *Romances*, and the works of two or three *fashionable* infidels, to be very decently equipped. He will then be fully entitled to admission into the best companies, where he will see exemplified all that he has been learning, and find proper opportunities to display his own abilities, which must no doubt greatly promote his progress. But nothing will more effectually do this, than a diligent attention to the *DRAMA*. *Drama*, whose *mirrors of life* (as we before observed) will reflect him more amiable

amiable to himself, converting his foibles into excellencies, and his vices into virtues. If he also occasionally visit *brothels and gaming-houses*, and the *diversions of the turf*, it will mightily conduce to his purpose; for, though they may happen to cost him his health, fortune and character, *they will add to his knowledge of the world*, which is the great *desideratum* of a Gentleman. And if he is ambitious to unite every possible advantage, he may contrive, by stealing now and then an interval from these various avocations, to *trot a few terms at one of the learned universities*, which with due care would do him no harm, and might chance to help his credit with *strangers*.

SECTION  
XI.*Brothels,  
gaming-  
houses, &c.**Keeping a few  
TERMS at one  
of the univer-  
sities.**Foreign tra-  
vel.*

And thus having furnished himself with all the learning and elegant accomplishments of his own Country,



SECTION  
XI.

what remains, but that he betake himself to his travels, in order to glean up the excellencies of other nations? And though he should mistake their fopperies for such, 'tis no matter; he may import them safely; not one in a thousand will perceive the difference. But his great object will be to pick up curious notions concerning morals, religion, and government, that may serve (if possible) more thoroughly to convince his dear countrymen, that they are the merest impositions upon the reason and liberties of mankind. This when set off with a thousand foreign embellishments in his person and address, must surely at once recommend him to their taste and judgment, and may possibly obtain him a seat in the senate.

*The national  
character  
corrupted by  
wrong educa-  
tion.*

Such is the education of a *fine* gentleman, and such his flattery of himself, which

which is too often realized by success. SECTION XI.

And yet a coxcomb is by no means the natural growth of the island; it is a *forced* production, which requires warmer suns, or hot-beds at home, to bring it to maturity. The native genius of Britons is plain and sensible, and rarely becomes affected or foppish, unless sophisticated by art or foreign infusions. Wrong methods of education, and injudicious travel, have greatly contributed to corrupt the national character.

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S E C T I O N XII.

## SECTION XII.

**B**UT their method of training up Female education. young ladies, if not more immoral, which would seem impossible, is however more abhorrent from the customs of our empire. Perhaps we

SECTION  
XII.

have strained too far our ideas of feminine modesty, and it is probable, that an occasional intercourse of the sexes, with caution and reserve, would contribute to their mutual improvement. But in this, as in other instances, we have not duly attended to the doctrine of our philosopher laid down in his *immutable Medium*.† And yet methinks, of the two extremes, we have adopted the safer. If the graces of person and a cultivated understanding are super-added to Virtue, it will appear indeed the more like itself; but at any rate let Virtue be secured. It is on this principle, that our females are excluded from all converse with the other sex, prior to their marriage; which is contracted too without their advice, or a single

† The second canonical book of Confucius so called. See Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 306.

single interview with the intended party. And when they are conducted to their new home, with abundance of ceremony, it is but a splendid passage from one prison to another.† This is doing violence to nature, and is too severe to be endured. But *here* I observe, that no sooner can the *little miss* scramble round the room, than she is taken from under her mother's eye, and placed in some fashionable feminary, where instead of her duty to God, a true modesty of temper and carriage, with the useful arts of domestic life, she is usually instructed in the whole system of coquetry. After a due time spent under this discipline, she is introduced into the world, for a *finishing* of her education. And having whirled awhile in its giddy circles, her head turns, and

SECTION  
XII.

G 4

she

† Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 203-7.

SECTION  
XII.

she fancies herself, if not a primitive Christian, at least a perfectly accomplished lady: And she will often persist in the same rounds of dissipation, notwithstanding the remonstrances of an unfortunate husband. If we consider this, we shall not much wonder to find so many young men in this country averse to the marriage-state.

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SECTION  
XIII.

## SECTION. XIII.

*View of the  
two univer-  
sities.*

**B**UT enough of female education. Let us now cast an eye upon their two universities, where it is ordinary for youth designed for the learned professions, and not unusual for young gentlemen of quality, to pass a few years. In revenues and exterior splendour, they are perhaps superior to

to any in the world; and their original laws and statutes seem in general to be wisely framed. China has no establishments exactly similar; but then the

SECTION  
XIII.

whole Empire is an University. Every hamlet is a college; and there are few houses of moderate wealth but retain a domestic tutor. In many places a small neighbourhood agree to send their children twice a month to a *common hall*,

*The whole Chinese empire an university.*

there to try their abilities upon a subject, or *thesis*, which every head of a family proposes in his turn, and likewise determines upon the merits of their several productions. Twice a year, all the youth in the Empire, in their respective districts, are called before a *Mandarin*, who marks out the best qualified; these are again examined by his next superior, and as many as pass this second scrutiny are reserved for a third, which is had twice in three years before

a *Literato*,

SECTION  
XIII.

a *Literato*, particularly commissioned, and sent from the Capital for this purpose. And 'tis at this time that the successful candidates, who are limited to fifteen out of every four hundred, are admitted to their *first degree*. Once in three years, all who have attained this honour, appear before another learned tribunal, consisting of the great officers of the province and two presidents, as candidates for their second degree, which is conferred on no more than six out of every thousand. And now there remains only to pass the *imperial examination*, to arrive at the third and highest dignity. The Emperor himself proposes the *thesis*, and is supposed to be the Judge on this occasion.\*

The

\* This examination is committed to the *Han-lin* [or *chief doctors of the empire*], but styled *imperial*, because it is made under the immediate inspection and controul

The candidates are usually five or six thousand; about three hundred succeed, who are thence deemed qualified for the highest offices in the state.

SECTION  
XIII.

The greatest rigour is observed in most of these examinations. They are held in large *balls* divided into small apartments for the several candidates, who are barely supplied with implements for writing. Guards are posted at every avenue. In this situation the students frame their compositions; and at the time appointed, the Mandarins proceed to determine upon their merits;

controul of the emperor himself. See Du Halde, p. 12-13.

These *Han-lin* were themselves called to a severe examination by the Emperor *Cam-bi*, upon his observing their neglect of study, their eagerness for preferment, and the general decay of learning in the empire; several of them were *degraded*, and dismissed from Court. Ibid.

and



SECTION  
XIII.

and should any artifice be discovered, such as signifying the name of the author, or any other way of procuring favour, the offender would be severely punished. And thus a son of the meanest peasant stands as fair for his degrees, and of obtaining the highest preferments, as a descendant of the most honourable house. §

It appears then, that these degrees are not merely literary, but so many steps to political offices: So closely has our admirable constitution united theory with practice! Whereas in this country, a man may be even a *Doctor*, without any qualification, real or supposed, for Public service. Their Universities confer three degrees; the same in number, and nearly in title, with ours.

*The manner of conferring degrees in our universities.*

The

§ See Du Halde upon the studies, &c. of the Chinese, Vol. III. p. 1—14.

The first is obtained in the space of SECTION  
 four years, with a residence of about XIII.  
 four or five months in a year, unless  
 the student prefer a longer term; but  
 in general, he *strictly* observes the sta-  
 tute, and spends the rest of his time  
 more agreeably to his humour. In this  
 period, he undergoes several examina-  
 tions, which are now for the most part  
 grown merely formal and nugatory,  
 and by a stranger might be mistaken  
 for a banter upon learning. A smatter-  
 ing in Greek and Latin, to which is  
 commonly added a taste in philosophy,  
 without any sound knowledge of mo-  
 rals, or the laws and religion of his  
 country, will entitle the candidate to  
 proceed *bachelor of arts*. If he is ambi-  
 tious of higher honour, he has only to  
 spin out another period of three years,  
 of which he need not spend above six  
 months

SECTION  
XIII.

months at his college, and thus, after a few more idle formalities, he commences *master of arts*; with as little knowledge as he had before. And as to the doctoral degree, it is generally either a pure compliment, or bestowed with little examination or merit, and therefore with little honour. Nay, so lightly is this highest literary dignity held, that it is become an article of traffic in the *Northern* part of the Island at least, where many a dunce and coxcomb is *belied* at a small expence.

*Their disorder  
and want of  
discipline.*

I must own there is nothing I have met with which has more disappointed my expectations, than these celebrated establishments. Their inattention to learning is their least grievance. And what indeed can be expected from a body of youth left almost without con-

troul, and many of them of birth and fortune, but that their *morals* will keep pace with their ignorance? Where is the wonder if their colleges are converted into taverns, and their studies into revels? And I fear that in these, and many other respects, the licentiousness of the age is copied, and possibly with improvements. To vie with a modern gentleman, seems the ambition and chief study of a young collegian.

SECTION  
XIII.

Such is the disorder that prevails in these seminaries, which probably in part arises from the inveteracy of the evil itself, and partly from the negligence or incapacity of their superiors. I had conceived highly 'tis true of these grave gentlemen, and in my quest after Christian wisdom, approached them with the veneration of a man about to consult an oracle; but (like other oracles)

*Their governors censured.*

SECTION  
XIII.

cles) I found them either dumb, or their responses unsatisfactory. And I soon perceived, that I had mistaken their character; that their object was neither religion nor learning, but like *wife men* to eat and drink well, and doze in comfortable indolence.

*How they  
might be use-  
ful.*

It is therefore no wonder, that in such a state of corruption, these communities contribute little to enlighten and benefit mankind. Yet how might a society of *literati*, in their circumstances, exempted from vulgar cares, and with all the means of knowledge in their hands, (besides discharging the great trust of education,) assist the friends of virtue conflicting in the world, by supplying them with fit arms against their enemies, and thus shew themselves their true allies from the banks of the *Cam* and the *Isis*! Yea, how might they

they, in the bosom of these retreats, plan and accomplish noble works, which, in spite of every hostile assault, should remain everlasting monuments to the honour of sound learning and religion! Instead of this, they generally either employ their leisure to no purpose, or in amusing the public occasionally with poetic effusions, with trivial erudition, and with as much Christianity as will leave it to be understood *that they are not in earnest*. Did I say they amused the public? Rather; they are sunk below its notice; nor do they appear anxious for its esteem, further than their revenues are concerned. They are a sufficient theatre to themselves; and the little study left amongst them seldom looks beyond their own walls. Even the national history and laws are scarcely attended to (though in the latter instance a noble effort has been lately made in one of

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SECTION  
XIII.

SECTION  
XIII.

the universities\*); nor have they any institution for the training of a public speaker, which might be particularly expected, if we consider the high notions of liberty common in this country, and the freedom of its government. It would seem then, on the whole, that however these seminaries flourished in former times, they are, at present, neither to be celebrated for Religion, nor good Learning.

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SECTION  
XIV.

## SECTION XIV.

*A Critique  
upon the Royal  
Society.*

NOR has their Royal Society (so called because founded by one of their Princes) less deviated from its original institution. It was established for

\* Probably the late Judge Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England are here intended.

for the promotion of natural science, and for the best part of a century was justly held in high estimation. Its first members, and their immediate successors, were natural philosophers in the truest sense; they laid the foundation of experience, and, by mathematical reasoning, erected noble fabrics of knowledge, which our Eastern world has beheld with admiration. Their enquiries, since, appear to have been less successful, and often to have descended from the important to the trivial, and sometimes to have degenerated into the ludicrous: Whether it is, that Nature is exhausted, and so the work being done, it remains only to play; or that the human mind has attained its limit; or, which is more likely, that we are apt to slacken and grow weary in every laudable pursuit: However, it is certain that the

SECTION  
XIV.



SECTION  
XIV.

Society has often departed from its philosophic character, and from the contemplation of the stars stooped to the chase of butterflies, and the picking up of cockle-shells. Could the illustrious Newton look down from the *Empyrean* upon his inglorious sons in such frivolous occupations, they might provoke his smile; scarcely would they merit his indignation. The legitimate end of philosophy is not a puerile amusement, or a low gratification of vanity or interest; but the glory of the *Creator*, displayed in just and extensive surveys of his works. Even the greatest discovery in nature would be of little value, without this ultimate reference: And I would gladly suppose that such a reference was originally intended in this, and other similar institutions in Europe, founded about the same period, and which seem to have dwindled in like manner.

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SECTION  
XV.

## SECTION XV.

LET us now endeavour to form a *Transition to a general view of our literature, and religious opinions.* sketch of the literary state of the nation at large, and especially of their philosophical and religious opinions, so far as may seem necessary to our design.

The *novel* and *romance* has been the *Novels and Romances.* species of composition most in vogue for half a century, and may be justly reckoned among the chief causes of the general depravity. In China, they are designed to illustrate some instance of prudence or virtue, and are conducted without any offence to the strictest decorum \*; whereas in this Island, they

H 3 are

\* "The Chinese *novels* are generally full of instruction, containing maxims very proper for the reformation

SECTION  
XV.

are commonly founded upon the most violent passion in our nature, which they tend to inflame by an artful series of lewd adventures, and fascinating descriptions. I have lately seen a *farraga* of this kind; in itself too low for censure, and which I only notice in relation to the national character. Under the thin pretext of sentimental refinement, it is calculated, with more effect, to taint the imagination, and corrupt the heart†; and this *novel* is still in fashion. The author is by some extolled as a philanthropist, and even as a philosopher; For my part, I will venture to pronounce

STERNE.

reformation of manners, and almost always recommending the practice of some virtue." Du Halde Vol. III. p. 113,

† "The gross appetite of love becomes most dangerous, when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, disguised by sentimental passion." Gibbons' Decline and Fall of the Rom. empire, Vol. I. p. 328. [Dublin ed. Octavo.]


nounce him a *villain* and a *hypocrite*: SECTION  
 since, in spite of his effusions of hu- XV.  
 manity, he that wantonly stabs the  
*morals* of his country is a villain; and  
 he is a hypocrite, if, under such a con-  
 duct, he makes pretensions to benevo-  
 lence: And how he came to be mis-  
 taken for a philosopher, I am at a loss  
 to determine. Even to have produced  
 such an author, would be some disgrace  
 to a community; as it could hardly be  
 supposed to have happened, where  
 morals and decency were had in repu-  
 tation; but that he should generally be  
 read and applauded, evinces the proflig-  
 acy of the public manners. I own  
 he is among the vilest of his class; but  
 if the best of them may be allowed in-  
 dulgence, it is only in the hands of  
 persons of discernment, and established  
 morals; for, notwithstanding a variety

SECTION  
XV.

of just observation, with frequent strokes of genuine nature and wit, still their general tendency is unfavourable to virtue.

*The frivolity of the national character argued from the prevalence of this species of composition.*

But supposing we should grant (what is usually pleaded in behalf of these compositions), *That they are harmless and amusing fictions*; yet their general prevalence discovers a strange frivolity in the national character. Imagination is an inferior faculty, and ought not to be indulged at the expence of reason, which can only be satisfied with a contemplation of *realities*. But *reason* it seems is a *serious thing*, whose exercise calls for attention, and attention requires some effort, all which is happily avoided by taking up an innocent *novel*, which may surely be read, as it was written, *without thinking*. This suits extremely well with  
the

the fine gentlemen and ladies, whose SECTION XV.  
 grand object it is, *to live and die without*   
*reflection.* And therefore they are every  
 where provided with store of these  
 empty volumes, which may serve occa-  
 sionally for a winter-evening's entertain-  
 ment, if by a sad mischance they are  
 deprived of theatres and assemblies; and  
 for *light Summer reading*, in their excursi-  
 ons to the polite watering-places.

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## SECTION XVI.

SECTION  
XVI.  


**B**UT entirely to satisfy the prevail-  
 ing taste, an author must be *brief*,  
 as well as gay and lively. Instead of  
 the huge volumes of their forefathers,  
 he must treat them with a smart *duode-*  
*cimo*;

*Modern  
brevity.*

SECTION  
XVI.

*Periodical  
essayists.*

*cimo*; and this too must be minced very small, by *divisions* and *sub-divisions*, to humour the queasy palate of a polite reader. Hence the present race of fashionable authors generally appear in this *minute form*; nay, sometimes they have so far descended from their dignity, as to compose *single sheets* for the public edification; which being duly handed up in a morning, might enable even the fair sex to be improving their understandings, and inspecting their manners, while they are sipping their tea, or busy at their toilette. It was in this method that one of their most celebrated writers insinuated his speculations; and by his moralizing turn, his exquisite humour, and his delicate railleries, set off with all the graces of language, endeavoured to correct the foibles, and refine the manners of his countrymen. And since his time, I am

informed, the British roughness has been gradually softening, to which he seems to have chiefly contributed. But whether his labours, on the whole, have been favourable to Christianity, I am not very certain; his pictures of life carry so much attraction, and his censures of vice are so extremely gentle, that it appears doubtful, whether the temptations he presents are not stronger than his antidotes.

Others have followed him in the same line, with various degrees of merit and success. Visions, Allegories, Eastern stories, and in short, every agreeable vehicle has been employed by these ingenious essayists to entertain and improve the age. There are besides, innumerable periodical publications, that skim over all subjects, diffusing a slight general notion of things, which, if it answer no other

SECTION  
XVI.

*Real know-  
ledge inter-  
cepted by these  
short methods.*



SECTION  
XVI.

other purpose, however, swells the mind with conceit, and renders it averse to real knowledge. Hence it is, that we find numbers who fancy themselves profound philosophers, moralists, and divines, from shreds and fragments collected in desultory pamphlets, without any serious study of nature, of themselves, or of *that* volume which they profess to be the repository of heavenly wisdom.

In this manner it has happened, that under a pretence of facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and virtue, the simple people are trifled with, and tantalized, in their most important interests.

*Wisdom unattainable without effort.*

To be learned without study, and virtuous without effort, is certainly too hard even for British ingenuity. Whether the levity of the age is the cause, or consequence, of these illusory methods, it

it is needless to inquire; they evidently act and re-act on each other; and what will be the issue of this reciprocal influence, we must leave time to discover.

SECTION  
XVI.




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S E C T I O N    X V I I .

SECTION  
XVII.



**H**OW great an inconsistency is man! What contrarieties in the character of a people! Who would imagine, after all we have observed, that this is a nation of philosophers? Yes, in their comprehensive genius, they can embrace *metaphysic* and *romance*, and even unite them, notwithstanding their apparent opposition! You look at the sun; and they will prove to you, there

METAPHY-  
SIC and RO-  
MANCE,  
*united.*

is

SECTION  
XVII.

is no fun: You look at the moon; and they will prove to you, there is no moon: You look at the stars, and lo! there are no stars: You look upon the earth, hills, rivers, woods, cities, animals, men, and behold! they are all *ideas existing in the mind*, which have no resembling objects *without*! Matter is annihilated, and all is sublimated into spirit! Again, you are conscious of the operations of thinking, reasoning, doubting, volition, love, hope, fear, and imagine you are possessed of a principle called a *soul*: Alas! for your simplicity! They have philosophers who will quickly teach you, that this is intirely a *vulgar prejudice* §; and that all these

§ “ Like the generality of Christians *in the present age* [says one of our present reformers], I had always taken it for granted, that man *had a soul distinct from his body*.” And truly, a poor modern philosopher might

these refined acts and affections are only the modifications of matter, and that a *log* might be easily converted into a *metaphysician*! In short, they will demonstrate to you by turns, *that all is matter*, and *that all is spirit*; and to complete the whole, it has been discovered, *that there is neither matter nor spirit, but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity* \*. Now is not all this as good as a Novel? And does it not shew, that,

SECTION  
XVII.



might have blundered worse! See Priestley's *Disq. on Matter and Spirit*, Pref. p. 11.

But still I would ask this learned gentleman *a reason* for his restricting the general prevalence of this notion among Christians, *to the present age*? For I must own, I have hitherto been used to consider it as the uniform opinion of Christians, as well as MEN, in all ages; and it certainly owes nothing to any of our *late* corruptions of Christianity.

\* These are the words of Mr. Hume. See *Beattie on Truth*, p. 257. 3d edit.

SECTION  
XVII.


that, notwithstanding their metaphysic and romance set out in contrary directions, they meet in the opposite point of the circle?

*The metaphysician described.*

The metaphysician is an intellectual spider, that spins theories out of his own bowels. He is a sophist, who, instead of feeding his understanding by a wholesome contemplation of nature, devours his own imaginations; and after he has refined them by a second concoction, casts them up again in pure visions and non-entities. He is the ghost of a departed philosopher. This is a spectre, that has only of late ages appeared

*A stranger with the ancient Chinese.*

with the Chinese. Their wiser ancestors knew nothing of metaphysic subtilities, and would have derided a curious disquisition upon identity and diversity, cause and effect, impressions and ideas. Morals, history, and laws, were the

the great subjects, and good govern- SECTION  
ment political and individual, the scope XVII.  
of their studies. 

If these visionaries were content to speculate on matters of small moment, their reveries might be indulged: They might be allowed gravely to dispute whether snow is white, or fire hot, and a thousand points of equal consequence, without any inconvenience but to themselves, by a consumption of time and thought that might have been better employed. But when, from motives of vanity, they endeavour by their sophistries to subvert truths of infinite concernment, when they wantonly sport with the dearest interests of mankind, they are to be treated as common enemies, who have no claim to any thing beyond rigorous justice. I am not adverse to free-enquiry; but let it be liberal,

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SECTION  
XVII.

beral, let it be modest, let it not trifle with important truth, let not the existence of God, the liberty of human actions, and the natural distinction between vice and virtue, be brought in question, merely for the sake of displaying a petulant ingenuity.

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SECTION  
XVIII.

## SECTION XVIII.

*The ancient doctrine of the Chinese probably indebted to revelation.*

**T**O find out the author of the universe I grant to be a difficult task to human reason.\* The ancient Chinese seem to have acquired this knowledge by other means; and it is not improbable that, in some inconceivable manner, *Tien* discovered himself

\* Τὸν μὲν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα ἰσθὶ ἅπαντος οὐρανοῦ τοῦ γῆρον, καὶ οὐρανοῦ εἰς πάντας ἀδυνατοῦ λόγων, says Plato in his *Timæus*.

self and his will to the early ages of the world; and it is only, I conceive, by sup-  
 posing this revelation to have been  
 handed down with a degree of clear-  
 ness for some generations, that we are  
 able to account for the purer Theology  
 of our primitive ages. Hence prob-  
 ably it was that Confucius derived his  
 wisdom; here that he lighted his lamp  
 which has since irradiated the Empire:  
 It was not to his own understanding,  
 but to the *five volumes*, to the Emperors  
*Yao* and *Chun*, that he ascribed his  
 doctrine\*. The honour reserved for

SECTION  
XVIII.

I 2

reason,

\* "When any one admired his doctrine, and the leading principles of morality which he taught, far from assuming the honour to himself, he ingenuously acknowledged that this doctrine was not his own, but was much more ancient, and had been taken from those wise legislators *Yao* and *Chun*, who lived 1500 years before him." Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 300.

The



SECTION  
XVIII.

reason, was to obscure and pervert, by its commentaries, what it could not investigate. *Tchu-tse* and *Tching-tse* led the way in this career, and were followed by a body of interpreters who explained away the ancient text, and in the place of *Chang-ti* substituted the visible heavens. Such was the fruit of Chinese metaphysic, to deify the world and reject its Author! †

Since

The same is observed in the *Scientia Sinensis*. “Confucius ait, Præco sum, seu relator, & non author doctrinæ, quam palàm facio. Credo & amo antiquitatem, ex quâ studiosè suffuro & excerpo quæ ad rem meam sunt.” Lib. III. p. 36.

† The reader perhaps will not be displeas'd with the following passage upon this subject, though of some length, in which I conceive we may trace at once the features of Stoicism, Aristotelianism, and Spinozism; and thus it may serve at least to shew how the human mind is apt to run into the same vagaries in all countries.

“About the year 1070 was the time when these interpreters

interpreters appeared, who gained a great reputation; the most famous were *Tchu-tse* and *Tching-tse*, who published their works under the reign of the sixth prince of the family of *Song*. *Tchu-tse* distinguished himself so greatly by his capacity, that they revered him as the prince of learning: Though these authors have been held in esteem for these five or six hundred years past, yet they are still looked upon as modern, especially when compared with the ancient interpreters, who lived fifteen ages before them.

SECTION  
XVIII.

“ But it was not till the year of our Lord 1400, that the emperor *Yong-lo* made choice of forty-two of the most skilful doctors, in order to digest a body of doctrine, with a particular eye to the commentaries of *Tchu-tse* and *Tching-tse*.

“ These Mandarins applied themselves to this work, and, besides their interpretation of the canonical books, and of the works of Confucius and Mencius, they composed twenty volumes under the title of *Sing li ta tsuen*, i. e. of *Nature*, or *Natural Philosophy*. They followed, according to their orders, the doctrines of the above writers, and, that they might not seem to abandon the ancient books, so much esteemed in the empire, they endeavoured by false interpretation, and by wresting the meaning, to make them speak their own sentiments,

“ The authority of the emperor, the character of the Mandarins, their ingenious and polite style, their

SECTION  
XVIII.

new method of handling the subject, their boast of understanding the ancient books, gave a reputation to their works, and gained over many of the learned.

“ The following is a sketch of their system, which it is hard to make sense of, and perhaps the inventors themselves had no clear notions of what they had written.

“ They give the first principle of all things the name of *Tai-ki*, which they say is impossible to be explained, being separated from imperfections of matter, and therefore can have no appellation agreeable to its nature: However they compare it to the ridge of a house, which serves to unite the roof; to the root of a tree; to the axle-tree of a chariot; to a hinge on which all things turn: And they affirm it to be the basis, the pillar, and the foundation of all things. It is not, say they, a chimerical thing like the *vacuum* of the *Bonzes*; but is a real being which had existence before all other things, and yet is not distinguishable from them, being the same with the perfect and the imperfect, the heaven, the earth, and the five elements, inasmuch that every thing may in a sense be called *Tai-ki*.

“ They say that this *Tai-ki*, when at rest, produces *Yn*, a matter gross, imperfect, and without motion; and that, when in motion, it produces *Yang*, a perfect, subtile, and active matter: And it is compared to a man who, while he is at rest, profoundly meditates upon

on a subject, which when he has comprehended he proceeds from rest to motion; and they tell us, it is from the mixture of these two kinds of matter that spring the five elements, which, by their union and temperament, generate all other things. In a word, they affirm that this *Tai-ki* produces order, and preserves all parts of the universe; that it is the cause of all their vicissitudes, and yet is ignorant of its own regular operations; that its extension is infinite, its duration without beginning or end, that it is the idea, the model and source of all things, and the essence of all other beings: nay, they sometimes speak of it as sentient, and gave it the name of soul and spirit, and even look upon it as the supreme understanding: But when they would reconcile these notions to the ancient books, they fall into manifest contradictions.

SECTION  
XVIII.

“ Sometimes the above universal principle is denominated *Li*, which, by its union with matter, constitutes all the different species of bodies, and their individual qualities: Their method of reasoning is this: You make out of a piece of wood a stool or a table, but the *Li* gives the *form* of the table or stool, and when they happen to be broke the *Li* perishes.

“ Their reasonings in point of morality are the same; they call *Li* that which establishes the reciprocal duty between the prince and the subject, the father and the son, the husband and the wife; they give likewise the same appellation to the soul, because it informs the body, and when it ceases to inform it the *Li* is said to be destroyed; in the same

SECTION  
XVIII.

The BIBLE  
incapable of  
being com-  
mented into  
Atheism.

Since that period our *Literati* have been tainted with this subtle poison, a few noble spirits excepted, who, by a close adherence to the primitive doctrine, have escaped the contagion \*. I do

manner, say they, as ice by an application of heat loses the *Li* whereby it became ice, and returns to fluidity.

“ And thus, by excluding every supernatural cause, and admitting no other principle than a certain virtue or energy united to matter, they run into Atheism.” See Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 53-6.

“ It is to be observed [says Navarette] that the *Li* and the *Tai-ki* are the same substance of the first principle, only distinguishable in some certain formality proper to every thing, for *Li* denotes the entity in particular, without any other circumstance; and *Tai-ki* denotes the same entity, inasmuch as it is the ground and root of all things, being in the midst of them as the North-pole is in the midst of heaven, and the king in the midst of his kingdom.” p. 211. See much more on this subject from p. 214 to 216.

\* “ If we may credit the testimony of a great number of missionaries, who have spent the chief part of their lives in the Empire, and have gained an exact acquaintance with Chinese affairs, by studying

do not find that the scriptures of the Christians have been ever *commented* into Atheism. They display the *being of God* with an effulgence that all the arts of criticism and metaphysic cannot darken. The light of nature affords the same discovery, but in a fainter manner, and liable to transient obscurities. A northern sophist may involve it in a momentary mist; and, by pretended reasonings upon impressions and ideas, causes and effects, insinuate the impious conclusion which the fool only *said in his heart*, as I find it elegantly expressed in one of their ancient prophets. But, for the honour of the island, I will suppose him the *only* Briton who

SECTION  
XVIII.

*The light of nature liable to obscurities.*

ing their books, and conversing with men of the greatest repute for knowledge among them, *the truly learned* have not given way to these mad notions, but have adhered strictly to the text of the ancient books, without regarding the extravagant opinions of modern commentators." Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 57.

has

SECTION XVIII. has questioned the existence of his *Ma-*  
*ker.* ||

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SECTION  
XIX.

S E C T I O N XIX.

*The scheme of*  
NECESSITY.

I Cannot indulge the same favourable supposition on the question of Liberty. They have many who dispute, and even some who deny its *possibility*. Their chief argument in support of this paradox is this, *That like determinations and effects must happen in like circumstances,* which is no more than affirming the point in other words; and, if carried to its extent, not only binds the human

|| See the conclusion to a Discourse on a *Particular Providence and a Future State* by the late Mr, *Hume*, who is doubtless the sophist here intended, I am told he has pursued the same subject in a posthumous publication, but I have no curiosity to rake in a dung-hill.

Will

Will and the whole Creation, but even the DEITY himself. This is startling to minds of a small compass, who, from a narrow principle of superstitious reverence, would gladly exempt the CREATOR from all *impulse or shadow of fate*, however contented they might be themselves to endure the yoke. But a thorough *necessitarian*, as he is not apt to be influenced by vain scruples, so he is aware that such an exception would endanger his whole system; perceiving that, if he allowed an entrance to liberty in this primary instance, it would be difficult to stop its progress. For, unless he could prove it an incommunicable property, it might also, for any thing he knew to the contrary, exist in a creature; and if it might, how could he be sure that it did not? But there is no need to argue from the bare *possibility*; it is enough to appeal to the experience

SECTION  
XIX.



SECTION XIX. experience of mankind for its *actual* existence, and leave *him* to infer the rest.

*How far it may be tolerated, and in what sense it should absolutely be rejected.*

Yet it must be owned that the notion of *fate*, in some degree, and under different modifications, is entertained in every part of the world. This may be considered as no more than a perversion of the idea of Providence, and an *encroachment* upon liberty. And while it is not extended to the *Lord of Heaven*, and in proportion as it leaves man responsible for his conduct, it may be tolerated; but, in the extreme of *philosophical necessity*, which allows only one possible determination in the same circumstances, it amounts, I conceive, to an exclusion of all liberty, and should absolutely be rejected. It would seem, in this rigorous sense, to be an error of some Chinese *literati* refined by Christian sophists. In the former case a blind necessity alone is God, and

in

in the latter God is subjected to necessity. I do not plead for the omnipotent rule of mere WILL, which I consider as the most tremendous of all ideas; but for the absolute independence of an all-perfect Being, who freely created the world, *when he could otherwise have determined*, and who governs it in a manner becoming HIMSELF.

SECTION  
XIX.

But methinks there is no need to go beyond the common objection against this hypothesis, *viz. That it destroys the true idea of vice and virtue, as blameable and praise-worthy, and consequently their essential distinction from physical good and evil*, to evince its absurdity. For surely either there is nothing certain to human understanding, or this is so, that, in a scheme which renders every thing *unavoidable*, there can exist no subject capable of just blame or praise. And  
thence

*In the rigorous sense it confounds physical and moral good and evil.*

SECTION  
XIX.

thence it would follow that *Yao* §, the best of Emperors, is no more deserving approbation than the sun when he looks forth in the spring, or a fruitful

§ He is reckoned the eighth from *Fo-hi*, and is regarded as the chief legislator of the empire, and the pattern of sovereigns; so that it is at present the highest praise that can be offered to an Emperor of China to say he is like *Yao* and *Cbun*.

He was probably a man of severe virtue with a great sense of religion: We are told, that his palace was bare of all ornament, his habit only of woollen-stuff in summer, and of deer-skin in winter, his food of the simplest kind; that if any public calamity happened, or any subject committed a crime, he attributed it to his own misconduct, or the anger of heaven for his neglecting to teach the people their duty; that he never made a progress through his empire before he had sacrificed to the Supreme Being; and that his subjects waited to see him with as much impatience as the parched fields look for the rain.

It is usual with the Chinese philosophers, when they would give an indisputable authority to their maxims, to support them by the example of *Yao* and his two successors. See Du Halde, Vol. I, p. 282-3.

shower;

shower; and that *Kie*\*, the most execrable of tyrants, is only to be ranked with conflagrations and earthquakes. We may indeed reward the one with our applause or services, as we would manure a field for the sake of a richer increase: And we may express our resentments against the other in order to prevent further evils, but we cannot justly criminate him; he is an object of pure compassion. Now this is so abhorrent from our moral constitution, the voice of nature is so clear to the contrary, that it would be an insult to our common Reason to offer a confutation. Metaphysic may reply, and labour to perplex the cause; but the contest is unequal: nature in the issue

SECTION  
XIX.

\* He was the seventeenth in succession from *Fo-hi*; he is represented as the *Nero* of the East, and, when they would give a prince the worst character, they say he is another *Kie*. See *Du Halde*, Vol. I. p. 296.

will

SECTION XIX. will ever be too strong for art, and sophistry at length must yield to conscious experience.

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SECTION XX.

S E C T I O N XX.

*A Critique upon OPTIMISM.*

FROM the doctrine of necessity is derived the *system of the Best*. Its demonstration has been attempted in all the severity of reason \*, and it is harmoniously sung by one of their most admired poets †. I have frequently debated

\* Especially by Mr. Leibnitz in his *Theodicée*.

† Mr. Pope in his *Essay on Man*; which “affords [says the late Dr. Johnson,] an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader

bated this topic with my ancient friend and fellow-student, the Literato *Kong-lun*; who, after sustaining the highest offices in the Empire, withdrew to a little hermitage on the mountain *Nin-hoa*, for the sake of indulging his sublime speculations. He was a zealous votary of the scheme now before us, and maintained, with the Western Optimist, that if out of all possible worlds *Tien* had not chosen the best, it must either have arisen from a defect in wisdom, goodness, or power; none of

SECTION  
XX.



reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse."

"The subject is perhaps not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not sufficiently master of his subject; metaphysical morality was a new study, and he was proud of his acquisitions, and, supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned." See his life of Pope, pages 201 and 200. (Octavo)

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SECTION  
XX.

which can be supposed. To this I usually objected, that, except he held the universe to be absolutely infinite, it was absurd to suppose a *best*; because, if *limited*, there must still be infinite room for further displays of wisdom, goodness and power; and thus it might grow *better* in an endless progression, but could never be *best* until it arrived at deification, and became equal to its author: Unless it should be thought fit to call that *best* which is actually chosen, and purely on that account: which might well be admitted in the present instance. But, if he meant only to assert, that it was *worthy* of its Creator to produce the world and every part of it, such as it was when it first came from his hands, and that he governs it as becomes an all-perfect Being; it was a sentiment in which I fully concurred. *Kong-lun* notwithstanding pursued his reveries;

reveries; he had started from his sphere, and lost himself in the region of possibilities.

SECTION  
XX.

Such *flights* are not surprizing in an Eastern contemplative; but they are more than I expected in this Northern climate. And I find they are by no means frequent; it is but now and then that a fanciful philosopher, or a metaphysical poet, takes wing into imaginary spaces, and amuses himself in constructing worlds, which it seems is but a play in the hands of a sublime genius. The sober Englishman is generally content to take things as they *are*, and, in the fulness of his benevolence, to consult the greatest good of the system in which he is actually placed, without studying to frame a better, or to demonstrate that it is absolutely best. This modest plan is entitled the *Good*



SECTION  
XX.  
~~~~~  
And the
GOOD OF
THE
WHOLE.

of the WHOLE †, and appears better calculated for use, however inferior it be supposed in point of dignity. It must be acknowledged however to be very differently understood, according to the various intellects and dispositions of its votaries. Such who pretend no less than the good of the Creation at large, may

* “ There is an odd way of reasoning, but in certain distempers of mind very sovereign to those who can apply it; and it is this: *There can be no malice but where interests are opposed. A universal Being can have no interest opposite; and therefore can have no malice.* If there be a *general mind*, it can have no *particular interest*: But the general good, or *Good of the Whole*, and its own private good, must of necessity be one and the same. It can intend nothing besides, nor aim at any thing beyond, nor be provoked to any thing contrary. So that we have only to consider whether there be really such a thing as a Mind which has relation to the Whole, or not. For if unhappily there be no Mind, we may comfort ourselves, however, that nature has no malice: If there be really a Mind, we may rest satisfied, that it is *the best-natured one in the world.*” Lord Shaftsbury’s *Characteristics*, Vol. I. p. 27. [Ed. 1749]

may be considered as capacious spirits, philosophers of the first order, determined foes to narrow systems, and citizens of the universe †. In the next class may be placed those who, either from a want of such ample comprehension, or benevolence, confine their views to the general happiness of mankind, and hence may be styled philanthropists ‖. The ordinary patriot means only the welfare of his own

SECTION
XX.

† “ The generous mind is not satisfied with the beauty of a part ; but, extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of *All*, and affects the interest and prosperity of *the Whole*. True to its native world and higher country, 'tis here it seeks order and perfection ; wishing the best, and hoping still to find a just and wise administration.” Id. Vol. II. p. 139.

‖ These are described by the noble author just cited, as not resting satisfied with public good in *one* community of men, but framing to themselves a nobler object, and with enlarged affection seeking the *good of mankind*. Ibid.

SECTION
XX.

country § ; the monk, the prosperity
of his order;.. the domestic chief, the
interest

§ This, we are told, was the standard of *right* and *justice* with the ancient Spartans: Λακεδαιμονιοι ἠν' ἐρωτήν τῶ καλῶ μερίδα τῶ τῆς πατρίδος συμφερόσι διδοίης, οὐκ ἐμαθθανῶσι. εἰ ἐπιγὰρ ται δίκαιον ἄλλο, κλην ὡ τῆν Σπαρτήν αυξῶν νομιζῶσι. Plut. in Agefiláo.

The same narrow notion has been held by little bigotted patriots in all ages, and has lately been taken up by some of their brethren of the minute philosophy. Thus one of them expresses himself upon this point :

On ne connoit pas comment on n' a pas vu plútôt que la reunion des hommes en société, n'ayant ni ne pouvant avoir d'autre but que le bonheur commun des individus, il n'est ni ne peut être parmi eux d' autre lien social que celui de leur intérêt commun ; que rien ne peut convenir à l' ordre des sociétés, s'il ne convient à l'utilité commune des membres qui les composent ; que c'est là ce que determine necessairement le Vice & la Vertu ; qu' ainsi nos actions sont plus ou moins vertueufes, selon qu'elles tournent plus ou moins au profit commun de la société: qu' elles sont plus ou moins vicieufes selon que la société en recoit un prejudice commun plus ou moins grand."

" Est-ce pour lui-même qu'on érige en vertu le courage? Non : c'est à cause de l' utilité dont il est
pour

interest of his family. And thus the *Whole* is usually contracted into a *part*, till at length it terminates in the individual.

SECTION
XX.

But let us take this scheme for a moment in its full extent. Virtue then

pour la société — Pourquoi l'ivrognerie est-elle un vice? Parce que chaque citoyen est tenu de concourir à l'utilité commune, & qu'il a besoin, pour remplir cette obligation, du libre exercice de ses facultés."

" Puisque la société doit être utile à chacun de ses membres, il est de la justice que chacun de ses membres soit utile à la société. *Ainsi, être vertueux, c'est être utile; être vicieux, c'est être inutile ou nuisible. Voilà la morale.*" Such is the language of an unprincipled writer. Raynal Hist. Phil. & Pol. Tom. VII. 297-8. [Octavo 1775.] See to the same purpose Helvetius *de l'Homme*. Sect. II. Ch. xvi. [at the end.]

" Reason, (says another) plainly declares to us, that the *good of society* is THE END OF OUR CREATION." Reason, I am persuaded, never said any such thing, either to him or his brethren. See Turnbull's Christian Philosophy, p. 350. [Ed. 1740.]

SECTION
XX.

*GOD to be
supremely re-
garded, both
in himself, and
in the relations
he bears to his
creatures.*

consists in an endeavour to promote the happiness of the whole created system. But are no regards due to the

Author and head of the system, distinct from it, and in relation to it?

And does not an attention to these enter into the essence of true virtue?

Is he not infinitely excellent in himself, and purely on that account worthy of our highest reverence, affection and obedience?

And, considered in particular as our Creator, is it not a principal part of virtue to act suitably towards him in that character, independent of all consideration of our fellow-creatures?

And may not the same be observed, as he is our Preserver, Governor, and Benefactor?

And does not all this imply something more than barely pursuing the good of the Creation?

It is true we ought to pursue it; but then we should do it from a re-

gard

gard to the *Will of Heaven* commanding us, as well as to the natural fitness and congruity of the thing itself: Otherwise our virtue would fail in its most fundamental obligation, which is, to attend to his pleasure, on whom we are absolutely dependant as his creatures and subjects.

SECTION
XX.

We here observe, in the height of their moral speculations, the same disposition to exclude a Deity, which before appeared in their conversation and manners. Their *sacred oracles* indeed tell us, *that we should render to all their due*, and in the first instance, *to God the things that are God's*. Now (taking the point in this light), are we not his *property*, as being the work of his hands, and, consequently, in no wise authorized to dispose of ourselves, not even so much as to regard our own or the

A remarkable disposition in the present age to exclude a Deity.

SECTION
XX.

the good of others, without the sanction of his Will? Are we not his subjects, and therefore bound in every

No true virtue without a reference to God.

thing to consult his laws? And hence, I conceive, it may certainly be concluded, that, however laudable our conduct may appear; nay, however it be *right, materially* considered, and conducive to general happiness, yet, if it want its animating form, if not referred to the LORD OF ALL, in its principle, rule and end, it is short of true virtue. We may amuse ourselves with fine theories and founding language; we may expatiate on the *good of the whole*, while probably we are pursuing our private gratification, or a partial interest, under that pretence: But it is fit we be reminded, that it is not even our utmost effort to promote the happiness of the *whole created system*, without respect to

its

its AUTHOR, that will entitle us to the
praise or the reward of virtue.

SECTION
XX.



S E C T I O N. XXI.

SECTION
XXI.



HOWEVER inconsistent with the
scheme of Christianity these lofty
theories may appear, we will not sup-
pose they are advanced in opposition to
it; a plan so lowly is not calculated to
draw the attention of an *Optimist*, whose
comprehensive mind is engaged (as we
have seen), in projecting new worlds,
or ascertaining the *greatest good* of the
world already in existence. But there
have been others of a humbler rank,
who have condescended to quarrel with
the religion of their country. They
have assaulted it on every side, in its
prophecies

*Others have
condescended
to quarrel
with the reli-
gion of their
country.*

SECTION
XXI.

*They have
assaulted it in
its prophecies,
miracles, and
mysteries.*

prophecies, its miracles, and its mysteries. The attack, which has been led on indiscriminately by nobles and plebeians, has continued with little intermission for more than a hundred years*. I cannot find that any impression has been made upon the system itself, however it may have suffered in the public opinion; in this, not unlike the great luminary of heaven, whose light may be intercepted or obscured, while he remains equally illustrious in his own sphere. The argument from prophecy was eagerly contested in the beginning of the century, and seems to have been

* Lord *Herbert of Cherbury* died in the year 1648.

“ He seems to have been one of the first, says Dr. Leland, that formed Deism into a system, and asserted the sufficiency, universality, and absolute perfection of natural religion, with a view to discard all extraordinary revelation as useless.” *View of the Deistical writers. Vol. I. p. 3. [London 1764]*

triumphantly

triumphantly vindicated *; for, from that period, the controversy either has not been revived, or but faintly and incidentally. The subject of miracles has undergone more frequent discussion, and has lately been agitated by that *vain-glorious* author † I have already noticed; and upon a principle which,

SECTION
XXI.



* This must refer to the controversy with Collins, who died in 1729. See Leland, Vol. I. p. 90-100.

† Mr. *Hume*.—That he deserves the epithet here given him, may appear from the following anecdote in a letter of Dr. Smith's to Mr. Strahan.—“ I have done every thing [said he to the doctor now mentioned, a little before his death] which I ever meant to do.” Well, and what was that? “ I have been endeavouring [he tells Charon] to open the eyes of the public.” [No doubt a very laudable project.] “ If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition.” Now this is quite too much, and argues a ridiculous presumption, by supposing that Christianity [for every one sees his meaning] could be subverted by a few paltry sophisms, after the assaults of violence and learning it had withstood during seventeen centuries!

before

SECTION
XXI.

before I visited this island, would have led me to conclude, that no such being existed: Since my experience † had afforded me no example, that a man might not only insult the religion of his country, but endeavour to sap the foundations of all virtue and truth, without animadversion from the magistrate. But I recal myself—I am a friend to liberty *though abused*: And notwithstanding the profaneness of the age, there is doubtless one spark of British sense yet remaining, and, while that is left unextinguished, the impiety of his notions is safe in their absurdity.

*But chiefly
they have op-
posed its mys-
teries.*

But they have chiefly directed the war against those peculiar doctrines in the Christian system, which may be emi-

† An allusion evidently to Mr. Hume's mode of arguing from *experience*, of which the absurdity has been well exposed by *Campbell, Adams, Leland, &c.*

nently styled its *mysteries*. And they oppose them, as would seem, upon this principle: *That whatever is not comprehensible by human reason is incredible*; although they know the contrary to be true, and admit it without difficulty in a thousand instances, where Christianity happens to be unconcerned. A few indeed of these gentlemen, for the sake of consistency, have embraced universal scepticism, and now and then a poor sceptic, mistaking his way, has unhappily stumbled into Atheism; the gulf of incomprehensibles! But in general they *affect* religion, and glory in the title of Deists, *mortal* and *immortal**; for so I find them distinguished. The former, if they are not extinct, must be extremely few, and the dregs of the party; the latter are numerous, and

SECTION
XXI.Deists MOR-
TAL and IM-
MORTAL.

* See Blount's *Oracles of Reason*, p. 95.

especially

SECTION
XXI.

especially among persons of education and fashion*. These can clearly read in the volume of nature, the being of God, the immortality of the soul, the moral differences of things, and a future state of retribution. And, if they are charged with stealing these ideas, and afterwards denying the theft, they disdain the imputation. What! a Deist to pilfer from the Christians? That would be *miraculous* indeed! No:

* Dr. Leland, contrary to our author, supposes the sect of the *mortals* to be the more numerous. His words are (speaking of the Deists): "Though these [viz. the *mortals*] are by some among themselves represented under a very disadvantageous character, and as little better than Atheists, they are, it is to be feared, the more numerous of the two. And, indeed, some of their most eminent modern writers seem to be very easy about these differences. With them all are true Deists, who oppose revelation, whether they own future rewards or punishments, or not. And they speak with great regard of those disinterested Deists, who profess to pursue virtue for its own sake, without regard to future retributions." Vol. I. p. 3.

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let others so disposed, or who find it necessary, fly to revelations; they acknowledge no oracles but REASON and NATURE.

SECTION
XXI.

SECTION XXII.

SECTION
XXII.

THERE are others who take the contrary method. They do not reject the system on account of its mysteries, but the mysteries on account of the system. They are enlightened friends of Christianity, and endeavour, by reducing it to the standard of reason, to restore it to its primitive purity. They have discovered, that its pretended mysteries were impositions upon ignorant ages, and that, having begun

The enlightened friends of Christianity, viz. the Socians.

L in

SECTION
XXII.

in fraud, they have been continued through stupidity; or that at best they are the idle visions of enthusiasm, and the infusions of pagan philosophy. The founder of their religion, who has been usually honoured by his followers as a God, they consider merely as a man; an extraordinary man they confess, and furnished above measure with every intellectual and moral excellence, and a special favourite of heaven; but indebted for his *Apotheosis* to an ancient Greek philosopher*, and the blind
 venera-

* Bishop *Bull* speaks of some in his time who held, that the Apostles indeed preached the *pure naked gospel*, or the mere humanity of Christ, but that soon afterwards the mystery of iniquity began to work, and the purity and simplicity of Christianity was adulterated by Platonic philosophers.

On the contrary, says the bishop, it is plain that Plato learned all he wrote of this matter from the more ancient philosophy of the Jews. It being certain, says he, that we may find in the Scriptures of
 the

eneration of his disciples. He is therefore introduced in the character of a sage, instructing the world in a perfect


SECTION
XXII.

the *Old Testament*, (much older than Plato,) many footsteps of this mystery: And he particularly refers his reader, for satisfaction on this point, to the treatise of Dr. *Allix*, entitled, *The Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians*.

He observes that, so far as he could find, one *Daniel Zuicker*, a violent *Ebionite*, was the first author of this absurd opinion.

This *Zuicker*, according to Mr. *Nelson*, was born at *Dantzick* in 1612, and died in 1678, and was a man of considerable learning and abilities.

The same notion has again appeared among the other great discoveries of our present reformers. The author of the *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit* speaks of Christians as very early taking occasion from the gentile philosophy “of ADVANCING their master, the too *humble Jesus*, to the high rank of the first and principal emanation of the Deity, the *vous* or *λογος* of the Platonists, and the *θεμιουγενος* under God, in creating the world.” See Bull’s *Primitive and Apostolical Tradition*, in the Introduction, and Chap. V.—*Nelson’s Life of Bull*, p. 390-4—*Priestley’s Disquisitions*, &c. p. 279.

SECTION XXII.  system of duty, which he illustrated by his example, and sealed by his death.

Difficult in this instance to avoid a suspicion of dishonesty.

To admit a suspicion of dishonesty is painful to every just and liberal mind.

And yet how to avoid it, in this instance, is beyond my comprehension. Their holy scriptures so highly exalt the person of JESUS, that to degrade him to mere humanity is hardly to be ascribed wholly to ignorance or prejudice. Were they content, as many others, to consider him as *a middle Being*, above creation but short of divinity, they might have some colour for their opinion; although I do not see how this is consistent with his character as the *Creator and End of all things*,* and as the † *God who is supreme and blessed*

* A manifest reference to ch. i. v. 16, of *Paul* to the *Colossians*.

† Rom. ch. ix. v. 5.

for

for ever; and it appears to shake the foundation of the whole Christian system: But to sink him to a man, though the best and wisest of the species, is such an outrage upon the plain letter of the volume upon which they pretend to establish their sentiment, that, in my apprehension, it would be a fairer proceeding, to reject at once its authority. It would at least argue that they had courage to disavow what they did not believe, and that they scorned to be indebted to artifice for the support of their opinions. Whereas the conduct we are now considering would seem to arise no less from want of spirit than of honesty.

And it appears equally repugnant to the evident sense of the above volume, to assert, that the life and death of JESUS was no more than an example of extra-

*The idea of
pice or ran-
som clearly
expressed in
Scripture.*

SECTION
XXII.

ordinary virtue, and an attestation to his doctrine. If any language can express the idea of *price* or *ransom*, in consideration of which the offender may be restored to moral integrity and happiness, it *IS* expressed in the said volume; not feldom and incidentally, but *often* and in *the most formal manner*, and as a principle that lies at the foundation of Christianity. It is in vain to fly to eastern metaphor: I will presume to answer in the name of the Chinese and Tartars, the Persians and Arabs, and every nation and tribe in that quarter of the world, that they would generally reject the former comment, as a violence done to language, and the uniform strain of the Christian oracles.

And the necessity of an interior influence of the Holy Spirit.

And to add one instance more: To hold the sufficiency of our natural powers, even when supplied with external
revela-

revelation, for all the purposes of virtue and happiness, without any interior influence of a mysterious agent called the HOLY SPIRIT, appears an insult to this Spirit, and to that external revelation by which they profess to regulate their opinions. I am at a loss to account for these positions, but by supposing what-----I will not repeat.

SECTION
XXII.

SECTION XXIII.

SECTION
XXIII.

THESE are *grave* writers, who endeavour to carry their cause under an appearance of reason or scripture. They have had a long reign, and have still a numerous party, but, if I mistake not, are now fast in their decline. It is not indeed from any symptoms of a re-

*The railleurs
now in fa-
shion.*

SECTION
XXIII.

turn to primitive Christianity that I entertain this sentiment; but from the fastidious levity of the age, and its impatience of every thing that looks serious or argumentative. To be reasoned or preached out of their religion would engage them too much, by straining their attention, or agitating their passions; to be politely laughed out of it is more to their ease and humour, and no less effectual. The metaphysical sophist and pretended scripturist have accomplished their mission, and, as solemn harbingers, prepared the way to the sprightly *railleur*; and the business now, at least in the fashionable world, is no longer to make formal and tedious enquiries about religion, but, by delicate insinuations and ingenious pleasantries, with an air of superior understanding, to expose it to contempt. The principal

pal article of this well-bred system has been for some time established by a noble author, who demonstrated beyond all reply, that *ridicule is a test of truth*. SECTION XXIII.

A discovery of such importance, and so very extraordinary, gives him not only a claim upon the gratitude of his country, but of the world in general, which is apt to be troubled with a notion, *That a man must be serious in order to be wise*. Lord SHAFTESBURY.

And who can tell how long it might have laboured under this gloomy and pedantic prejudice, if this brilliant genius had not happily evinced, that man, being a risible animal, might easily, by a skilful exercise of this distinguishing faculty, decide upon the weightiest points in nature and divinity.

But time is necessary to complete every discovery, and apply it to all its uses.

The

SECTION
XXIII.

The noble author in question only led the way. He just sported a few darts *obliquely* on the religion of his country. It would have looked fair indeed and liberal to have begun with his own speculations, and it was by no means discreet to leave the trial to his adversaries, as he could hardly suppose it probable, that his airy *phantoms of beauty and sublimity*, or that even his lovely *goddes*, his adorable *Virtue*, though armed with all her perfections, would prove absolutely invulnerable.

SECTION
XXIV.

SECTION XXIV.

Scorners have
arisen.

HAD the noble author, among his other sublime excellencies, possessed the gift of prophecy, he would

doubtless have guarded his principle by a learned commentary. For at length it has come to pass that SCORNERS have risen up, who, indulging their petulant humour at the expence of every thing venerable in itself, or interesting to mankind, have turned into a jest not only every species of religion, but even the constitution of nature, and every social and moral virtue: *Casting firebrands, arrows, and death, saying, Are we not in sport?* as it is elegantly expressed by the *Hebrew* sage §. The captain of this band sprung from a rival people on the neighbouring continent. He undoubtedly merits the reputation of an early and universal genius, though not of the first order; such as *Tien* at certain periods sends into the world to enlarge

SECTION
XXIV.

VOLTAIRE.

§ See Proverbs, ch. xxvi. v. 18, 19.

the

SECTION
XXIV.

the boundaries of human knowledge. But, if he could not invent or extend, he could supply all the beauties of style and lights of imagination, to illustrate and adorn any art or science at his pleasure. Who then can forbear lamenting that this lively and elegant writer, who was able to delight by his poesy, to instruct in the page of history, to facilitate and strow with flowers the paths of science, and to embellish the intellectual world, should degenerate to a miserable buffoon, and a *zany* of impiety! The temptation, however, from the circumstances of the time, and to a man of more vivacity than understanding *, ought to be considered: He
found

* « La plaifanterie n' est jamais bonne dans le genre sérieux, parce qu' elle ne porte jamais que sur un coté des objets, qui n' est pas celui, que l' on considère; elle roule presque toujours sur des rapports faux »

found the stage already erected, and willing audience; his vanity mounted him aloft, and his avarice † confirmed him in the practice.

SECTION
XXIV.

His admiration of the antiquities of our empire, and his profuse panegyrics upon Confucius and his morals, might naturally be supposed to ingratiate him with a Chinese; and were they the fruits of sincerity and learned information, they would merit my acknowledgments. But, being evidently the effusions of malevolence towards Christian nations, every candid Chinese must resent such invidious encomiums. He industrious-

faux, sur des equivoques; de là vient que les plaisans de profession ont presque tous l'esprit faux et superficiel."
Voltaire [in *A Fragment on the Corruption of Style.*]

† "Vain à l'excès, mais encore plus intéressé, il travaille moins pour la reputation que pour l'argent; il en a faim et soif." See the Postscript to a work entitled, *L'Oracle des Nouveaux Philosophes.*

ly

SECTION XXIV. **ly** confronts our chronology with the

Mosaical accounts contained in the *Bible*, flattering himself, as would seem, by this method, to sink them into discredit. I could never perceive that we had any sufficient grounds for our high chronological pretensions, and I apprehend (besides their intrinsic improbability) that the loss of ancient monuments, and the inaccuracy of early historians, have long rendered their verification impossible; however, I willingly leave them to the defence of our officious advocate. And, respecting the morals and character of our prince of philosophers, he could not have disgraced them more effectually, than by an endeavour to exalt them from motives of envy, and by the low arts of detraction.

SECTION
XXV.

SECTION XXV.

SUCH is the motley tribe of philo-^{Free-thinkers}sophers and moralists that has in-^{characterised.}fested this country, and other parts of Europe, for a century past, and chiefly under the character and title of *free-thinkers*; a race of men that we find scattered in the other quarters of the world, in the manner of gypsies and fortune-tellers, but who seem to have pitched upon this island as the seat of their intellectual empire. Although they are agreed in no common system, and their opinions are as various as might be expected from the freedom of their thoughts, there are a few characteristic notions and qualities, by which they may be generally distinguished.

And

SECTION
XXV.

*They have a
mighty conceit
of themselves.*

And first, they are remarkable for a wonderful conceit they entertain of themselves, as if they were the only men who, by dint of enquiry and strength of mind, had surmounted those prejudices which enslave the rest of the world. And surely an exploit of this extraordinary nature may well recommend them to their own good opinion.

*One of their
maxims.*

They have also an established maxim, That the ministers of every religion are knaves, whether they are *Bonzes, Lamas,* or *the clergy of the church of England;* and that all who listen to them are *void of understanding.* And to afford some comfort to mankind after such melancholy tidings, they assure them of their heroic purpose to rescue them from such ghostly impostors, and of their humble readiness to supply their place.

They

They pretend to be great searchers SECTION
 after truth, which from their mode of XXV.
 enquiry, one would imagine to have *They pretend
 to be great
 searchers af-
 ter truth.*
 remained totally undiscovered before
 their time: For they profess to set out
 a-fresh, as if they were the first adven-
 turers, or at least as if none of their
 predecessors could afford them any in-
 formation: At the same time taking
 care to be encumbered in their pursuit
 as little as possible; and therefore dis-
 charging all their former notions as the
 prejudices of education, notwithstanding
 the most forcible pleas of reason
 and nature in their behalf. Nay, it
 sometimes happens, that after they
 have fortunately caught *a truth*, they
 will let it loose again, for the pleasure
 of another chase.

And this may point us to another of *Another of
 their maxims.*
 their favourite maxims, which is, that
 opinions bear no relation to *practice*,

M

but

SECTION
XXV.

but are merely calculated for an exercise of the understanding. And therefore, in respect to mankind in general, they consider truth and error as things indifferent.

They style every man a bigot who thinks religion of any importance.

Hence every man who seriously contends for the importance of any religious system, they style a bigot, a fanatic, or enthusiast. And there is hardly a surer sign of a *free-thinker*, than to affect this scornful language, with a due mixture of the well-sounding words, *liberal, candid, rational*, as clearly applicable to themselves.

They can assume all shapes.

A *free-thinker* can easily assume all shapes; which is not surprizing, if we reflect that a man who holds to nothing is best able to *act* every thing; as stage-players who personate all characters are said to have none themselves. He is sometimes seen in the guise of a Chinese,

Chinese, talking notably of Confucius: SECTION
XXV.
Anon he is a Turk, and lavishing his
praises on Mohammed: Next, per-
haps, he is a Magian, and then you
will hear wonderful things of Zoroas-
ter: And thus by turns you may find
him a Gymnosophist, a Talapoin, a
layman or a priest, a Jew, or even a
Christian: His business is to play the
opinions of mankind upon one ano-
ther with an eye to their common de-
struction, and to erect upon their ruins
a monument to UNIVERSAL SCEPTI-
CISM.

But let us not imagine that a free-
thinker is necessarily a sceptic; he is
sometimes a dogmatist, and of the
strangest fort. He can be confident
that matter is capable of thought, and
therefore that his soul (if he have
any) is material, and perishes with the
body. He can be confident that virtue

*They are
sometimes
DOGMA-
TISTS, and
of the strang-
est kind.*

SECTION
XXV.

and vice have no foundation in the nature of things, but are purely the inventions of artful men, who have a mind to work upon others, for their own ends. He can be confident (by dint of free-thinking) that there is no such thing as freedom in the world; that it is in its nature absurd and impossible; and, that his *free thoughts* are merely links in the chain of necessity. He can be confident of every thing, except what others look upon as reasonable and virtuous.

So various a being is a free-thinker! He is every thing by fits and in pretence, and nothing in reality, but what must disgrace him in the opinion of wise men!

*They should
rather be styled
free-actors, or
free-speakers.*

But perhaps he may more properly be denominated at the present time, a *free-actor*, or a *free-speaker*; for the former

mer title supposes him to *think*, which after the discoveries already made being no longer necessary, he has very prudently discharged himself of this trouble. His predecessors have thought for him, which he takes to be quite sufficient. He has now only to believe and disbelieve, *without examination*, as they have been pleased to direct him. To yield implicit faith to JESUS CHRIST, whose credentials are so few and unsatisfying, would no doubt be the merest simplicity; but not so, to admit upon his bare word whatever a *free-thinking prophet* has thought fit to utter. When I consider this, it by no means appears to me, that in his present transformation, a free-thinker is chargeable with want of faith; he is a believer as well as the Christian, but of another kind. He believes in *man*; the Christian professes to believe in God. And thus

SECTION
XXV.

They are believers as well as the Christians, but of another kind.

SECTION
XXV.

being happily relieved from his intellectual labours, he is at leisure to indulge his ease in the *seat of the scornful*, which a princely poet in the sacred volume represents as the last stage of impiety. And there I leave him, 'till the admonitions of wisdom, or the consequences of folly, rouse him to sobriety of reflection.

SECTION
XXVI.

SECTION XXVI.

To be a genuine free-thinker, is to be a wise and a great man.

I Have more than once declared myself on the side of modest and liberal enquiry. To be a genuine free-thinker is, in my idea, to be a *wise* and a *great* man. He shews himself to be wise, by displaying a judicious criticism, and carefully separating the chaff from the solid grain; not approving or rejecting any notion, without proper evidence, nor any system of notions, without

without a just discrimination. And SECTION
XXVI.
being aware of the importance of religious truth, he is more than commonly serious in his enquiries after it; and having experienced the difficulty of attaining it, he knows how to allow for human ignorance in proportion as it is involuntary. And from a sense of the anxiety that attends an unsettled judgment in points of that nature, he never wantonly moves doubts and questions concerning them; regulating his conduct as well by the laws of expediency and benevolence, as of strict theological verity. And he is a great man; because he has the magnanimity to look error always steadily in the face, even when armed (as it often is) with power, recommended by interest, and authorized by custom; and to challenge it (whenever an occasion fairly calls upon him) to a trial at the bar of reason,

SECTION
XXVI.

lon, or revelation; while at the same time he is ready to embrace Truth, even though she is a stranger, or disgraced, or under the scourge of persecution,

SUN-YONG. Such a free-thinker was *Sun-Yong*. He was early purchased of his needy parents by the *Ho-chang*, and placed in one of their monasteries*. Here he soon became distinguished, and was rapidly advancing both in honour and authority, when the love of truth drew upon him the indignation of his associates. He could not perceive by what surprizing virtue their absurd rigours were able to compensate for their crimes; how a sinner by *standing on one leg* could become a saint: and he considered their secret doctrine (delivered by *Fœe* in his

* This is a frequent practice. See *Du Halde*, Vol. III. p. 42.

last moments, and reserved for the more illuminated) as little better than a refined species of Atheism. These sentiments he plainly avowed in a formal examination before the whole convent, and was expelled with every mark of indignity. He next applied himself to the *Tao-see*, who received him with open arms, and employed every art to fix him in their party. He listened with attention to their discourses; he studied their chief authors with uncommon diligence; and carefully inspected their manners. He found no satisfaction: he looked upon them as a tribe of fanatical magicians, and bore a firm testimony against them; for which he suffered the full weight of their resentment. What shall he do? He now resorts to the *literati*, the disciples of the great Confucius, and his expectation was again baffled: they

SECTION
XXVI.

SECTION
XXVI.

they appeared to him to have sunk into an impious philosophy: he argued against them, and was treated with learned contempt. He now betakes himself to a serious enquiry after the primitive religion, as contained in the canonical volumes, and the writings of Confucius and Mencius; and from this elevated ground he imagined that he discerned a glimmering of truth. He perceived, or thought he perceived, the *Author* and *Governor* of the universe distinct from his works; but the fates of mankind after the present life remained involved in thick darkness. In this perplexity he was relieved by the history of JESUS, rendered into his own language, and put into his hands by an European stranger, where he found *life and immortality brought to light*. He recollected the frequent declaration of Confucius, *That the HOLY ONE should appear*

appear in the West; and he indulged a hope that he had discovered the personage intended. He was seized with a passionate desire of seeing Christendom, which he fancied a region of light and benevolence; and, notwithstanding the infirmities of age, he was on the point of launching on the ocean, when death intercepted his purpose. May his last words ever live in my remembrance! *Hi-eul* (said he), what is every thing to truth, to moral and religious truth? I have sought her from my youth up—in the glooms of superstition; in the fantastic mazes of philosophy; and on the hills of antiquity, where I have traced her footsteps:—but never had I a glimpse of her countenance, save in the person of JESUS! Lo! I die! But go then, my son! and visit every land to the extremity of the West, till thou hast found the perfect knowledge

SECTION
XXVI.



SECTION
XXVI.

knowledge of this HOLY ONE! Such was the final counsel, and to me the sacred injunction, of the free thinking *Sun-Yong*, to his speechless and *weeping friend!*

SECTION
XXVII.

SECTION XXVII.

A tribute to a few great authors.

BUT before I quit this subject, it would ill suit the Chinese politeness, not to pay my respects to a few great authors, who have adorned this island; those immortal geniusses, who have extended the limits of the human mind; have multiplied useful arts, by their discoveries in nature and, above all, have furnished fresh grounds of praise and adoration of the CREATOR, by just and ample surveys
of

of his works. At the head of this chosen few I would place that illustrious man, who in respect of *intellectual* Lord Bacon's *comprehension* seems to stand the foremost of our species. To have grasped the whole of human knowledge extant in his time; to have pointed out its deficiencies, and the methods of supplying them; and at the same time affording admirable specimens of his own, that might serve for encouragements and directions to others, could only have been accomplished by himself. The death of this transcendent genius was nearly coincident with the birth of his successor, who happily prosecuted his plan in many of its important branches, and by his numerous experiments largely contributed to lay the foundations of a genuine philosophy. In this excellent person § methinks I dif-

SECTION
XXVII.

Lord Bacon's

Mr. Boyle.

§ He was born the year after Lord Bacon's death.
cern

SECTION
XXVII.

cern the character of a perfect sage. Though not endued with the height and extent of faculties of the former, he seems more entirely to have consecrated himself and his studies to the glory of his MAKER. He considered creation as his temple, and man as the sacred minister ordained to offer up praises in the name of all subordinate beings.

Sir ISAAC
NEWTON.

The next great genius reared the superstructure of natural science; he exhibited the universe in its grandeur and proportions, bearing manifestly inscribed on its front the divinity of its AUTHOR. He disentangled the rays of light, and in the subtilty of nature traced the same hand which had erected the frame of heaven. And to crown his character, his modesty was equal to his best abilities, pretending to no advantage over others, unless *in a patient attention to his subject.* These were

men born to dispel the ignorance, and relieve the wants of humanity, and are at once the glory and the shame of their country.

SECTION
XXVII.



Nor have they wanted Poets of the first order. This is more than I expected in this northern climate; and I came prepared to excuse them in works of imagination, provided they instructed me by their reason and morals. But I have found among them *one* poet, who MILTON. seems to have surpassed all the sublimity of the East, and (as I would willingly suppose) has grafted his fictions upon truth. His argument is of great compass, and interesting to mankind beyond all others. It is no less than the lapse of the human race in their common progenitor, involving in its extent all that can affect the mind with pity and astonishment. The creation
of

SECTION
XXVII.

of the world; the rebellion of angels; the seduction of man; promises of his restoration: these are the grand subjects, interspersed with a thousand incidental terrors and beauties, that compose this wonderful performance. Could some Chinese genius render it into our language with a measure of its original spirit, it would quickly pervade the empire, and might awaken curiosity to enquire, whether the Christian system be not more than a *cunningly devised fable*, or a lofty poetic fiction.

*A general
sketch.*

It would engage me too much, and requires a more extensive and accurate acquaintance with the present state of their literature than I am master of, to enumerate their many eminent writers, and to distinguish their several excellencies and defects. In general, they
are

are more remarkable for their *reasoning*, than for their taste or eloquence: and while they endeavour to convince the judgment, they do not sufficiently court the imagination, and interest the heart. Yet to be ever reasoning is the disease of little spirits; it is chiefly by intuitive powers, sometimes by a single stroke of simplicity and nature, that a first-rate genius at once enlightens the mind and governs the passions.

SECTION
XXVII.

Even the admirable author *on the human* Mr. LOCKE. *understanding* does not seem entirely exempt from *the reasoning malady*: A man he was undoubtedly of strong faculties, and clear argument, and neither destitute of taste nor eloquence; but (if I mistake not) *wanted intuition*, or the original power of instantaneously discerning those principles which only grow more involved by a logical investigation. And perhaps if he had cultivated a bet-

SECTION
XXVII.

ter acquaintance with ancient writers, it might have shewn him, that many of his doctrines which he looked upon as not only just but *new*, were neither so certain as he imagined, nor by any means to be ranked among the *original* discoveries of the moderns. Hence I consider him as a most ingenious theorist, who has spun a curious system out of his own ideas, which he too hastily abstracted from nature, and afterwards forgot or neglected to compare with those of other men ††. However, though he may afford but little solid information,

†† “Many things may seem *new* to one, that converses only with his own thoughts, which really are not so: as he may find when he looks into the thoughts of other men, which appear in their books. And therefore, although I have a just esteem for the invention of such who can spin volumes barely of their own thoughts, yet I am apt to think, they would oblige the world more, *if after they have thought so much themselves, they would examine what thoughts*

information, he makes his reader *think*, SECTION
 which is no mean commendation of an **XXVII.**
 author. In the *art of healing*; so highly
 esteemed in our empire, and for which
 we have been celebrated from the ear-
 liest antiquity ††, they have produced
 professors of great eminence. In laws,
 history, and criticism, and in a word,
 almost in every department of art or
 science they have excellent models:
 But these I dismiss with respect; and
 return to the great purpose of our en-
 quiry.

N 2 SECTION

thoughts others have had before them, concerning
 the same things," This was good counsel, though
 from an adversary. See Stillingfleet's Answer to
 Mr. Locke's 1st letter.

†† Yet it is pretty certain, that notwithstanding
 the early cultivation and esteem of the medical art
 with the Chinese, and though *colleges* were founded
 by former emperors, for its improvement, it has
 made a much greater progress with the Europeans;
 which is not surprising, if we consider, that the
 Chinese

SECTION
XXVIII.

SECTION XXVIII.

*Transition to
the PARLIA-
MENT.*

LET us now turn our attention to the great national assembly, styled the Parliament, and see whether the professed religion of the land, which we have hitherto fought after in vain among the people at large, has not taken refuge with its political founders. But I cannot forbear a few previous re-

Chinese are but little skilled in natural philosophy, and are almost entirely ignorant of anatomy.

Their whole system consists in the knowledge of the pulse, and the use of simples.

By the pulse only, it is said, they will frequently determine both the cause, nature and symptoms of diseases; and it is this which has rendered the Chinese physicians so famous in the world.

Among their simples, of which they have great variety, they reckon divers *specifics*. See Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 356. 7. and 362.

marks

marks on the history and constitution
of this country.

SECTION
XXVIII.



Perhaps there is not any nation in the world which can rival the Chinese in point of antiquity or uniformity*. They can boast of native Princes (allowing a short interruption**) for the

*View of the
British consti-
tution com-
pared with
the Chinese.*

N 3

space

* Est prorsus admiratione dignum quòd in hoc Sinarum imperio—tanta sit, & ab omni retrò memorià semper fuerit in rebus omnibus *uniformitas* tam constanter & exactè observata; ut non solùm linguæ, rituumque civilium, qui ad forum, conjugia, & disciplinas scholasticas spectant; item sacrificiorum, vestiumque unà eademque pro cujusque gradu sit ratio: sed urbium quoque, palatiorum, & domorum par omninò forma; sic ut qui unam urbem viderit, omnes hujus imperii urbes vidisse censei possit.” *Scientia Sinensis Lib. ii. p. 80. 1.* — It must be observed, however, that the present Chinese are less uniform,

** About the year 1280 after Christ, China was first conquered by a Tartar prince named *Chi-tsou*. At his accession he made no changes in the ministry, laws, or customs; and, during the whole course of his reign, acted with such honour and paternal regard to his new subjects, that he entirely gained their affections.

SECTION
XXVIII.

space of near four thousand years, from *Fo-bi* till the late conquest||, with little variation during this long period, in government or manners; and (if some of our Western panegyrist's may be credited) with as little alteration in religion; but this I reckon among their gratuitous praises, which I willingly relinquish. The history of this island hardly extends to half this period, and presents it to the reader as little more than a stage of perpetual changes and revolutions. In the course of a thousand years, it was successively in possession of five different nations†; and of

affections. And his successors so well copied his excellent qualities, that the administration of this Tartar family is at present styled, *the wise government*. It continued 89 years. See Du Halde, Vol. I. p. 443.

|| This was the second conquest by the Tartars in 1644, under whose dominion it now is,

† Viz. The Britons, Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans.

consequence,

consequence, its opinions, laws and customs, during that time, must have been in constant fluctuation. Since the last conquest, however, things appear to have been gradually advancing to their present state. And in particular, we may trace back for five hundred years at least †, the same fundamental constitution of parliament, which now at length is arrived at such a degree of perfection, that it may justly be thought to rival our own form of government.

SECTION
XXVIII.



The supreme power is lodged in the above assembly, which consists of three estates; the prince, the nobles, and the representatives of the commons. They are regular checks on one another, and together constitute an exquisite balance between tyranny and popular licence. Hence in this respect, the British poli-

† See Blackstone's Commentaries, Book I. Ch. 2.

SECTION
XXVIII.

ty, which circumscribes the power of the prince, might be thought superior to the Chinese, which leaves him absolute: But this is mostly in appearance; since custom and manners in our empire have the force of laws, and are in general sufficient to secure the established tribunals while they keep within the usual limits. Besides, we have an order of censors*, or public inquisitors, whose

* Nothing, says Du Halde, is more capable of curbing the power of the magistrates which compose the supreme tribunals, than the precaution that is taken to name an officer who observes all that passes in every tribunal: he assists upon all occasions, reviews all their acts, which they communicate to him for that purpose; but can decide nothing himself, and is merely an inspector to take notice of every thing, and send an account thereof to the court: He is also obliged, by his office, to give private information to the emperor of the faults committed by the *Mandarin*s, not only in the administration of public affairs, but in their private conduct. In short, nothing escapes the vigilance of this order of men.

It is therefore no wonder they are extremely dreaded,

SECTION
XXVIII.

dreaded, especially as they have exhibited so many surprizing instances of their courage and perseverance: they have ventured to accuse grandees, viceroys, and princes, though protected by the emperor himself, who also upon occasion submits to their animadversions; and they will frequently suffer disgrace, and even sometimes lay down their lives, rather than desist from their pursuits, when they think them conformable to equity, and the order of a wise government.

One of these censors having convicted several great Mandarins of receiving bribes for nominating to offices, the emperor *Cam-hi* immediately reduced them to the condition of *wardens*, who are small officers among the common people.

There is manifestly a resemblance between these *Chinefe* and the old *Roman* censors, with this difference, that the latter only were invested with executive power.

The Roman censors, says Dr. Middleton, were *the guardians of the discipline and manners of the city*, and had a power to punish vice and immorality by some mark of infamy in all ranks of men, from the highest to the lowest.

L. Gellius and Cn. Lentulus, he observes, in the time of Cicero, *expelled above sixty-four from the senate for notorious immoralities*, the greatest part for the detestable practice of taking money for judging causes, and among them; C. Antonius, the uncle of the
triumvir;

whose office it is not only to inspect the tribunals, but to admonish the emperor himself when he transgresses the due bounds. And these we may consider as the *three estates* of the Chinese constitution; which, although they may not form a *systematic poize*, are by no

triumvir; subscribing their reasons for it, that he had plundered the allies, declined a trial, *mortgaged his lands, and was not master of his estate*. See Middleton's Life of Cicero, Vol. I. p. 117. London, 1767, 8vo.

The most remarkable example of this censorial authority that I remember in this country was, when Cromwell (according to Mr. Whitlock) entered the house, and told the members, "That they had sat long enough, unless they had done more good; that some of them were whoremasters;—that others of them were drunkards, and some corrupt and unjust men, and *scandalous to the profession of the gospel*, and that it was not fit they should sit as a parliament any longer." And so fairly dismissed them. Should both our present honourable houses of parliament be discharged of the above characters (without mentioning others), Quære, how many of their respective members would be left behind? See Harris's Life of Cromwell, p. 321.

means

means without a competent degree of mutual control **.

SECTION
XXVIII.



We have remarked that the supreme government is vested in the British parliament. This must be understood in the largest sense, as extending equally over the ecclesiastical and civil state. Herein it resembles the jurisdiction of the Chinese court of rites †; which, besides other important objects of a political nature, takes cognizance of the religion of the empire ‡, though not with all the authority assumed by the British parliament, which pretends to establish articles of faith as well as modes of

** The reader who would see this more distinctly, may consult the account of the Chinese government in Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 32—45.

† It takes its name from its regulating the *ceremonial* of the empire.

‡ The missionaries have been called before this tribunal, See Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 37.

SECTION
XXVIII.

The parliament censured for neglecting to superintend the national religion.

worship. Hence it might be supposed that the national religion is a principal object of their attention ; and that they frequently examine, whether or not the public opinions correspond with their standard of faith, or the public worship be duly observed. How surprizing then must it appear, that these are points which seldom engage their enquiries or deliberations, though there is reason to apprehend, that while the latter (as we have seen) is generally neglected, the former is as generally disbelieved ! Thus they sit like men unconcerned, neither enforcing their statutes, nor so much as bearing their testimony by a *vote of the house*, against the national infidelity and profaneness, which justly draws a strong suspicion upon themselves : For in such circumstances, not to remonstrate is to approve ; and even the Chinese might teach them this lesson,

son, who solemnly condemn, once a year in the capital, those heresies they are unable to suppress ††.

SECTION
XXVIII.





And if we take the subject in another light, the parliament seems liable to just censure. A considerable property and many civil advantages are granted to an order of men, on condition of discharging the offices, and maintaining the doctrines of a certain religious system. Now as this condition is prescribed by parliament, it seems to be evidently its duty, to enquire how far the said condition answers the intended purpose; and, in case of its failure, to examine whether this arises from any defect in the condition itself, or from a want of its being properly observed: And accordingly to enforce, modify, confirm, or annul both the condition and the

†† Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 52.

grant,

**SECTION
XXVIII.**

grant, as in its wisdom shall appear fit:  Otherwise, its authority may be disregarded or abused, and the said advantages be disposed of contrary to the laws of the land, or even to the laws of heaven; for all which this legislative body must stand accountable. And should it be alleged, that the archbishops and bishops, with a train of subalterns, are the officers appointed to superintend the ecclesiastical branch of the constitution; this will by no means justify a neglect of its supreme inspection, even though the ministers of the church were much purer and more vigilant than they are generally supposed. Besides, in every department of the civil state, enquiries are made into the conduct of its officers, and the application of the public property under its direction; and were there a due proportion
of

of ecclesiastical patriotism, the church would share equally in the inquisition. **SECTION XXVIII.** 

I will not enter upon a consideration respecting either the existence or limitation of a right in the legislature of this country, to interpose in matters purely of Christianity. This would lead not only to a disquisition into the nature and extent of civil government at large, and of the British constitution in particular, but likewise into the authority and laws of this religious system. I only insist, that as it argues a strange unconcern for their religion to make provisions in its favour, without attending to their execution and effects; so it shews no less a want of political integrity, to suffer a considerable property and other civil advantages to be disposed of (for aught they know or regard), contrary to the established laws, and to the common prejudice of society

SECTION
XXVIII.

fociety and Christianity. This surely is to act neither agreeably to the character of Christians nor senators.

But perhaps in the liberality of their enquiries, they have at last discovered that the Christian church, as a religious community, ought to be exempt from civil jurisdiction; and hence may arise their remissness in enforcing their statutes. So far may be well: But, would it not be better in this case nobly to relinquish their spiritual usurpation at once, and leave the church entirely to its own regulations, and the care of its great Founder? This idea, I find, has been maintained by the author *on the human understanding*, and others of high reputation; and its adherents, who are neither inconsiderable for character or number, have lately applied to parliament, praying to be released from their ecclesiastical bondage.

It

It seems that no person is admitted by the present laws of the land to the office of a Christian teacher, without his subscription to certain articles of faith ||; and in the established church a further consent is required to the use of certain rites and forms of devotion. This has been deemed a grievance of an extensive nature: As encroaching upon the kingdom of Christ, and the natural rights of conscience; as sometimes preventing honest men from sharing with others in the good things of this life, and contracting their sphere of usefulness; and as having a tendency to breed scruples in those who have acceded to such conditions. Upon these and other considerations, parliament has been petitioned by persons of several descriptions, both within the esta-

SECTION
XXVIII.

*Petition to
parliament in
the matter of
subscription.*

|| The dissenters obtained relief on this point a few years ago.

SECTION
XXVIII.

blished church and out of it, for relief of conscience and equal liberty, by an admission to the full exercise of their religion, and to all civil privileges, upon barely subscribing to the Bible in general, unincumbered with human creeds and explications.

SECTION XXIX.

SECTION
XXIX.

IN pursuance of my chief object, I was eager to attend the debates of parliament upon this occasion §§, in

§§ In *The Debates and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, published in Octavo, is some account, and the only one I have been able to meet with, of what passed in parliament upon this affair of subscription, in the years 1772 and 1773. I shall cite a few passages (omitting the names of the speakers), which seem more particularly to correspond with the relation here given by our Chinese.

hopes

hopes of obtaining authentic information concerning the Christian system, and its reception in this island, and, at the same time, of discovering the religious character of its political guardians. I must own my expectation was considerably damped upon my first view of this assembly, which little corresponded with the conception I had formed of a Christian senate. *I felt a want of dignity in the appearance,* and was surprized to observe so many young legislators, who seemed hardly escaped from college or their travelling tutors. Before I was well seated, all my remaining ideas of order were disturbed, on occasion of some unseasonable jest, which threw the house into a fit of merriment. This methought was no promising prelude to a religious discussion. For although I am far from approving the Chinese solemnity,

SECTION
XXIX.

note.

SECTION
XXIX.

nity, or condemning every instance of pleafantry, even in the weightieft deliberations, yet ftill there is a *decorum* to which wife men are attentive.

At length an honourable member (for every member is honourable by courtesy of the houfe) flood up in his place, and moved for leave to introduce a petition in the name of a certain respectable body, confifting of minifters of the church, profeffors of civil law, phyficians, and divers others, praying relief touching fubfcription to the thirty-nine articles, which conftitute the eftablifhed creed of the nation. The honourable gentleman, who (by the *fympol* in his hand) appeared of more than ordinary diftinction §, fpoke with much zeal in behalf of his clients, flattering himfelf at the fame time, that

§ He was at that time *Comptroller of the houehold*.

there

there was no need to urge many arguments in their favour, since the articles in question were clearly *repugnant to common sense* *. I was astonished at this declaration, and expected signs of displeasure in the house, and was more astonished upon observing its patience or indifference. Methought a modest suspicion of his own judgment, as well as a respect to former ages, required another language; and that even *non-sense*, when authorized by the laws of two centuries, ought to be treated with decent ceremony. But does the charge terminate in the thirty-nine articles? I have been at some pains in comparing them with the canonical scriptures from which they are said to be drawn, and am satisfied of their agreement in the

SECTION
XXIX.

The articles pronounced contrary to common sense by the mover of the petition

This censured

* In the *Debates*, this gentleman is made to observe, "That licentiousness in the church was the unavoidable consequence of signing assent to that which was *repugnant to common sense*." p. 323.

SECTION
XXIX.

principal doctrines: And I presume the honourable gentleman will hardly affirm that *Christianity is nonsense!* This indeed a pretended free-thinker might perhaps assert, but it would surely be strange from the lips of a British senator! Another honourable member (who I was told was a noble lord) observed, That he just rose in order to express his concurrence with the mover of the petition, being perfectly of his mind, that the articles were too glaringly absurd to admit of debate, and that no man could be supposed to subscribe them in the sense originally intended, nor without perverting the text by forced interpretations **. And in

Similar charges made by others, with remarks.

** " Lord — spoke of the absurdity of the articles, and observed, that the Church of England could be in no danger whilst there were bishops: That those who signed the articles *did it with a forced interpretation of their own, as none could be so absurd to do it for conscience sake,* in the light the founders of the church ordered they should." See the *Debates*.


the opinion of another noble lord, they were of no use but to open the doors of the church to men who would subscribe to *any thing* †. These are grievous imputations upon the established clergy ! It is saying they are either mean hypocrites or abandoned villains ; and they will no doubt consider upon the properest methods of justifying both themselves and the faith they profess. Another member arose, who it seems is a patriot, and having read part of the articles to the house, declared with abundant liberality, that he would not expose them any farther, *because they did it sufficiently themselves* ††. Possibly this

SECTION
XXIX.

† Lord ——— said, “ That the house was not senseless, but could judge of the intelligibility of the articles : That many of them were absurd and heterodox, and had no other effect *than giving opportunity of entrance to men who would subscribe to any thing.*” DEBATES, p. 325.

†† Mr. ——— observed, “ That the articles were

SECTION
XXIX.


 this gentleman had so quick a discernment, accompanied with so rare a modesty, that he ascribed to the evidence of the subject, what he chiefly owed to his own extraordinary powers of intuition; and he could not in politeness suppose that the house had less understanding than himself. The honourable gentleman who next drew my attention (as my information described him) was an eminent lawyer and a wit, and assuming this second character, contented himself in few words and with an affected grimace, to pronounce the articles *ridiculous* †; which was adding but little to the accusation;

were so *strikingly absurd*, that he wished them to be read, and would read them himself; but having gone through a few of them, declared *he would not attempt to expose them further than they did themselves.*" Ibid. p. 327.

† Mr. ——— said, "The subscription to the articles was indefensible, *they were so palpably ridiculous.*" Ibid. p. 327-8.

as this is generally the case with non-
 sense and absurdity. In the close of
 the debate, the honourable member
 who moved the petition again rose up
 in his place, and in vehement terms
 aggravated his former charge, declaring
 that the articles were *notoriously false*,
 and that no clergyman of sense and
 character would defend them before
 his parish in their obvious meaning,
 and as intended by the compilers ††.


SECTION
 XXIX.

On the other side it was argued, *Arguments in
 favour of
 subscription.*
 That the legislature was vested with
 competent authority to prescribe terms
 of admission to the emoluments and

†† According to the DEBATES, this gentleman
 observed, "That the articles taught as divine, not
 only what were not the attributes of *God*, but what
 must be peculiarly the attributes of the Devil, if we
 suppose the Devil the most unjust of Beings: *That
 the articles were a notorious falsehood: That no minister
 would defend the doctrines of them in a strict grammatical
 sense before his parish.*" p. 328-9.

privileges

SECTION
XXIX.


 privileges of the church; and that religious men, who could not accede to the conditions, would not much regret being honest at the expence of a few temporal advantages: That the demands of a scrupulous conscience are never satisfied, and ought to be rejected in the first instance: That innovations are always dangerous, and that the state had been often disturbed, and sometimes subverted, under religious pretences. Such were the political reasons urged in behalf of subscription to the established faith. However I must do the justice to *one* or *two* of the honourable members to observe, that they stood forth in vindication of the *faith itself*, under all its charge of absurdity and error, insisting, that besides its political expedience, it was at once agreeable to reason and scripture: And allowing (said they) there existed a few
 hardships

hardships in the matter of subscription, this is no time for relaxation, as the debates of this day have sufficiently evincèd. Accordingly the petition was rejected.

SECTION
XXIX.

But notwithstanding this repulse, the friends of religious liberty renewed their attempt the following session, when the same honourable gentleman again moved the house on the matter of subscription to the thirty-nine articles (or to any other test), as it respected the admission of members into either of the universities. A gentleman who spake early in the debate argued in favour of the motion from the indifferency of speculative opinions, insinuating, that the articles in question, and religious creeds universally, were of this description. This (if I mistake not) is in the very spirit of minute philosophy, whose noble

A second application to parliament.

Indifferency of speculative opinions contended for, in order to subvert all religion.

SECTION
XXIX.

noble design is to supersede every species of religion. To affirm barely that the articles are ridiculous, is limiting the charge to a particular subject, and from the absurd superstitions that abound in the world, at first sight carries some kind of appearance, and therefore may be thought not altogether inconsistent with a regard to religion in general: whereas in the scheme of this honourable gentleman, every opinion which extends beyond the honest and the dishonest, the noble and the mean, the base and the praise-worthy, *as relating to the purposes of life*, is taxed as merely speculative and unnecessary; and thus I fear all that can justly be named religion is done away, unless a religion can be found which has no regard to God, nor the prospects of immortality. In the progress of his discourse, he thought proper to examine

*The genealogy
of the articles.*

mine the genealogy of the articles: he SECTION
 traced them into ignorant ages, and at XXIX.
 length discovered their origin in monk-
 ish enthusiasm. Hence I was led to
 fancy myself transported to a remote
 antiquity, and was afterwards surpriz-
 ed to find, that by ascending a little
 beyond two centuries, I arrived at
 those *days of darkness*, when *superstition*,
 (it is said) *impregnated by ignorance*, pro-
 duced the thirty and nine absurdities of
 the national faith. It might be well
 for the honourable gentleman before
 his next harangue in parliament upon
 this subject, just to refresh his memory,
 by perusing once more the history of
 his country; lest some foreigner should
 haply imagine, that the *ages of ignorance*
 were not yet past. For should he un-
 luckily find out, that the Compilers When and by
 whom com-
 piled.
 of the offensive *dogmas* flourished in
 times almost bordering on the present,
 and

SECTION
XXIX.

and at a period when all the liberal arts and sciences were reviving in the West; and that instead of cloistered visionaries, they were men of learning and business, who openly stood forth the most formidable adversaries of monks and monkish pretensions, I know not but he would consider our declaimer as individually beneath a monk, and in his representative character, as casting a suspicion of illiterate barbarism upon his age and nation. And yet this superficial pretender is lavish in his encomiums upon the knowledge and liberality of the times, as if he fondly imagined himself an authentic example. As for his knowledge, indeed, we may suppose it to lie in Egyptian or Chinese antiquities; but as for his liberality, had he possessed the least portion of this excellent quality, he would have thought it quite sufficient

*The know-
ledge and libe-
rality of the
times pretend-
ed.*

cient to have simply confuted the religion of his country, without further loading it with every opprobrious epithet ||. But this it seems is now the fashion,

SECTION
XXIX.

*Christianity
treated as un-
worthy of a
serious con-
firmation.*

|| The gentleman here designed is doubtless the same who in the DEBATES is introduced as delivering his sentiments in the following manner: "As to speculative matters, they are, in my opinion, by no means material; every man knows what is honest and dishonest, what is base or praise-worthy, what is noble or mean; in this we are all agreed: and is not this, Sir, sufficient for the purposes of life? But what are these articles which our youth are forced to subscribe? *The offspring of monkish enthusiasm, begot by ignorance upon superstition: they are a jumble of contradictions that pass the line of every man's understanding not bewildered in the region of metaphysics.* Away, therefore, with such fanatical stuff; can children understand them? No: grown men, who have plunged into the controversies of those ignorant ages when they were framed, are altogether at a loss. *We now, Sir, live in more enlightened times: formerly none but priests dwelt in the colleges; all their institutions shew that they were founded for the training of such men only; their chancellors were church-men.—* Their chancellors have lately been officers in civil departments: I honour the choice they have lately made; *not that I suppose the Chancellors of either of the universities at all conversant in matters of religion* [a
loud

SECTION
XXIX.

fashion, as we may suppose from the former instances; and honourable gentlemen find it more convenient, and infinitely more graceful, to pronounce with an air at once, *mere enthusiasm, fanatical stuff, jumble of contradictions*, than by calm reason or authorities of scripture, to make good their allegations. Such grave argument, which so strongly favours of the illiberality of

loud laugh through the house]; but, Sir, they are worthy men, and I should hope that one of them, now before me, will recommend an abolition of subscription, to the university over which he presides." p. 226-7.

Another member observed: "We are still, Sir, to be shackled in the same manner *as in the superstitious days of monkish darkness*: the all-cheering sun of reformation hath indeed arisen, but we prevent its reflecting rays from enlightening our minds in the manner to be wished.—We will still persevere, certain that in the end, truth will prevail; common sense will triumph over mysticism, reason over superstition, and a rational system of faith and manners *over the musty relics of monkish spirituality*." Ibid. p. 230.

the

the schools, is entirely discarded by men of sense and knowledge of the world, who are now perfectly of opinion that Christianity is too absurd for a serious refutation †.

SECTION
XXIX.

He was followed in the same strain of cant and arrogance by other honourable members, who seemed determined to ring out all the possible changes on monks, darkness, shackles, priests, reason, liberty, reformation,

This totally unbecoming the sense and liberality of Britons.

† What Dr. Hartley observes in relation to governors and their subjects may be here applied: "For governors," says he, "to render religion [viz. either the religion of nature or Christianity, of both which he is speaking] contemptible in the eyes of their subjects, by example or insinuation, and much more by directly ridiculing or vilifying it, is manifest infatuation; it is seeing without perceiving, and hearing without understanding, through the grossness and carnality of their hearts. And it may be part of the infatuation predicted to come upon the wicked in the latter ages of the world. For then the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand." Vol. II. p. 443-4.

P

and

SECTION
IX

and such like terms, whose intended application was sufficiently obvious.

Who would not prefer a modest ignorance to such conceit of superior understanding? And is this (I thought) a specimen of British sense and liberality? Is this the respect they render to the institutions of their country? Is this their veneration for that system which I had considered as the product of divine wisdom? Struck with a profound admiration of its excellency, I am come from a remote quarter of the globe, in order to visit this favoured land, where I imagined its light and operation were most eminently displayed. Here I have sought it among the populace; I have sought it amidst polite circles; I have sought it in colleges and temples; and now having pursued my enquiry to the seat of the national wisdom, am I thus greeted
with

with a language, which, in the instance of a particular creed, seems to throw contempt, not only upon Christianity, but upon every species of religion? Disappointed and disgusted, I was just quitting the assembly, when an honourable member happily arose at the instant, and addressing himself to the chair with a becoming spirit of indignation, delivered his sentiments to the following effect.


SECTION
XXIX.

“ From what we have now heard, a stranger might suppose, that we lived in an age of blind enthusiasm, when every impulse of fancy is mistaken for inspiration, and every ceremony of worship for pure devotion. But these, Sir, are groundless suggestions, calculated to excite vain terrors in the ignorant, and afford some countenance to the opposition of captious ad-versa-

*The present
age profane
and sceptical
beyond former
example.*

SECTION
XXIX.

ries. Surely, Sir, this is by no means an enthusiastic age ; it is rather an age of scepticism, in which, under a pretence of reason, the most undeniable and important truths of religion and morals are called in question ; and under a pretence of liberty, are treated with contempt. Nor is the age, Sir, less remote from all shadow of superstition, witness our deserted churches, witness our unhallowed dwellings, nay, witness this house of Parliament, which scarce retains an appearance of religion, though originally consecrated to its service. The only relic that I know is the reverend chaplain, who is yet retained to mumble a few prayers ; but you, Sir, can best tell how many of the honourable members are present on the occasion. Sir, we are cast in an age profane and sceptical beyond all former example, and therefore though
a few

a few hardships should really exist in the case before us, the motion is un-
 SECTIO
 XXIX. 
 reasonable, and as such my voice is
 against it §."

This methought was a noble address on the side of religion, at a moment when it seemed abandoned to the scorn of the house, under the names of enthusiasm and superstition. But the honourable gentleman was not left to stand without a second: he appeared to have kindled the like ardour in the breasts of others. Away with your modern apostles, said the next honourable speaker; your Voltaires, your Rouf-

§ Several of these sentiments are expressed in the *Debates* as follows: "I know, Sir, [said Mr. —,] that the hackneyed term *superstition* may be called in with great dexterity, as a bugbear to alarm weak minds, by suggesting groundless terrors: but surely, Sir, this cannot be called a *superstitious age*; it is rather an age of *scepticism*; under a notion of *religious liberty*, the solemn truths of religion itself are treated with contempt, and *sceptical infidelity* abounds." p. 231-2.

SECTION
XXIX.

feaus, your Humes, and Bolingbokes! §§ Let us no more be nauseated or insulted with their buffooneries, their whims, their sophistries and impudence; restore us our prophets and evangelists, our Peters and our Pauls, men of sobriety, reason, and inspiration. And having thus expressed his resentments, he entered on a pathetic description of the irreligious state of the times. Nor was there wanting in the same cause the prime minister himself, who addressing the chair remarked to this purpose: We are told, Sir, of reformation; I look, Sir, with jealousy on the reforming

§§ “Whence all that scepticism, that froth of words, that puerile stuff, *so much the taste of the present times?*—but from your Humes, your Bolingbokes, your Rousseaus, and others of this despicable tribe?” See *Debates*, p. 232.

“As to the Humes, the Bolingbokes, and the Rousseaus, [said another member] I verily think them the worst pests to society.” *Ibid.* p. 234.

notions

notions of this age; something more than reformation is intended; something that deserves a harsher name, and to which if we give way, adieu to religion, adieu to every thing dear to us as men and as Christians. The times, Sir, are such that to relax in points of this nature would be so far from promoting reformation, that it would only increase that dissoluteness of religious principle which is the characteristic of this sceptical age*. When the noble lord had thus delivered his sentiments, the debate came to a close, and the ^{*The motion re-*} ~~the~~ _{*jected.*} motion was rejected.

* In the *Debates* he is made to express himself nearly in the same words. p. 238.

SECTION
XXX.

SECTION XXX.

*The religious
character of
the HOUSE.*

I HAVE already observed that my motive for attending the house upon this business, was to obtain information concerning three points: 1. The nature of the Christian system: 2. The entertainment it meets with in this island: and lastly the religious character of its constitutional guardians. In respect to the first of these subjects, I received no light from these political divines, which I less wonder at upon reflecting, that the *holy scriptures*, which are held the only authentic documents of Christianity, were seldom introduced in the course of the present discussion. Upon the second point, it appeared to be the general sentiment of the house (and to which I perfectly agreed), that scepticism and
pro-

profaneness were the prevailing evils of the time. And in regard to the religious character of this legislative body, I would remark: That although their determination in this instance may be interpreted in their favour, there are some appearances against them. Why (it may be asked) did they suffer a language that would have disgraced a club of minute philosophers? In case of disrespect to the prince, or other flagrant breaches of order, they generally discover evident tokens of their displeasure, and sometimes proceed to a formal censure; and shall no animadversion be used, when a doughty orator wantonly insults the religion of his country? Nay, shall he be heard with a grin of applause by the avowed advocates of this religion? I fear these are no-convincing signs of faith in the thirty and nine articles, or of a zealous attachment

to


SECTION
XXX.


SECTION
XXX.

to Christianity. Were this really the disposition of the house, the most heroic infidel would no doubt think it prudent to confine himself within the bounds of decorum. And if we attend to the mode of defence employed on this occasion, it will appear of a very equivocal nature. One might reasonably have expected, that the argument chiefly urged in behalf of the articles would have been their agreement with the *Bible*, from which they are professedly drawn, and of whose fundamental doctrines they are set forth as a just summary: And indeed this method was adopted by *one* or *two* of the honourable members: But in general, the rights of parliament, and the necessity of opposing a *legal* barrier to the impiety of the times, were the topics resorted to in their favour. And so little was their agreement with the *Bible* insisted on,

that their disagreement was at least tacitly acknowledged by some of their warmest advocates: Of which the former session afforded a singular example; when the prime minister being challenged by the mover of the petition, to demonstrate what he declared him to have asserted, *that the articles were agreeable to scripture*, professing his readiness in that case to subscribe them himself; the minister declined the challenge, denying that he had made such an assertion, and very charitably left the honourable member among the non-subscribers. And, if we further consider the inattention of parliament to enforce a due regard to the articles on those who have subscribed them, we shall perhaps see cause to apprehend, that their zeal partakes more of policy than religion ††.

SECTION.
XXX.



On

†† This is less severe than what is advanced by a great

SECTION
XXX.

*Political in-
trenchments
supposed of
little honour
or use to Chris-
tianity.*

On the whole, were I allowed an opinion upon this important subject, it would probably incline in favour of the petitioners, so far as the single point of subscription is concerned. And I was struck with an observation that was dropped in the course of the former debate, by AN HONEST MAN, AND A LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY †, *That the cas-
tle*

great modern philosopher, who asserts that the politicians of the present times are not even wise enough to improve religion to their own purposes: "Religion (he observes) is often said by unbelievers to have been the invention of wise lawgivers and artful politicians, in order to keep the vicious and headstrong multitude in awe. How little does the practice of the present times suit with this! *The administrators of public affairs, in the present times, are not even wise or artful enough to take advantage of a pure religion handed down to them from their ancestors, and which they certainly did not invent; but endeavour to explode it at the manifest hazard of all that is dear to them.*" Hartley's Observations on Man, Vol. II. p. 444.

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tle of divine truth did not need the feeble out-works of human policy. This I conceive was to do honour to Christianity; whereas to discover an anxiety upon every appearance of danger, and timidly to oppose political intrenchments, instead of nobly confiding to its own native strength and provisions of defence, is to degrade it in the eyes of its enemies, to encourage their assaults, and to betray the suspicions of its adherents. *If it be of God it cannot be overthrown,* said a Hebrew sage in the like case, *but if it be of men it will come to nought*.*

SECTION
XXX.

probably designed under this character; nor is there, I presume, a liberal-minded man in the kingdom, but will acknowledge the propriety of its application to this distinguished Senator; who, by his genuine patriotism, his inflexible integrity, and boundless humanity, exhibited to a corrupt age a pattern of public and private virtue.

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up
And say to all the world, THIS WAS A MAN!

* Acts of the Apostles, chap. v. ver. 38-9.

SECTION
XXXI.

SECTION XXXI.

*The influence
of religion up-
on the legisla-
ture at large.*

LET us now for a moment extend our view, from a particular system, to religion in general; and consider its influence on the legislature at large, consisting of both Houses of Parliament, with the Prince at their head. The existence of ONE SUPREME BEING, besides what may be gathered from the common light of nature, is so evidently displayed in the *Bible*, that without the most absolute proof, I will never suppose a Briton to be an atheist. But neither a bare conviction of his existence, nor a mere philosophic admiration of his perfections is sufficient to constitute religion, without those practical acknowledgments which are naturally.

turally due to him from every rational creature. We must obey him as his subjects, and love him as his children, and render him these duties in all our relations and capacities, both individually and as members of society. And hence every political state, considered as a distinct part (though infinitely minute) of his dominion, and branch of his family, and as constituting one *moral person*, is bound to the discharge of these obligations. And should we even set aside the reasons of *duty*, our obedience ought to be induced by motives of interest; since not only individuals, but the greatest empires rise or fall, are depressed or exalted at the will of heaven. Our classical volumes abound with this sentiment: *Tien* (it is often observed) elevates and casts down at his pleasure the kings of the earth; fertility and famine, peace and war,

SECTION
XXXI.

The being and providence of God particularly acknowledged in the ancient Chinese government.

SECTION
XXX.

*Political in-
trenchments
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little honour
or use to Chris-
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SECTION
XXX.

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SECTION
XXXI.

war, and other public blessings and calamities, are represented as his messengers; and sometimes he is said to signify his anger by unusual signs and prodigies, to rouse the nations to repentance and reformation||. This appears to have been the Chinese primitive doctrine, which was probably by degrees corrupted, till at length the weal of the empire was almost solely suspended on the conduct of the Prince, considered as the representative of his people. Hence when any disaster befalls a province, the Emperor confines himself to his palace, abstains from food and every enjoyment, and by his edict relieves the afflicted province from the usual taxes§§. And it was a regulation

|| See Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 17, 18.

§§ He professes to weep night and day for the public calamities, declaring that they wound his heart, and that all his thoughts are employed to make his people happy. See Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 17.

of

of *Yong-Tehin*, that immediate notice should be sent him when any part of the empire was threatened with calamity, in order that he might use the most timely measures to appease the anger of *Tien* *. Nor were at least our ancient princes contented barely to offer vows and sacrifices in these exigencies, without narrowly scrutinizing at the same time their own character and manners. And whether they conceived the offence to consist in the sumptuosity of their habits, the luxury of their tables, the magnificence of their palaces or equipage, or their secret iniquities, they resolved upon reformation, as the only effectual method of propitiating the Deity. One of them confessed that he had not obeyed the salutary suggestions of *Tien* **: Another was apprehensive,

SECTION
XXXI.

* Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 17.

** Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 19.

SECTION
XXXI.

left his neglect of business and fondness for amusements might provoke his displeasure, and prove the source of public calamities*. And so far was this idea extended as to render the prince responsible for the public morals, which were imagined to depend on the influence of his own virtues §. It is a small matter, say the Chinese, to punish offences; a prince ought to prevent them by the force of his example †. And we are told of one of our ancient emperors, that observing a criminal on the point of execution, he lamented his own want of virtue, as the prime cause of every enormity committed during his

* Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 19.

§ " Ils pretendoient que la seule vertu des rois pouvoit rendre tous leurs sujets vertueux, & que par là les rois estoient les premiers responsables envers le ciel des mauvaises moeurs, de leur royaume." La Loubere Descr. de Siam, tom I. p. 402.

† " Cest peu, disoient-ils, de punir les crimes, il faut qu'un roi les empêche par sa vertu." Ibid. p. 403.
reign.

reign††. And of another we are informed, that seeing the empire visited with a seven years famine, he charged himself as the only delinquent with the sins of his people, and devoted himself to death by way of expiation; but that heaven being satisfied with his intention, withheld the sacrifice, and by sudden and abundant showers restored the earth to its usual fertility‡. From

SECTION
XXXI.

Q 2

these

†† Descr. de Siam. Ibid.

‡ Ibid. This remarkable event is related by Du Halde in the following manner.

“ In the reign of *Teking-Tang*, [about 1800 years before Christ,] seven years famine having reduced the people to the greatest misery, the emperor had offered several sacrifices to appease the wrath of heaven without success, he therefore resolved to offer himself as a victim; he divested himself of his imperial robes, and went with the grandees of his court to a mountain at some distance from the city, where with a bare head and naked feet, he prostrated himself nine times before the supreme Lord of the universe.

4

“ Lord,

SECTION
XXXI.

these instances it appears, that in the judgment of the Chinese, the empire in all its parts is immediately subject to the will of *Tien*; though probably we mistake in assigning the reasons of his providence. The prince, as the head of his people, is no doubt an object of chief regard, and his deportment, besides its political and moral influence, may be considered as a *special reason* which draws down the favour or displeasure of hea-

“ Lord, (said he) all the sacrifices that I have offered to implore thy clemency have been in vain, and therefore it is doubtless I myself that have drawn down so many miseries on my people: Dare I ask what my fault is? Is it the magnificence of my palace, the delicacies of my table; or is it the number of my concubines, which, however, the laws allow me? I am desirous of repairing all these faults by modesty, frugality, and temperance; and if this is not sufficient, I offer myself as a victim to justice; let me be punished, and my people spared; I shall be contented that the thunderbolt be aimed at my head, if at the same time the rain falls upon the plains.” His prayers were heard, the air was darkened with clouds, refreshing showers watered the earth, and afterwards produced a plentiful harvest. Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 26, 27.

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ven upon the whole State. But then we ought only to consider it as *one* reason among many others, such as, the morals of the people at large, their connection with other nations, and above all, the wise though mysterious plan of the divine government. At present I only mean to insist on the actual dependance of nations on the will of heaven, whether in relation to peace or war, plenty or famine, health or sickness, or whatever else concerns the common welfare; and that this dependance is generally acknowledged in our empire, and in a more solemn manner by its government.

SECTION
XXXI.

It might therefore be expected, that the public deliberations of a Christian senate would be conducted with a perpetual regard to divine providence. Is it not then exceedingly strange, that

*Providence
but little re-
garded by the
British parlia-
ment.*

SECTION
XXXI.

this regard is so seldom expressed? I have attended their debates upon a variety of subjects, and some of them of the highest importance to the kingdom, and I was never able to discover that their considerations extended beyond natural and political causes. And so far as I could discern the spirit of either house, had any honourable or noble member seriously introduced a Deity to extricate them from their political embarrassments, he would have been looked upon rather as a fanatical poet than a wise senator. The evils are thought purely human, and to require only human remedies. It is the *Gallican* or the *American*, or (what is worse) some obnoxious minister, that occasions the public calamity. Humble the Gallican, subdue the American, or remove the minister, and the cure is effected. There is no avenging providence

vidence in the case that stirs up foreign enemies, or that elevates some ignorant or wicked statesman for the punishment of the people; and therefore on these accounts to have recourse to religion, would be absurd and superstitious. It is true, that on certain extraordinary exigencies, the nation in general seems awakened to a sense of their dependance on heaven, which they reverently express by fasting and prayer, and observe the correspondent returns of thanksgiving. How far these go beyond appearances it becomes me to leave to our common judge; certainly, they are not more than transient devo-
Or the nation in general.

tions, and both the nation and its legislature soon relapse into their former indifference.

SECTION
XXXI.

SECTION
XXXII.

SECTION XXXII.

*Exception in
honour of the
King.*

I Must however remark in honour of the Prince, who in point of dignity is the first branch of the legislature, that his regard to religion is more uniform. At his royal castle, the residence of ancient kings, and his favourite retreat, which, besides its other extensive prospects, commands a distant view of the metropolis: Here I have observed him, with pleasure, early at his chapel, and with the most edifying humility, associating with his people in public worship, and almost discharging the office of a subordinate minister of religion ††. And I am told that

†† Every one who has attended morning prayer at St. George's chapel when the King has been present,

that he is not forgetful to bow his knee in secret before the King of Kings. This is an example truly royal, and ought to excite every subject in his realm to a due imitation; but especially every gentleman of rank or influence and therefore in the most eminent manner, every Lord and Commoner in Parliament. How far this is the effect, I apprehend, is sufficiently apparent from our foregoing surveys, in which we have found the little of religion remaining in the land to diminish in proportion to its ascent, and very unlikely to arrive at the head of the po-

SECTION
XXXII.



sent, must have observed that his majesty makes the responses more audibly than any of the congregation, which I suppose to be the circumstance here referred to. Nor let any little gentleman or *bel esprit* presume to mock at this, and say the king degrades himself to a parish clerk; but rather by an humble imitation, go and demonstrate to his fellow-creatures, that he is not ASHAMED of offering his petitions to the ALMIGHTY.

litical

SECTION XXXII. litical body; where however it happily enjoys protection and countenance.

*His Majesty
no less a pat-
tern in domes-
tic life.*

Nor do we find this religious Prince less exemplary in domestic life. He is a pattern of conjugal fidelity and affection; a pattern (like the former) but little imitated, and least of all by the nobles and quality that crowd his court. How gladly then must he withdraw from this unhallowed circle, to the retirements of devotion, to the chaste conversation of an amiable consort, and the fond endearments of a numerous and lovely offspring! May they copy the virtues, as they bear the outward impression of their Royal Parents! When I have seen this illustrious couple, with their beautiful train, circling the castle on a summer's evening, my heart has swelled with satisfaction, and a tear started from my eye, and never shall I expect to meet with a
mor

more delightful image of domestic felicity! I had only one painful concern on account of the sprightly heir apparent, and could not forbear elevating a wish to heaven in his behalf, upon a prospect of the dangers he was likely to encounter, from his exalted station, and the corruptions of the court, operating on his youthful inexperience! However I had the satisfaction to hear that a reverend prelate, of the purest morals and most elegant learning, had the direction of his studies: And may he live to see his instructions grow up and ripen into every princely virtue!

SECTION
XXXII.*The Prince of
Wales.*

I cannot leave this enchanting scene, without observing its contrast to the stately reserve of Eastern monarchs, who seem hardly contented to tread the same ground, or breathe the same air, with the rest of mankind. I have admired

*The character
of our common
humanity su-
perior to royal-
ty.*

SECTION
XXXII.

mired the British Sovereign on his throne, and amidst all the splendors of his court, but he never appeared greater in my eye, than as we have now seen him on Windsor terrace, walking hand in hand with his Queen, and attended with no guards but his children, and his loyal subjects, who are admitted to share his evening perambulation. This is laying aside the trappings of royalty, in order to assume the superior character of our common humanity. And I was happy to find, that his general conduct was marked with the same benevolence and condescension. So that distinct from his kingly office, he would command our respect as a private gentleman, and a good neighbour.

SECTION XXXIII.

SECTION
XXXIII.

BUT let us now return from this excursion, and again take a view of the two other branches of the legislature. We are told that in former times they sat together in the same house, and were styled an *assembly of wise men**, the title being restrained to political wisdom; but here I shall take it in a larger sense. Now what idea are we led to conceive of a council of sages deliberating on the public good? Do we not consider them as luminaries of reason, and examples of virtue; and as chiefly employing their consultations on the promotion of these great objects? Are not the morals of a people of primary importance, and the only ground on which a durable fabric of

The Parliament formerly styled an assembly of wise men.

What ought to be the great objects of such an assembly.

* Wittena-gemote.

found

SECTION
XXXIII.

*And what
their objects
are.*

found polity can be erected? And yet they are seldom known to draw the regard of a British parliament. The much greater concern of imposing taxes **, and once probably in seven years the question of peace or war; but especially the very serious business, and always in agitation, of getting or keeping the public places of honour or profit, engrosses their attention. And even in theory they hardly entertain an idea of the public welfare beyond exterior circumstances. If the nation

** “ Les anciens politiques parloient sans cesse de *mœurs* & de *vertu* ; les notres ne parlent que de commerce & d’ *argent*.” *Oeuvres diverses par Rousseau, Vol. I. p. 27. [Amsterdam, 1761.]*


And of the Chinese in particular it is observed, “ Ils ont préféré les *mœurs* à toute la gloire des Conquêtes, & à tous les avantages du commerce avec les étrangers.” *La Loubere Descr. de Siam, Vol. II. p. 297.*

be free, wealthy, and powerful, what more is necessary? Thus they are competently provided for as two-legged animals, tame and wild, for peace and war; and as to their manners, while they keep in any tolerable measure within the boundaries of law, the senate will trouble them on this account with no controul or remonstrance, *out of pure tenderness for their liberty*. This no doubt is a noble delicacy, but will scarce justify a neglect of any lawful mean of improving the national understanding and virtue, which are objects that in some degree ought to be consulted by the obscurest citizen, but which challenge the utmost attention of this supreme council. And I had flattered myself that their deliberations would often have furnished those comprehensive sentiments, and great moral strokes, which are felt by every human being,

SECTION
XXXIII.

SECTION being, because equally interesting to
 XXXIII.
 ~~~~~ our common nature.

*A concession.* I gladly acknowledge that, in this august body, there are men of great genius and capacity, which some of them have highly improved by study and experience. And in general they discover a native good sense, which may be considered as part of the birth-right of a Briton. Nor are there wanting among them orators, who can thunder against a corrupt minister. How much greater would they appear, by directing their eloquence with equal zeal against the profligacy and depravation of principle, that mark the nation at large! And how much greater still, if by their virtuous remonstrances it was recovered, after a long degeneracy, to modesty and frugality, to morals and religion! At present their oratory  
 has

has small effect, being commonly understood to be little better than the **SECTION XXXIII.**   
**language** of ambition, interest, or disappointment. But it is time to leave the Senate, and proceed to a view of the Ecclesiastical State.

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## SECTION XXXIV.

**SECTION XXXIV.** 

**T**HIS is the last head of our En- *Transition to the clergy.*  
 quiry, and its title might excite our expectation, notwithstanding our former discouragements. For though we should have found Christianity entirely banished from every other order of the community; yet still we might reasonably imagine that its consecrated and established ministers would afford it both sanctuary and defence. Let us,  
 R therefore,



SECTION  
XXXIV.

therefore, under the impresson of this flattering idea, take a brief survey of the national clergy.

*Their early designation.*

And first let us consider their original designation to the sacred office. This mostly depends on their parents or guardians, and is generally fixed very early in life. Accordingly, these little candidates for the church are put upon the study of classical learning, in which a considerable time is spent, expence incurred, and often a proud indolency contracted, which unfits them for business, and so renders it necessary for them to persist in their first course, notwithstanding the most weighty reasons to the contrary. Who does not perceive that a morality of disposition, and a happy genius, are indispensable pre-requisites to the clerical function? And yet so little regard is had to these qualifications,

qualifications, that the fate of the child is often determined before they can be properly ascertained. Thus a father having two sons destines the elder of them, suppose, to the army, and the younger to the church, ere they are well out of the nursery; whereas, had he reversed the order, possibly each might have contended for his religion and country in his proper place.

SECTION  
XXXIV.

If we attend to the motives of a clerical designation, we shall find them to arise either from an opinion of the spiritual dignity and consequence of the office; from vanity; or from views of interest. The first of these motives, and perhaps the only one which ought to be admitted in this case, has almost entirely lost its power; except among a few Christians of primitive simplicity, who still retain an idea,

*The motives to  
it considered.*

R 2

that

SECTION  
XXXIV.

that to be a minister of the gospel is to sustain the most important, and, in itself considered, the most honourable character in the world. Nor has the second motive at present a much superior influence. While the clergy were generally held in the rank of gentlemen, many might be prevailed upon, by a little family pride, to entitle their sons to this character, by entering them in the church. But this idea of clerical honour is well nigh vanished, unless in obscure villages, where the vicar happens to be the greatest man in the parish; and then indeed it may excite in some honest farmer a stirring of ecclesiastical ambition, and induce him to distress the rest of his family, in order to give his favourite boy a chance of the like pre-eminence: but this is becoming every day less frequent, and the clergy are growing into contempt even in the huts

huts of peasants †. It is interest which supplies the principal motive; that universal power which equally governs the Briton and the Chinese; though not often (as would seem) in the present case judiciously consulted. It appears upon examination, that, of ten thousand benefices in the kingdom, there are six thousand not exceeding annually the very small amount of fifty pounds ‡;

SECTION  
XXXIV.



† “Most people, in this island, have divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority: the clergy have much lost their credit: their pretensions and doctrines have been ridiculed; and religion can scarce support itself in the world.” Hume’s Essays, Vol. I. p. 47. [Oct. 1764.]

‡ Doctor Warner, in the Appendix to his Ecclesiastical History, has the following observation:—“Of the nine thousand and some hundred churches and chapels which we have in England and Wales, six thousand—I speak from the best authority—are not above the value of forty pounds a year.” See the Bishop of Landaff’s Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, p. 35.

Dr. Burn makes the number 5597 under 50*l.* a year. Ibid.

SECTION  
XXXIV.

and it is calculated, that, allowing the number of clergymen and benefices to be the same, the whole ecclesiastical revenue would not furnish more than one hundred and fifty pounds a year to each individual \*; which is hardly equal to the moderate expectations of trade to a person of common education. How then comes it to pass, that the doors of the church are perpetually crowded with fresh candidates? I see no way of accounting for this, but by considering them as adventurers in an ecclesiastical lottery, where a few glittering prizes captivate the imagination.

It is possible no doubt that a fortunate youth may in time obtain a prebend, a deanery, or even a bishopric; and it is possible too, and in general very probable, that he will be left to starve upon

\* Bishop of Landaff's Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, p. 28.

what is termed a curacy. And therefore, unless he is previously provided with a benefice, or with powerful friends, he had better, on a merely secular consideration, engage in any other profession.

SECTION  
XXXIV.

## SECTION XXXV.

SECTION  
XXXV.

**L**ET us now attend to the manner in which a youth is trained up for this important ministry. We have seen, in a former part of our survey, that there are scarce any traces of domestic piety remaining in the land, which renders it highly improbable that his first bias will be in favour of religion. On the contrary, must he not regard it with an early indifference or contempt, upon observing the neglect, and perhaps de-

*The education  
of a youth in-  
tended for the  
church.*

SECTION  
XXXV.

rision, with which it is treated by those he is most bound to love and honour? He sees his parents begin and conclude the day without any acknowledgment of God; he hears no pious discourse from their lips; he sees them eager in the pursuit of wealth, and without any solicitude for their children, unless for their secular prosperity: and the only object held out to him by way of inducement is some good benefice, or perhaps a plurality, with a bishopric to close his prospect. Now what must he infer from all this, but that religion is either a thing of no consequence; or, at most, a trade? And what can be expected after such wretched rudiments but a mercenary and profane character? It must be an excellent education indeed, that, in spite of these early impressions, of which our nature is so extremely susceptible, is able to produce a wise, a

dis-

*The first bias  
he receives is  
commonly un-  
favourable to  
religion.*

disinterested, and zealous minister of *Jefus Chrift.* ||

SECTION  
XXXV.

And

|| In the life of Dr. Prideaux we are told, " That he ufed frequently to lament the exceffive ignorance he had met with, in fuch as offered themfelves for holy orders, at their examinations; that men, who were themfelves unacquainted with the common doctrines of Chriftianity, neceffary to the falvation of their own fouls, fould take upon them the facred office of conducting others to falvation: *and this he attributed in a great meafure to the neglect of family devotion*; for while religion remained in families, and GOD was daily worfhipped, children were early bred up by their parents, and inftructed in the knowledge of him; and the principles of Chriftianity, thus firft infilled into them, continued to grow up with them into further knowledge, as themfelves grew to be further capable of it. And whilft young men were thus educated, when any of them were fent to the univerfity, there to be fitted by their ftudies for the miniftry of religion, they carried fome knowledge of it thither with them, and thereby became the fooner and more effectually qualified to become teachers of it. *But fince family devotion and family inftruction have been neglected, and this neglect, through the corruption of the times, has grown fo faft, as now in a great meafure to have overspread the land, young men frequently come to the univerfity without any knowledge or tincture of religion at all.*" P.90-1.



SECTION  
XXXV.

His school  
learning.

And yet what is this excellent education? Before the youth has half learnt his mother tongue, he is put upon *Latin* and *Greek*, of which in the course of seven years he probably gets a smattering just sufficient to gain him admission into one of the universities. I will suppose these are languages fraught with much knowledge and elegant learning, which cannot be so happily conveyed in the best translation; and that the *Greek*, in a more particular manner, is necessary to a clergyman, as originally containing the records of the Christian dispensation. But, methinks, a better acquaintance, and in less time, might

“It is evident (says Dr. Hartley,) that the infidelity of the laity must have an ill effect in respect of the clergy. Many of these must be the sons of infidels, thrust into the church by their parents for subsistence, or with a view to great honours or profits; and must carry with them a deep tincture of the corruption and infidelity which they imbibed in their infancy and youth.” Vol. II. p. 447.

be

be obtained of these *alphabetical tongues*, by proper methods of instruction; and (which is the most important consideration) with less danger to morals. To crowd the memory of a boy, and taint his imagination with ridiculous fables and obscene descriptions, is surely un-

SECTION  
XXXV.

*The study of  
beatben poets  
censured, un-  
less a due se-  
lection is made*

§ The Chinese is not so: "The Chinese language has no resemblance with any of the dead or living languages that we are acquainted with: all other languages have an alphabet of a certain number of letters, which by their various combinations make syllables and words; this has no alphabet, *but as many different characters as there are words.*" Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 389.

These characters amount to no less than 80,000; however, with 10,000 a person may understand a great many authors: the generality of the learned are not masters of more than 15 or 20,000; and there are few doctors who go beyond 40,000.

It is obvious how much this difficulty of the language must obstruct the acquisition and progress of knowledge.

The reader who would see more upon this subject may consult the above author. Ibid. p. 388—415. and Le Comte, Tom I. p. 369-84.

favour-

SECTION  
XXXV.

favourable to truth and virtue; and can hardly be thought a proper introduction to Christianity §. And yet so it is; the unthinking youth is plied with lewd stories of fictitious divinities, which tend to kindle the vilest passions, and the more as they are set off and heightened by the magic of poetry. And thus the understanding loses its natural relish of truth, and grows impatient and incapable of sober disquisition\*. I would not however insinuate that the famous poets of Greece and Rome contain nothing but an obscene mythology: I

§ His atque hujusmodi figmentis, & mendaciis dulcioribus, corrumpuntur ingenia puerorum. *Minucius Felix.*

\* Has fabulas et errores, & ab imperitis parentibus discimus, & (quod est gravius) ipsis studiis & disciplinis elaboramus, carminibus præcipuè poetarum, qui permirum quantum veritati ipsâ suâ auctoritate nocuere. Et Plato ideò præclare Homerum illum inclytum, laudatum & coronatum, de civitate quam in sermone instituebat, ejecit. *Idem.*

can

can easily admit that many sage maxims of life, sublimities of sentiment, and examples of heroic virtue are interspersed; and were these duly selected and studied under the eye of a judicious master, they might greatly contribute to the just purposes of a liberal education.

SECTION  
XXXV.



After his introduction into the university, he pursues the course we have before described, till he obtains his bachelor's degree. During the term of four years previously required by statute, his studies at college are employed upon classical and other subjects, that bear but a very distant relation to divinity. This might be thought scarcely tolerable even in such who are designed for secular situations; but in respect to candidates for the priesthood, all whose studies, I presume, should

*His studies at  
the university.*

SECTION  
XXXV.

*Catechetical  
lecture reject-  
ed by the uni-  
versities.*

should be directed to Theology as their grand scope and completion, it appears incapable of all defence. But how little this is considered by the two universities, as well as the general neglect of religious education, may partly be collected (besides what we have already observed) from this singular circumstance: That when an offer (as we are told) was formerly made by a celebrated scholar, to establish in each university a catechetical lecture, for the instruction of the under-graduates in the rudiments of Christianity, it was rejected (after grave deliberation no doubt) by these learned and pious seminaries \*. Hence we need

\* This anecdote is related in the life of Dr. Prideaux as follows: "Dr. Busby offered to found two catechetical lectures, one in each university, with an endowment of 100*l.* *per annum* each, for instructing

need not wonder if a young man often obtains his degrees, and formal testimonials of his sufficient qualification for the *orders* of the church, without any further knowledge of the *Bible*,

SECTION  
XXXV.



ing the under-graduates in the rudiments of the Christian religion; provided all the said under-graduates should be obliged to attend those lectures, and none of them be admitted to the degree of bachelor of arts, 'till after being examined by the catechist, as to their knowledge in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion, and by him approved of. But this condition being rejected by both universities, the benefaction was rejected therewith."—And therefore the case is, [according to the same author] "That young men frequently coming to the university, without any knowledge or tincture of religion at all, and having little opportunity of improving themselves therein, whilst under-graduates, because the course of their studies inclines them to philosophy and other kinds of learning; they are usually admitted to their first degree of bachelor of arts, *with the same ignorance, as to all sacred learning, as when first admitted into the universities*; and many of them; as soon as they have taken their degree, offering themselves for orders, *are too often admitted to be teachers in the church, when they are only fit to be catechumens therein.*" See Life of Prideaux, p. 92 and 91. and also *the Confessional*, p. 391-6. 2d Edit.

than

SECTION  
XXXV.

than just to construe a passage in the original text of the apostles or evangelists §.

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SECTION  
XXXVI.

## SECTION XXXVI.

*Usual method  
ordination.*

**T**HUS academically equipped, he presents himself before one of the bishops (who constitute the highest

§ “ It is a thing of melancholy reflection [says Dr. Prideaux in a letter to Lord Townsend, Secretary of State] to consider, what ignorance we often find in those who come to be examined for orders. *Unless the universities, for the future, breed us better men for the ministry,* it is, humanly speaking, utterly impossible, that the Church of Christ, which is by God’s mercy now established among us, can be well supported against those many adversaries which are, at this time, on every side rising up against it, and are, with the utmost craft and diligence, whetting all the instruments of hell for its subversion.” Life of Prideaux, p. 197-8.

clafs

class of the clergy), for admission to the sacred function †; upon which, he is usually first committed to a certain ecclesiastic, styled his chaplain, for preliminary examination ‡; and, this being passed (which I find is seldom conducted with a scrupulous severity, the occasion duly considered), he is returned to the bishop with an additional testimonial, and so formally ordained according to the prescribed order, *a minister of the gospel*. It happens some-

SECTION  
XXXVI.

† “Many come to be *ordained*,” says Bishop Burnet, “without considering duly, either what it is that they ask, or what it is that is to be asked of them: which some do with so supine a negligence, that we plainly see *that they have not so much as read the OFFICE, or, at least, that they have done it in so slight a manner, that they have formed no clear notions upon any part of it, and least of all upon those parts to which they themselves are to make answers.*” Pastoral Care, p. 130-1. Edit. 1692.

And yet of these *many*, very few are rejected.

‡ There are but few of the bishops who examine the candidates at all themselves.

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SECTION  
XXXVI.

but every man that has it not must needs know that he has it not.

“ The true meaning of it must be resolved thus ! The motives that ought to determine a man, to dedicate himself to the ministering in the church, are a zeal for promoting the glory of GOD, for raising the honour of the Christian religion, for the making it to be better understood, and more submitted to. He that loves it, and feels the excellency of it in himself, that has a due sense of GOD’s goodness in it to mankind, and that is entirely possessed with that, will feel a zeal within himself for communicating that to others ; that so *the only true God*, and *Jesus Christ whom he has sent*, may be more universally glorified, and served by his creatures : And when to this he has added a concern for the souls of men, a tenderness for them, a zeal to rescue them from endless misery, and a desire to put them in the way to everlasting happiness, and from these motives feels in himself a desire to dedicate his life and labours to those ends ; and, in order to them, studies to understand the scriptures, and more particularly the *New Testament*, that from thence he may form a true notion of this holy religion, and so be *an able minister of it* ; this man, and only this man, so *moved*, and so qualified, can in truth, and with a good conscience, answer, that he *trusts he is inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST*. And every one that ventures on the saying it, without this, is a *sacrilegious profaner* of the name of GOD, and of his HOLY SPIRIT. He breaks in upon his church, not to  
*feed*

certainly a pretension, to which no one can justly be thought entitled, who is merely prompted by a human suggestion, and has no higher design than to obtain a benefice: And I fear the much greater number of clerical candidates fall within this description. What then? Do they stumble at the threshold? Do they commence the ministry of truth with a lie? and with a lie *not unto men, but unto God* § ? We will gladly allow every

SECTION  
XXXVI,  
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*feed it, but to rob it: And it is certain, that he who begins with a LIE may be sent by the Father of lies, but he cannot be thought to enter in by the door, who prevaricates in the first word that he says in order to his admittance."* Past. Care, p. 112-14.

§ " If any one [observes the same bishop] says, *I trust so*, that yet knows nothing of any such motion, and can give no account of it, he LIES to the HOLY GHOST; and makes his first approach to the altar with a lie in his mouth, and that NOT TO MEN, but to GOD. And how can any one expect to be received by God, or be sent and sealed by him, that dares do a thing of so crying a nature,

SECTION  
XXXVI.

every mitigating circumstance, from an improper education, from youthful inadvertence, or the urgency of their

as to pretend he trusts he has this *motion*, who knows that he has it not, who has made no reflections on it, and when asked what he means by it, can say nothing concerning it? And yet he dares venture to come and say it to GOD and his church. If a man pretends a commission from a prince, or indeed from any person, and acts in his name upon it, the law will fall on him, and punish him; and shall the GREAT GOD of *Heaven and Earth* be thus vouched, and his motion be pretended to, by those whom he has neither *called* nor *sent*? And shall not he reckon with those who dare to run without his *mission*, pretending that they *trust* they have it, when perhaps they understand not the importance of it, nay, and perhaps some laugh at it as an enthusiastical question, *who yet will go through with the office?* They come to CHRIST for the *loaves*: They hope to live by the *altar* and the *gospel*, how little soever they *serve* at the one or *preach* the other; *therefore they will say any thing that is necessary for qualifying them to this, WHETHER TRUE OR FALSE.*" Ibid. p. 111-12.

These passages are rather long, but they appeared so agreeable to the sentiments of our Chinese, that I could not forbear transcribing them.

situation;

situation; yet, after a beginning so inauspicious, we are almost discouraged from attending them in their spiritual progress. But, the scope of our Enquiry rendering this necessary, we shall proceed to view them next in the character of preachers.

SECTION  
XXXVI.

## SECTION XXXVII.

SECTION  
XXXVII.

I Have always lamented as a great imperfection in the Chinese institutions, that their only religious system which carries an appearance of reason, and may be called the religion of the empire, is entirely left to the care of the magistrate, without any distinct class of men consecrated to its service\*. But in some measure to sup-

*The followers of Confucius have no priests.*

*The Emperor is universal teacher.*

\* "It is perhaps," says Mosheim, "the most gross

SECTION  
XXXVII.

ply this defect, the Emperor, besides offering sacrifices to the *Lord of Heaven*, which is restricted to his own person, condescends to discharge the office of universal Teacher. And accordingly he assembles, from time to time, the chief mandarins, and the grandees of his court, in order to instruct them in their several duties, as well moral as political, from the doctrine laid down in the classical volumes †. In like manner every mandarin, in his particular province, is commanded by a law

*And every mandarin within his province.*

and simple of all the religions that ever were taught in the world. It prescribes reverence to an invisible Being residing in the visible heaven, and distributing thence happiness and misery amongst mankind; but it enjoins no particular worship to him: So that temples, priests, assemblies, sacrifices, and rites, are things entirely foreign to it. The Emperor alone, at certain times, offers a sacrifice to this powerful Being, in the name of his people." *Memoirs of the Christian Church in China*, p. 12.

† See Du Halde, Vol. II. p. 53.

of the Empire to convene the people the first and the fifteenth of every month, for the same important purpose ||. The topics of instruction on these occasions (which were assigned by the Emperor himself), are reduced under sixteen heads. By the first, the mandarin is directed to inculcate the duties of filial piety, and a proper deference from the younger brother to the elder, that, in these domestic instances, the people might be taught to regard the general importance of natural obligations. By the fifth and sixth, he is ordered to recommend the virtues of temperance, modesty, and frugality; together with a due attention to the public schools. And under the eighth head, (which is the last I shall mention, and is the only one which appears to have an immediate eye to re-

SECTION  
XXXVII.*Sixteen heads  
of instruction.*

Ibid. p. 53-4.

ligion),

SECTION  
XXXVIII.

acknowledging the ecclesiastical supremacy of the prince, he engages to observe the forms of common prayer, and the other established offices, which together make up a voluminous composition; and declares the thirty nine articles, *all and every one of them*, to be agreeable to the word of God. And all this is pretended to be done, *willingly and from the heart*. Whence it appears, that the preacher is, at least, bound to advance no opinion *contrary* to the above *formulas*: and the latter of them may properly be considered as the avowed standard of his doctrine. Let us therefore briefly touch a few of its principal points, and compare them with the tenor of his public discourses.

*The ninth article, Of original sin.*

The ninth article is entitled *of original sin*, which is represented as not merely contracted by imitation, as the Pelagians are

are said to have held, but *as the fault and corruption of the nature of every man,* and derived by descent from their common ancestor; whereby they are declared to be *very far gone from original righteousness, and naturally inclined to evil*†. And, agreeably to this doctrine, the priest and the people solemnly confess before God, *we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep—and there is no health in us.* A Chinese literato would probably object to it.

This account of the corruption of our nature, I imagine, would hardly be admitted by a Chinese *literato*; who probably might rather choose to ascribe it, with the Pelagians, to imitation of evil examples, or a want of early instruc-

† The words referred to in the article run thus: "Original sin standeth not in the following of *Adam* (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of *Adam*, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil."

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SECTION  
XXXVIII.

tion. And even our great Confucius seems not to have been averſe from this ſentiment, as may be ſuppoſed from his ſometimes ſpeaking of the natural light and integrity of mankind †; though on the other hand, he is perpetually lamenting their ignorance and depravity, and inciting them to the ſtudy of wiſdom and the practice of virtue.

*A reflection upon it.*

When I have formerly reflected upon

† “ All men [ſaid he] naturally are upright, and are born adorned with a light which teaches them to follow good and eſchew evil.” Navarette, p. 136.

“ The whole doctrine of this philoſopher tended to *reſtore* human nature to its *former* luſtre, and that *fiſt beauty* it had received from heaven, and which had been ſullied by the darkneſs of ignorance, and the contagion of vice.” Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 298.— See alſo Le Comte Tom. I. p. 414-15, and Scientia Sinenſis, Lib. I. p. 1.

The caſe ſeems to have been, that Confucius, like other wiſe men in the heathen world, was very ſenſible of the corruption of human nature, but was at a loſs how to account for it.

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this subject, it has appeared to me extraordinary, that, if mankind be so happily endowed by nature as Confucius seemed at times to imagine, they should so uniformly agree to abuse their advantages. This is against all the laws of probability, by which, upon the present supposition, it would at least be an even chance, that half the world were persons of consummate virtue. And yet not more than a single instance, that I know of, and this furnished by the Christian history, is pretended to be produced of such a character, while the bulk of the species is notoriously corrupt and wicked. This I say is utterly inexplicable on the hypothesis of our native innocence, and just as absurd, as that an equal balance should always preponderate on one side. Nor is it, in my apprehension, more probably to be accounted for, than (in the manner of  
the

SECTION  
XXXVIII.  


SECTION  
XXXVIII.

the article) from an evil bias in our nature induced by the first man, and communicated to all his posterity.

*Qualified by  
the Christian  
preacher.*

However, the Christian preacher is generally content to resort with the philosopher to wrong education, or bad example, as if it afforded a sufficient account of this universal disorder. Or should he proceed further, and venture to impeach our nature itself, it is with all imaginable caution, with the delicacy and tenderness of a lover, and as a man that would stand well in the opinion of his audience. He will allow indeed, that it has suffered a slight deviation in old time, which in the article, it seems, is rather unskilfully represented, by its being *very far gone from original righteousness*. And thus by diminishing the evil, the grace of the Christian system is rendered less necessary.

Hence

Hence he either greatly qualifies or rejects the following article, which asserts the inability of man, since the fall of Adam, *to turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength, to faith and calling upon God.* He supposes the defect to lie more in the want of information than of right disposition; and it must, I think, be allowed, that consistently with this sentiment, the necessity of the grace of God *preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will,* as the article further speaks, cannot very strongly be urged ††. Or

SECTION  
XXXVIII.

*Who likewise  
softens or re-  
jects the next  
article.*

†† The whole article runs thus: "The condition of man, after the fall of *Adam*, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength, and good works, to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by CHRIST preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

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SECTION  
XXXVIII.

if he admit at all of vicious habits; as he imagines they were introduced, so he may surely be allowed to imagine again, that they are capable of extermination, by the force of example. And on the whole, may from his principles reasonably conclude, that an intercourse with persons of virtue, in addition to good moral instructions, with a very slight proportion of grace, is fully adequate to the recovery and improvement of our spiritual powers.

*And the following one upon justification.*

Nor does he differ less from the following article, concerning the justification of man in the sight of heaven; which the article affirms to be *only for the merit of JESUS CHRIST by faith, and not for his own works or deservings* ††. The preacher

†† “We are accounted righteous before God [says the article] only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour

preacher generally holds another language, and directs his audience for their justification to their own virtues; which, however, being somewhat imperfect, as he gravely reminds them, after the highest improvement, he perhaps thinks proper to suggest the need of repentance, to compensate their deficiency. And lest this should happen to prove inadequate, like a prudent watchman who foresees every possibility of danger, he will probably in the close recommend the merit of CHRIST as a convenient and universal supplement. Whence it appears, that in his system, the merit of Christ is not the only, nor even the principal, but the partial and sup-

plimentary to the merit of JESUS CHRIST by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the homily of justification."

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SECTION  
XXXVII.

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE PRESENT STATE

SECTION  
XVIII.

plemental reason of divine acceptance; and he will frequently throw out cautions against the former idea, as big with peril and presumption: though the article declares it to be *a most wholesome doctrine*, and in confirmation of the point refers to a certain *homily*, which is included in the matter of clerical subscription.

Section  
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Had man continued in that original innocence, of which we find an account in the Hebrew records, it is easy to perceive, that the favour of heaven being infallibly attendant upon the state in which he then stood, there could no question arise of obtaining what he already enjoyed. But in the present condition of our nature, the enquiry is become very serious and important; nor is there I suppose a human being endued with moral reflection, but feels, or has felt,

felt, apprehensions of divine displeasure. And hence no doubt are chiefly derived the various forms of religion in the world, which by their several votaries are considered as so many effectual methods of propitiating the *divinity*: although they are sometimes marked with such horrid barbarism, and generally with such absurd extravagance, that, to a philosopher, they must at once afford a melancholy and ludicrous spectacle. And we may further observe, that as they propose one common end, so they are founded on the same common principle, *that it is ONLY by his own merit that a delinquent can appease the anger, or conciliate the favour of heaven*; which is just the reverse of the present article. And here, I presume, lies an essential difference between the Christian, and all other religions. The first levels a fatal blow at the pride of man, and lays him

SECTION  
XXXVIII.



SECTION XXXVIII. prostrate at the throne of mercy; while the rest, though they may abridge his enjoyments, and harass him with corporal austerities, yet still leave him to glory in himself, which, in the estimate of vanity, is often deemed an ample compensation for the severest rigours. Between these opposite systems, the preacher steers with address; and so ingeniously explains, or gently insinuates, the merit of *Christ*, that he neither incurs the censure of a total omission, nor offends the jealous pride of human virtue.

*He opposes also the eighteenth article.*

I shall only produce one more instance from the *formula* under our consideration: “*They also* (it is said in article the eighteenth) *are to be had accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature,*

*For*

*For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of JESUS CHRIST whereby men must be saved.* Such are the express words of the article. But what says the preacher? He tells his audience, *that those are to be condemned as highly uncharitable, who presume to say, that a sincere man shall not be saved whatever be his creed or profession.* And this he endeavours to evince from the nature of sincerity, which, in morals, like a certain imaginary stone in physics, has an efficacy, it seems, that gives error and impiety the same value with truth and righteousness. So that Christians and Pagans, and men of every description, when furnished with this all-atoning virtue, are equally accepted in the sight of heaven. And of consequence Christianity is of no particular importance to the world, and its missionaries can be of no use to those nations, who are either *sincere* in their

SECTION  
XXXVIII.

SECTION XXXVIII. *own religion, or who are arrived at that utmost limit of human improvement, to be sincerely of none.*

*The plea of sincerity very improperly urged in the present case.*

For my own part, though I am a great admirer of sincerity, I am not disposed patiently to hear it exalted in opposition to the reason and nature of things; and least of all by our clerical advocate. What! shall he be heard in behalf of sincerity, who is manifestly acting against it? shall he presume to plead its efficacy in every religion, who discovers in the very plea itself, that he is not sincere in his own? For whether we allow or not that this virtue *alone* is available in the sight of heaven, doubtless no religion is available without it: and however we determine upon the thirty-nine articles, I will venture to add a *fortieth*, which I am confident is beyond dispute, *that no man can be saved by a*  
*reli-*

*religion in which he is not sincere.* And what pretensions to sincerity he can produce, who, under the authority of any doctrine, and receiving wages for its promulgation and defence, preaches against it, our evangelist may do well to consider. Certainly such a one has no claim to reverence, and will have no cause to wonder if he is heard with little attention; for as an honourable member of parliament properly observed in the affair of subscription, *a minister who will subscribe to the thirty-nine articles, and afterwards preach against them, is likely to make no deep impression upon his audience* ||.

SECTION  
XXXVIII.

|| See the *Debates* in 1772, p. 327.

SECTION  
XXXIX.

## SECTION XXXIX.

*The ordinary  
system of a mo-  
dern preacher.*

**B**UT what then, it may be asked, is the theological system adopted by our preacher? Though this may be difficult to ascertain with any precision, I think I may venture to assert, from a pretty large observation, that its more considerable parts consist of poetical descants upon the works of nature, slight discussions of the ordinary topics of morality, and, with an eye to particular seasons, of dry narratives and demonstrations, of the nativity, death, resurrection and ascension of *JESUS*, who, except in these annual commemorations, has, I find, but little place in the sermons of our clerical orator. At other times, he is more disposed to introduce the names, and authority, of certain heathen sages; and especially of the divine *Socrates*, who may be styled  
the

the Confucius of the West, and almost a rival of CHRIST. Hence his theology wears a very dubious character, being neither physical nor moral, Pagan nor Christian. However, it appears to have received the sanction of the public opinion, and is the current doctrine of the pulpit: only now and then it happens, that in the hands of an ingenious reformer, it is further purged from the *leaven of Christianity*.

SECTION  
XXXIX.

## SECTION XL.

SECTION  
XL.

**S**UCH is the general *matter*; let us now see what is the usual *manner* of preaching. The Eastern style of eloquence is sublime and animated, without any regular modes of argument, any nice selection of words, or construction

*The usual  
manner of  
preaching.*

SECTION

XL.

*Chinese logic  
and rhetoric.*

tion of periods. The Chinese logic is nothing but the simple and inartificial exercise of reason, by which they compare their ideas, and infer consequences, perhaps with as much facility and precision as those who endeavour to assist it by curious definitions or divisions, and all the pedantic rules of syllogism §. Their rhetoric, in like manner, is perfectly natural, without any quaint conceits or studied embellishments, and consists in lively expressions, bold metaphors, and striking allegories, with a close attention to their best authors, and especially their ancient sages, whose concise and weighty maxims frequently

§ “Logic, which is so greatly refined in Europe, in China is void of all precepts; they have invented no rules to bring argumentation to perfection;—they follow nothing but the natural light of reason; it is by this alone, and without any assistance from art, that they compare several ideas together, and draw consequences sufficiently just.” Du Halde, Vol. III. p. 64-5.

inter-

interperfed, add peculiar grace and authority to their difcourfe\*.

SECTION  
XL.

If our preacher makes any pretensions to eloquence, he muft mean something, I apprehend, which can hardly be admitted under that title.

For what is eloquence, without fublimity, without energy, without *pathos*?

*True eloquence.*

When I fee an orator rapt beyond himfelf, from a juft fenfe of fome great fubject or occafion, and, by a noble vehemence, impreffing me with his own sentiments and emotions, I gladly allow him the praife of eloquence. But at the fame time I muft obferve, it is an eloquence I have not often met with in

\* “ They are little acquainted with rules to adorn and embellifh a difcourfe;—imitation generally ferving them in the room of precepts: they are fa-  
tiffied with reading the moft eloquent pieces, and obferve the ftrokes that are moft likely to affect the mind;—’tis after thefe models that they copy, when they compofe any fet difcourfe.” Ibid. p. 65.

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SECTION  
XL.

*Seldom met  
with in this  
island, and  
least of all  
from the pul-  
pit.*

this island, and least of all from the clerical chair, which is generally the seat of dulness, and scarce supplies any thing beyond cool argument or classic elegance. The British genius, it seems, is too solid and philosophical to endure a forcible address to the imagination and the passions, especially upon theological subjects; and therefore a discreet orator, when he mounts the pulpit, endeavours chiefly to act the part of a *rational preacher*.

*Remarks on  
the rational  
mode of  
preaching.*

But what then? Shall we allow that the cold and logical is the rational style of preaching? Were men indeed composed of pure intellect, this idea might carry some appearance. But since a variety of other principles enter largely into the human constitution, they ought certainly to be wrought upon according to their several na-  
tures.

tures. Have we no original instincts and natural anticipations, which prevent the exercise of reason, and scarcely acknowledge its influence? Reason perhaps may in a good measure discover their propriety or disorder; but to excite, repress, or regulate them, I suppose, is mostly beyond its competence\*. Who is not acquainted with the violence of imagination, and how often it mocks the feeble controul of the understanding? And yet strongly impress it with contrary images, by means of lively and animated description, and

SECTION  
XL.

\* "It is equally absurd in the natural and moral world, to suppose that art can create; it can only work upon subjects according to their original properties, and the laws of nature's appointment, agreeably to which certain effects may be produced upon them. No art can therefore educe from our natures, an affection or determination that is not originally there, no more than art can give bodies a property which they have not." Turnbull's Moral Philosophy, p. 137.

SECTION XL. you will probably give a check to its

career. And to argue coldly with those impetuous motions called passions, I need not say is mostly to argue in vain. We must oppose reason to reason; imagination to imagination, and passion to passion. To do otherwise, is to oppose things of a different order; lines to surfaces, and surfaces to solids. And yet our *rational* preacher will talk of vice and virtue, of heaven and hell, with all the phlegm of a philosopher; and prove, by undeniable arithmetic, that eternity is longer than time, and evince, by the most evident demonstrations, that right is preferable to wrong, and happiness to misery. Alas! and who denies all this? The business is to enforce these acknowledged truths upon the heart; in the first instance, by authorities and examples from their sacred records, and afterwards by con-  
siderations

siderations of reason, but not logically SECTION  
contracted or faintly offered, but amplified and made visible by imagination, animated with sentiment, and inflamed with affection \*. For a preacher to be ever supinely reasoning, or seeming to reason, upon points at once indisputable and of the greatest importance, is to trifle with his subject and his audience. It is *then*, that the sublime and impassioned is the only *rational* style of eloquence †.

## S E C-

\* “Lorsqu’ une vive persuasion nous anime, le moyen d’employer un langage glacé? Quand Archimede tout transporté couroit nud dans les rues de Syracuse, en avoit-il moins trouvé la verité parce qu’il se passionnoit pour elle? Tout au contraire, celui qui la sent ne peut s’abstenir de l’adorer, *celui qui demeure froid ne l’ a pas vue.*” Rousseau’s Lettres ecrites de la montagne [dans l’avertissement.]

† “Ancient eloquence, that is, the *sublime* and *passionate*, is of a much juster taste than the modern, or the *argumentative* and *rational*; and if properly executed, will always have more command and au-

SECTION  
XLI.

## SECTION XLI.

*The preacher gives no offence by particular applications.*

**I** Observe also a want of application to men's business and bosoms in the harangues of the pulpit. They carry much more the resemblance of formal exercises at a college, than of serious and manly addresses to an audience, in order to *reproof, correction, and instruction, in righteousness* †. But our preacher is not without his reasons for declining this apostolical method. For who does not see, that to reprove, correct, and instruct, would be to suppose

thority over mankind. WE ARE SATISFIED WITH OUR MEDIOCRITY, BECAUSE WE HAVE HAD NO EXPERIENCE OF ANY THING BETTER. Hume's *Essays*, Vol. I. p. 119. [8vo. 1764.]

† See 2 Tim. ch. iii. v. 16.

blame.

blame or imperfection in his hearers, and to arrogate an odious superiority of knowledge and virtue? And that this would be wantonly to provoke their resentments, by a most flagrant violation of modesty and politeness? He therefore very prudently confines himself to general sentiments; or if at any time he descends to particulars, it is always in favour of his auditory. For though he may now and then deal out his censures, it is merely the trick of an orator to lend a credit to his flatteries, by occasionally assuming the language of sincerity. But this is an artifice only to be practised by a man of ingenuity; and therefore the usual and safe method is to read a dull lecture, with a single regard to this saving circumstance, *to give no offence* ††.

†† Which, says the late Bishop Warburton, is the thing of all to be most dreaded, *by those who know the world.* See the Confessional, p. 347.

SECTION  
XL.

We have just observed, that the preacher's usual method is to *read* his discourse||. His eyes are mostly pinned to his book; his hands are unemployed, except in turning his leaf; and his voice is scarcely audible: Whereas the true orator not only elevates his voice, but speaks in his whole person; his eyes, his hands, his every motion and attitude, have a language often no less intelligible or persuasive §. While

at

|| "Reading [of sermons] is peculiar to this nation, and is endured in no other." Burnet's *Post, Care*, p. 229.

§ "Some [observes the same Bishop] by *hanging their heads perpetually over their notes*, by blundering as they read, and by a cursory running over them, do so lessen the matter of their sermons, that as they are generally read with very little life or affection, so they are heard with as little regard or esteem. Those who *read* ought certainly to be at a little more pains than for most part they are, to read true; to *pronounce with an emphasis, to raise their heads, and to direct their eyes to their hearers.*"——"That a discourse be heard with any *life*, it must be spoken with

at the same time he is careful, on the other side, to avoid excess, being aware, that theatrical gestures, and absurd vociferation, are generally the marks of a miserable declaimer, and in no wise becoming the gravity of the pulpit. Hence he is temperate in his greatest vehemence, which never exceeds the subject or the occasion; and is always accompanied with a due respect to his audience. And thus by a proper regard to reason and decorum in the height of his zeal, he discovers that he is master of himself, and therefore qualified to command the attention of others. Even in civil causes, all this

SECTION  
XLI.



with *some*; and the looks and motions of the eye do carry in them such additions to what is said, that where these do not at all concur, it has not all the force upon them, that otherwise it might have: besides, that the people, who are too apt to censure the clergy, are easily carried into an obvious reflection on *reading*; that it is an effect of laziness." *Ibid.* p. 230-1.



## SECTION

## XLI.

might be expected; but in the instance before us, how should the fear of God, and the superior importance of his argument, enforce every subordinate motive, and still more powerfully excite and regulate the Christian preacher!

But suppose him animated with a degree of zeal, how could he express it by mere reading? A man who is at leisure to recite his passion out of a book, will hardly be thought to feel much of its influence §§. And though he should be able to deliver his sermon entirely from recollection, yet still a studied discourse, though aided with all the address of an orator, has seldom the effect of the unpremeditated language of nature and passion. But I suppose

§§ “What we say [observes Abp. Secker to his clergy] *in such manner as to make it seem the present dictate of our own hearts, will much better make its way into the hearts of others, than if our eyes are fixed all the while on a paper from which we visibly recite the whole.*” See his third *charge*.

in this, as in most other cases, a medium is best; and that an orator, who by a previous general consideration and arrangement of his matter, could steer between an elaborate composition, and an extemporaneous address, would gain every point of true eloquence\*. However, our rational preacher is content to creep along the shore, by a close adherence to his written instructions.

SECTION  
XLI.

## SECTION XLII.

SECTION  
XLII.

**B**UT our principal charge against the manner of our preacher, is, that it wants the great nerve of persuasion, I mean sincerity. For though

*The great nerve of persuasion, viz. sincerity, is wanting.*

\* "There is a middle way [says the same metropolitan] used by our predecessors, of setting down, in short notes, the *method* and *principal heads*, and enlarging on them in such words as present themselves at the time. *Perhaps, duly managed, this would be the best.*" Ibid.

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SECTION  
XLII.

I certainly should prefer a discourse pronounced from memory to a mere lecture; and to either of them an extemporary oration, whose matter has been previously digested; yet probably any of them, accompanied with the above quality, would produce some good effect, and none of them without it\*\*. For what can be expected from a man

\* "But the rule [says Bp. Burnet] I have reserved last is the most necessary of all, *and without it all the rest will never do the business*; it is this: That a man must have in himself a deep sense of the truth and power of religion: He must have a life and flame in his thoughts, with relation to those subjects: He must have felt in himself those things which he intends to explain and recommend to others. He must observe narrowly the motions of his own mind, the good and bad effects, that the several sorts of objects he has before him, and the affections he feels within him, have upon him; that so he may have a lively heat in himself, when he speaks of them; and that he may speak in so sensible a manner, *that it may be almost FELT that he speaks from his heart.* THERE IS AN AUTHORITY IN THE SIMPLEST THINGS THAT CAN BE SAID, WHEN THEY CARRY VISIBLE CHARACTERS OF GENUINENESS IN THEM." *Past. Care.* p. 237.

who

who is not in earnest? Who, whether he read or declaim, whether he is antic or stationary, has no respect to the edification of his hearers, but is purely concerned either *to say his lesson*, or vainly to exhibit himself? So that in the one case, at the close of his sermon, he is prepared to thank heaven that he has got over it; and in the other to ask his audience, have I not acquitted myself well? And this is the more censurable, on account of its departure from the general character of a Briton, who, in his ordinary pursuits and business, and even in the senate, is either in earnest, or pretends to be so; and who seldom degrades himself avowedly or manifestly to act a part, except upon the stage, or in the pulpit.

Is it then any wonder that such a preacher is heard with indifference?

Or

SECTION  
XLII.



SECTION  
XLII.

affording it any comment or recollection. Or at most, supposing our orator has discovered a degree of vivacity, they may just drop him a word of approbation, as *a fine preacher*, by way of plaudit at the close. And thus if a momentary attention chance to be awakened by some livelier address, it is bestowed upon the speaker instead of his subject, which, in important points of religion and morals, I have always considered as a sure sign of idle declamation \*. Whence came I? And whither am I going? What have I done? Or what becomes me to do?

\* I remember to have read an anecdote in the life of *Maffillon*, which does him great honour, of which at least contains the finest compliment that can be paid to a preacher: I have been satisfied, said the King (Lewis XIV.) to him one day after his sermon, with many who have preached before me in this place; but since I have heard you, my father, I have been much DISSATISFIED *with myself*.

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These certainly are questions which ought chiefly to be excited by a Christian preacher, or even a philosophic sage, and would do him infinitely more honour than the highest commendations he could draw upon himself. But such enquiries are seldom made, and more seldom effectually prosecuted; *one goes to his farm, and another to his merchandise*; and sermons generally resemble so many tales that are told and forgotten.

SECTION  
XLII.

Were we to calculate critically the probable effect of ten thousand preachers, entrusted with a message which involved the present peace and everlasting felicity of the human race, and ordained for the purpose of publishing and enforcing it among a single people, within the compass of a single island; we could hardly suppose, but that

*What might  
be supposed the  
effect of ten  
thousand  
preachers in  
this country.*

SECTION  
XLII.

that every individual, arrived at years of reflection, would afford it a serious attention; and, upon admitting its credibility, would cordially embrace its offers, and obey its requisitions. Now Christianity declares itself to be such a message, is authorized by their laws, and published by ten thousand preachers to the British nation. And yet few of them will listen, fewer are sensibly interested, and fewer still embrace its promises, and submit to its precepts. This certainly is a curious phænomenon; and how far it may be justly attributed to the matter and mode of preaching, may perhaps partly be determined from the observations we have made upon these subjects.

## SECTION XLIII.

SECTION  
XLIII.

THIS small success of the clergy is the more surprizing when we reflect, that in the prosecution of their spiritual warfare, they employ the press together with the pulpit. And I am forward to confess, notwithstanding my criticism on the ordinary strain of their sermons, that I have met with some discourses in print of this description, which, in point of manly sense and argument, I admire as excellent models: Although I am by no means prepared to warrant their entire agreement either with the *national faith*, or the *Bible*. But if we confine our view to the usual topics of morality, I acknowledge they are here discussed

*A concession in  
favour of  
English Ser-  
mons.*



SECTION  
XLIII.

*The clergy  
considered as  
the general  
advocates of  
Christianity.*

cuffed with a force and precision, unknown to our ancient sages. But I would now consider our clerical advocates in another light, as they are set for the general defence of Christianity, by establishing its truth and authority at large, and resolving the objections of its opposers: Which is an office they have principally discharged in the character of authors.

There are three principal topics which I perceive have been resorted to, in order to demonstrate the truth of the Christian system: 1st. Its external evidence. 2d. The nature and excellency of its doctrines. And lastly, its correspondence with the state and wants of our nature.

*Its external  
evidence  
chiefly plead-  
ed.*

The first has been chiefly employed upon the present subject. Passages have been produced from the histories  
of

of nations out of the pale of the Jewish or Christian Church, in attestation to the truth of the Bible. And likewise traditions concerning the creation, the lapse of Adam, the deluge, the erection of Babel, and confusion of languages, and other important events recorded in the Hebrew scriptures, are traced in many heathen countries; together with various religious customs, which seem derived from the same original. But the argument from miracles and prophecy has been most frequently urged on this occasion, and with extraordinary force of conviction. For notwithstanding the world has been crowded with prodigies and wonders, real or fictitious, so that there is scarcely a species of superstition, however absurd, that does not put in its claim to miraculous proof; nay, though the degree of absurdity may often be

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SECTION  
XLIII.*Heathen histories and traditions.**Miracles.*

SECTION  
XLIII.

tolerably estimated by the quantity of pretended miracle: And though it may be difficult to ascertain the just idea of a miracle, or plainly in all cases to distinguish the extraordinary interpositions of Deity, from the course of nature, according to its general laws, or from the productions of subordinate spirits: Yet certainly an event may be of such a kind, and so particularly circumstanced, as fairly to be ascribed, beyond the established order of things, to the *finger of God*; and the miracles recorded in the *Bible* appear to me of this description.

*Prophecy.*

Nor am I less struck with the argument from prophecy, which seems peculiar to the Christian system. I never heard it pretended in behalf of *Fvë* or *Lao-kiun*, or any other religious founder in the heathen world, that the  
principal

principal incidents of his life, and the success of his doctrine, were foretold, or that even he was in general announced before his birth. And though some claims of this nature are made in favour of *Mohammed*, they are evidently grounded either upon ignorance or presumption †. How different is the case of CHRISTIANITY and its AUTHOR! The nativity of JESUS, the course of his life, his death and resurrection, the sudden spread of his religion, and its various success to the end of time, appear to have been predicted, not merely in a single prophecy, or by a single prophet, but in a chain of prophecy, and by a succession of prophets, extending almost from the beginning of the world to the Christian æra: To which may be added, the predictions uttered by JESUS and his apostles, whether in

SECTION  
XLIII.



† See Prideaux's *Life of Mohammed*, p. 159-63.

SECTION  
XLIII.

agreement with former prophecies yet unaccomplished, or further declarative of the state of things to their final consummation. And what strikes me with particular force, is, that the present circumstances of the world seem manifestly to correspond with prophetic description. Surely none but the OMNISCIENT can thus reveal futurity, and comprehend at once the END and the BEGINNING.

*The nature and excellence of the doctrines and morals of Christianity next insisted on; but with less effect.*

The nature and excellence of the doctrines and morals of Christianity have also been insisted upon to evince its divine extraction, though I apprehend not always with the same ability and judgment displayed in the external proof. I have seen it observed, that some of its doctrines are too strange and uncommon to have been the product of human invention. It may be  
so;

fo: Yet it must be acknowledged, that the human mind has been often fertile of extraordinary notions, and it may seem extremely difficult and hazardous, to determine upon divine revelations by this single criterion; which, however, taken in conjunction with the morals and chief scope of a system, is a circumstance to be regarded. For though every strange notion is not from heaven, yet whatever is thence revealed may reasonably be expected to appear extraordinary and wonderful to human understanding. The Christian morality, I conceive, affords a clearer and more direct evidence: For as it evidently exalts the common duties of life, by grafting them on the fear and love of God, and thus, as it were, elevates them from earth to heaven, and is essentially connected with every part of Christianity; it seems

SECTION  
XLIII.

SECTION  
XLIII.

strongly to bespeak the divinity of the whole. But then we must view it in this case as it is contained in the *Scripture*; for as usually it is represented by our *apologists*, it appears to have little advantage over the morals of Confucius, and other wise men. That we ought to do to others as we would have them do to us||: That we should study humility §, and patience §§: That we

|| This is said to have been a fundamental doctrine in the morals of Confucius: *Cem-cu* ait; Confucii doctrina fundamentalis, & unicum rectè vivendi principium hoc est—*talem te esse erga alios, quales esse velis alios erga te*; atque hoc sufficere, nec aliâ re esse opus. *Scientia Sin.* Lib III. p. 16.

*Cu-cum* sciscitando ait: Num fortè extat unum aliquod vocabulum, secundum quod velut normam quampiam possit quis per omnem vitam operari? Confucius respondit: Nonne istud vocabulum est, *Xu*? Scilicet, *tibi quod non vis, ne facias erga alios.* Ibid p. 114.

§ “Humility [says Confucius] puts away troubles. Humility unites a man to all people.” *Navarette*, p. 166.

Another

Another Chinese sage observes: "Virtue takes its original from humility; WHEN A MAN DECLINES IN VIRTUE, IT IS BECAUSE HIS HUMILITY DECAYS," Ibid. p. 163.

SECTION  
XLIII.



§§ "One quarter of an hour's suffering [says a certain Chinese author] saves an hundred years trouble.—If a man does not bear and curb himself, a thing that is no more than a straw grows to a great heap. So that all troubles whatsoever proceed from impatience and want of bearing. Patience is the precious jewel of the heart; impatience is its ruin and destruction."

Another observes, "HE IS NO MAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR WITH HIS BROTHER."

"The Chinese history tells us, That an emperor taking a progress through the empire, he came to a town in which was a house where man and wife, children, grand-children, daughters-in-law, servants, and all the family, lived in the greatest unity, love, and concord: The emperor admiring it, went to talk with the master of the house, of whom he asked, How such extraordinary peace and quietness was preserved among so many persons? The old man, without answering a word, took up a pencil, and, dipping it in ink, writ *fin, fin, fin*, that is, patience, patience, patience. The emperor understood him, commended his virtue, and rewarded it." *Navarette*, p. 166-7.



SECTION  
XLIII.

should love even our enemies\*: And in every thing conform ourselves to *right reason*\*\* : These are points, no less inculcated by our ancient sages than by the authors in question, and almost from the same considerations of reason and nature : And therefore can scarce be urged upon such grounds, as a peculiar argument in favour of the Christian religion.

\* “ When any man does me a good turn [says one of their authors], it is fit I should deal fairly with him, and shew myself grateful : And if any man misuses and hates me, it is fit I use him well, and love him. If I love and use all men well, who will hate me ? No man.”

Excellent instructions, cries *Navarette*, for loving our enemies ! And he tells us, that the Chinese write much upon this subject, p. 150.

\*\* See *Scientia Sinensis*, Lib. I. p. 1. and *Du Halde*, Vol. III. p. 303. This seems to answer the Stoical idea of *living according to nature* ; [*ομολογημένος ἡ φύσει ζῆν* ; or as Cicero expresses it, *congruenter naturæ convenienterque vivere.*]

The

The third and last topic which I SECTION  
 mentioned, appears to my understand- XLIII.  
 ing the most accommodated to general *The argument*  
 conviction. The greater part of the *from its cor-*  
 world are not sufficiently provided with *respondence*  
 leisure and learning, to comprehend *to the state*  
 the force of the argument from pro- *and wants of*  
 phesy and miracles; and might easily *our nature,*  
 imagine that the first were forgeries *most accom-*  
 posterior to the events, and that the *modated to*  
 second were no better than so many *general con-*  
 juggles and deceptions. And to discern *vicision.*  
 the authenticity of a religious system  
 by its intrinsic evidence, seems to re-  
 quire, not only a degree of understand-  
 ing, but of moral improvement, very  
 superior to our general attainments.  
 But herein appears to lie the distin-  
 guishing excellence of Christianity,  
 that it comes home to men's bosoms  
 and consciences; it tells them what  
 once they were, and what they now  
 are,

SECTION  
XLIII.

are, and they feel the truth in both cases: Their sense of grandeur and innocence points them to the one, while their meanness and misery convince them of the other. And thus it reflects men to themselves; and they descry at the same time, as in a mirror, their original and present state. This is a kind of *personal revelation*, and seems to carry its own evidence. Nor does it leave them here to a merely speculative discovery: It offers assistance to their weakness, and remedies to their imperfections. In other systems, the law of obedience is either reduced and levelled with the depravity of human nature; or if preserved in a degree of purity, no sufficient help is afforded in order to fulfil it, nor relief in case of failure: And thus man is either degraded to a beast, or mocked with unattainable perfection. But the Christian

tian religion seems equally to correspond to his wants and his dignity, displaying a law of consummate holiness answering to his original state, and, at the same time, affording interior assistance and an adequate atonement, calculated for his present condition of impotence and guilt. And upon these grounds it would appear, that Christianity might safely lodge its appeal with every individual, and leave him to try its truth and importance by his own heart and situation. But its advocates think proper to employ more indirect and learned methods in its favour.

SECTION  
XLIII.

There is one circumstance, however, which may cast a suspicion on their mode of demonstrating Christianity, which is, That as they have multiplied their demonstrations, the less it has been believed or regarded :

*The more  
Christianity  
has been de-  
monstrated,  
the less it has  
been believed  
or regarded.*

now

SECTION  
XLIII.

now at length the effect seems nearly the same as might have been expected; *if they had proved it to be false.* This, at first sight, may appear a curious phenomenon in the history of the human mind, and yet I conceive is in good measure to be accounted for by what we have already observed. Men generally are but little disposed to enquire or be persuaded into a scheme, and especially of a religious nature, in which they are not *sensibly* interested. What will it avail to tell them, that a divine person came into the world, wrought miracles, delivered certain doctrines, died and rose again, unless they are first practically convinced, that these are matters which involve their own duty and happiness? It may be said indeed, and no doubt truly, that subjects so extraordinary ought of themselves to attract the attention of rational beings. But I need not

*This endeavoured to be accounted for.*

not say, that speculative reason has little influence upon the general conduct of the world, which is chiefly governed by a *sense* of interest. Convince a plain man, that his present and future welfare are essentially connected with a certain system, and he is likely to search into it with a serious anxiety, and to yield a becoming obedience to its requisitions. But if it appear to him merely a question of words and names, or a curious speculation, or in short, a matter in which he has no concern, he will leave it to the discussion of idle people and philosophers, and may probably treat it with indifference or contempt, in proportion to the zeal and elaborate argument with which it is agitated.

But supposing our apologist has so far succeeded, that his demonstrations of the truth of Christianity in general

*What the apologist cannot gain by his comments, he liberally concedes.*

are

SECTION  
XLIII.

SECTION  
XLIII.

are admitted, he is still engaged in resolving particular objections against the system itself, both in its doctrines and precepts. And here he adopts a new method, consisting of ingenious comments and liberal concessions. He first endeavours to explain away the difficulty, sometimes by correcting the translation of the *Bible*, sometimes by reducing Eastern metaphor to British sense, sometimes by the help of ancient opinions and customs, and often by mere dint of reason and philosophy. Or if these, and other similar methods, prove ineffectual, he has still one sure expedient in reserve, which is, *to concede the point in dispute*, as of small importance, and in no wise affecting the fundamentals of the system. This must needs at the same time evince the solidity of his judgment, and highly add to the reputation of his candour and liberality.

It

It is, as if he should say, Gentlemen, SECTION  
XLIII.  
I have demonstrated to you the truth of Christianity in general, and here I might securely rest the cause; however I have so far condescended to your objections against particular parts, that I have endeavoured with all the wit and learning I am master of to explain them away; and where I have found this impracticable, have generously abandoned them to your discretion. Now this is a proceeding that must surely satisfy the most captious adversary.

It has been attended indeed with some inconvenience; but is not this the case with the best projects? The demands, it seems, have arisen in proportion to the concessions; but who could foresee that men would be so unreasonable? Our apologist pretends neither to be a prophet, nor the son of a prophet.



SECTION  
XLIII.

And nobody could suppose it probable, that he would gradually have been induced to grant away Christianity itself, in order to defend it; and especially after he had demonstrated its general truth, and his demonstrations had been admitted. It was certainly more than he was obliged to in point of reason; and he might justly have opposed the truth of the whole in defence of its several parts. But he might probably scorn to insist with rigour on his advantages, or the truth of his cause; and by his gratuitous concessions choose equally to display his magnanimity, and his regard to peace and accommodation.

*The two parties seem at length to have come to an amicable compromise.*

In this manner it has happened, that to an impartial by-stander it would often seem difficult to determine, what is now the matter in controversy between the two parties. They appear at length

to

to have understood one another, and to have nearly come to this amicable compromise; that, provided the general truth of Christianity be allowed to its apologist, he will graciously, in return, explain or modify it to the liking of his opponent †.

SECTION  
XLIII.

† This conciliatory scheme seems to have been introduced into the church as early as the second century, under the title of *the œconomical method of disputing*, which was, *that*, says the translator of *Mosheim*, in which the disputants *accommodated themselves, as far as was possible, to the taste and prejudices of those, whom they were endeavouring to gain over unto the truth*. And he adds, that some of the first Christians carried their condescension too far, and abused St. Paul's example (1 Cor. ix. 20-2.) to a degree inconsistent with the purity and simplicity of Christianity. See *Mosheim's Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 154-5. [Note z.]

In modern times, the Jesuits will easily be acknowledged as the great masters in this scheme of accommodation, which was practised by their missionaries in China, in the last century, with extraordinary effect: and it has found advocates in our own age and country.

SECTION  
XLIII.

“ In all propofals and fchemes to be reduced to practice [fays Bifhop Hoadley], we muft fuppose the world to be WHAT IT IS, not WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE. We muft propofe, not merely what is abfolutely good in itfelf, but what is fo with refpect to the prejudices, tempers, and conftitutions we know, and are fure to be among us.”

Upon this paffage, the author of the *Confefional*, among other things, obferves: “ It is now about fifty years fince the venerable Bifhop of *Wincheft*er advanced this maxim of confidering the world as it is, rather than as it ought to be; and as the maxim itfelf has been almoft univerfally adopted by the clergy, it is but reasonable to expect it fhould, by this time, have been juftified by better fruits, than would have been brought forth by our endeavouring to reform the world by the ftricter precepts of the gofpel. *Are then the men, or the times, upon whom thefe accommodating methods have been tried, in any better difpofition than they were, before they were introduced? Are their prejudices rooted out, their tempers softened, their conftitutions refined, or their manners purified, by thefe prudential expedients of reformation?*” —

“ The Bifhop of *Wincheft*er’s maxim is, however, in as much repute as ever. And no wonder, doctrines which have in them fo much eafe and convenience, with refpect to the teachers of religion, and fo plaufible an air of moderation towards their difciples, are in no danger of going out of fafhion, let them be confronted with ever fo plain facts, or refuted by ever fo folid reafoning.

reasoning. They pass from hand to hand with the perfect approbation of all sides; and with whomsoever it is we have any disputes, of which the conduct of the clergy makes a part, disquisitors, dissenters, infidels, or heretics, the apology is always drawn from the nature and necessity of the *times*.”

SECTION  
XLIII.

“ Thus, in a late answer to Lord *Bolingbroke* \*, we are informed that “ There are times and occasions “ when politeness, civil prudence, and the private “ motives of friendship OUGHT to determine a “ man, *who is to live in the world*, to comply with the “ state and condition of the times, and even to chuse “ the *worse* instead of the *better* method of doing “ good.”

“ How good things may be improved by keeping ! In the beginning of the century, compliance with the times was only a matter of *prudence* and *expedience*; it is *now* become a *duty*. The adversaries of the doctrine heretofore were only harmless theoretical *Utopians*. They are now *fanatics*, *enthusiasts*, and *bigots*.

“ The learned writer, indeed, hath limited this duty to *the man who is to live in the world*. But which of us is *not* to live in the world, in the common acceptance of that expression? If, indeed, by a man who is to live in the world, is meant a man who is *so* to live in it, as never to give offence (the thing, says this writer, of all to be most dreaded by *those who know the world*), it is well, if, in the gospel account, this politeness, civil prudence, and private friendship,

\* By Dr. Warburton.

SECTION XLIII. turn out to be any better than hypocrisy, partiality, worldly wisdom, and respect of persons.



“The plain truth is just this. The prejudices, tempers, constitutions, &c. of mankind, with respect to the expedients of reformation proposed in the Christian scriptures, have been much the same in all ages since the heavenly preacher of them first appeared. Sensual, worldly minded, and incorrigible men *hated* him, because he reproved their pride, their avarice, their hypocrisy, and other vices, without reserve. And such men hate such preachers to this hour, and will hate them to the end of the world. And yet such doctrines must be preached, with the same unreserved freedom, if the men who are appointed to the office would discharge it faithfully. Unless our prudent and polite reformers can produce a new revelation, exhibiting new sanctions, and new terms of salvation; or unless they can shew (what indeed some of them have more than half insinuated) that the same occasions which the men of that generation gave to our *Saviour* exist no longer, and that pride, avarice, hypocrisy, superstition, and sensuality, are banished from the face of the earth. When they have made either of these appear, THEN, but not till then, we can allow them to *accommodate* themselves, their *doctrines*, and *expedients* of reformation, to the *taste and temper of the times*.” See the *Confessional*, p. 336—344-5, and 347-8.

There is so much manliness and truth in these observations, and they seem so strongly to confirm what

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## SECTION XLIV.

SECTION  
XLIV.

**F**ROM what we have observed The clergy considered in point of learning.  
 under the present head of our enquiry, with our former remarks on education and the universities, we may form a tolerable estimate of the kind and degree of learning now existing among the established clergy: And we may venture to pronounce, in the first place, Inferior in professional knowledge to the bodies of law and physic.  
 with little danger of mistake, that of the three learned bodies of law, physic, and divinity, the last are least distinguished for professional knowledge. And upon viewing the circumstances, we shall find it could not well be otherwise, without inspiration or miracle; since the two former generally bestow some regular  
 is here advanced by our Chinese, that I am persuaded every reader, who has not the book at hand, will thank me for citing them on this occasion.

SECTION  
XLIV.

attention on the constitution and laws of nature and their country; whereas the clergy can hardly be said to rank theology among their studies, but are content to pick it up in the manner of secular men, from general conversations, flying pamphlets, and occasional sermons, without encumbering themselves with unweildy systems, primitive fathers, or oriental languages, and even without reading the *Bible* in their own tongue, unless now and then in performing the *offices* of the church †.

*More distinguished as natural philosophers than divines.*

The volume of nature more frequently draws their attention; and with a

† “The clergy of all ranks are, in general, either ignorant, or, if they do apply, it is rather to profane learning, to philosophy, or political matters, than to the study of the scriptures, of the oriental languages, of the fathers, and ecclesiastical authors, and of the writings of devout men in different ages of the church.” Hartley’s *Obs. on Man*, Vol II, p. 451.

little

little additional study and abstraction from the world, they might easily be taken for a sect of philosophers. However, such as they are, it is by no means unusual to find among them, botanists, chymists, astronomers, and in short, tolerable proficients in every branch of natural knowledge: so that they are more likely to furnish information concerning the qualities of plants and minerals, than of vices and virtues; and to fix the place of a star, or describe the track of a planet, than to determine our station in the moral world, and mark out the path of our duty and happiness. Individuals, no doubt, equally well versed in physics and theology, must have arisen in so numerous a body; but they appear to have been extremely rare. And we may observe in general, that the divine and philosopher seldom unite in the same character; nay,

SECTION  
XLIV.



*These two  
characters sel-  
dom unite,  
and are some-  
times contrary*



SECTION  
XLIV.

in this age and country, there are men, ecclesiastic and secular, highly celebrated in the latter capacity, who perhaps may justly be ranked among the greatest strangers as well as enemies to the Christian revelation; for which they endeavour to substitute something they are pleased to entitle the *religion of nature* ††.

*Most branches  
of literature  
indebted to the  
clergy.*

Besides the cultivation of philosophy, there

†† “The same persons (says Dr. Hartley) who treat the Christian religion and its advocates with so much scorn, will probably, some of them at least, profess a regard to *natural religion*; and it may seem hard to question their sincerity. However, as far as has occurred to my observation, these persons either deceive themselves, or attempt to deceive others, in this. There appears in them no fear or love of God, no confidence in him, no delight in meditating upon him, in praying to him, or praising him, no hope or joy in a future state. Their hearts and treasures are upon this earth, upon sensual pleasures, or vain amusements, *perhaps of philosophy or philology*, pursued to pass the time; upon honour or riches. *And indeed there are*

there is hardly a branch of elegant literature that is not partly indebted to the clerical order. It has produced poets, who have risen beyond mediocrity; and while they have devoutly employed their genius on sacred topics and occasions, they seem exempted from just censure; but not so, when they have degraded their muse to profane subjects, and even exposed her upon the stage. It has likewise yielded philologists of high repute; some who have bestowed elaborate comments on heathen classics; and others who have done the same ho-

SECTION  
XLIV.



*are the same objections in general to natural religion as to revealed, and no stronger evidences for it.* On the contrary, the historical and moral evidences for the general truth of the scriptures, which these persons deny, are more convincing and satisfactory to philosophical as well as to vulgar capacities, than the arguments that are usually brought to prove the existence and attributes of God, his providence, or a future state: not but that these last are abundantly sufficient to satisfy an earnest and impartial enquirer." Vol. II. p. 442.

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SECTION XLIV. nour to those of their own country.

Nor has it been destitute of antiquaries, who have consumed their lives amidst the rubbish of old times; or historians of all ranks, down to humble

*Their political authors.* writers of romance. And to shew that nothing is beyond its compass, it has not been barren of political authors;

men who can contend for the state as well as the church, and with degrees of zeal proportioned to their pay; and who are sometimes of great name while the service continues. One extraordinary

*Swift.* writer indeed of this description has survived the fourth part of a century, and is likely to be long remembered, both on account of his genius, and the abuse he made of it: but this is almost a singular instance, and may probably arise from more general causes: for a merely time-serving polemic is mostly forgotten with the occasion.

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## SECTION XLV.

SECTION  
XLV.

LET us now cast an eye upon the The general conduct and character of the clergy. general conduct and character of the clergy in their different ranks: And first of the bishops, of whom we have hitherto taken no distinct notice.

They appear to have been originally The duties of bishops. constituted, not only for the purpose of ordination, and the performance of a few ecclesiastical ceremonies, but for the preaching of the gospel §, and more peculiarly

§ “It appears that the constant sense of all churches, in all ages, has been that *preaching* was the bishop’s *great duty*, and that he ought to lay himself out in it most particularly.” Burnet’s Past. Care, p. 128-9.

“ This is certain that since—the inferior orders subsist in the superior, *bishops* must still be under all the obligations of *priests*: they are then, *take the matter at lowest*, bound to live, to labour, and to *preach* as well as they. But why are they raised to a higher rank of dignity and order, an increase of authority, and an extent of cure? And why have Christian princes

SECTION  
XLV.

cularly for the inspection of doctrine and manners, first among their clergy, and afterwards at large throughout their several dioceses §§. And agreeably to this end, they solemnly engage, upon admission to their office, *to instruct the people committed to their charge out of the holy scriptures; to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine; and both privately and openly to call upon others, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange opinions contrary to*

princes and states given them great revenues, and an accession of secular honours? All this must certainly import their obligation to *labour* more eminently, and to lay themselves out more entirely in the *work of the Gospel.*" Ibid. p. 242.

§§ "The title which is now by the custom of many ages given to the highest function in the church, of *bishop*, or *inspector*, and *overseer*, as it imports a dignity in him, as the chief of those who *labour*; so it does likewise express his obligation to care and diligence, *both in observing and overseeing the whole flock*, and more especially *in inspecting the deportment and labours of his fellow workmen.*" Ibid. p. 6. 7.

God's

*God's word: and, lastly, to correct and punish the inquiet, disobedient, and criminous, according to the authority they derive from scripture, or the ordinances of the realm.*

SECTION  
XLV.

Such are their obligations; let us now enquire what is their conduct. They almost entirely omit the office of preaching; and if they happen to discharge it three or four times annually, it may seem beyond their usual practice. And yet this appears to be the chief part they take in instructing the people. For although they engage to do the same *privately*, I cannot find that they are accustomed to teach, in the manner of the apostle, *from house to house*, or that their palace gates are often disturbed with cases of conscience, or with enquiries of the way to heaven. Nor do they seem less negligent in the inspection of their clergy. They visit them indeed once in

*They preach  
three or four  
times a year.*

*Neglect the in-  
spection of their  
clergy.*

SECTION  
XLV.

but without using any particular enquiry into their *doctrine or manners*. This with some other episcopal acts are easily performed within the space of a month. The ordination of priests and deacons is four times annually, and the whole may employ the bishop for one week. And if we add another fortnight in the year for granting certain *licences* and what are termed *institutions*, we shall probably attain the usual *medium* of episcopal occupation. During the winter season they occasionally appear in the upper house of parliament, in the character of spiritual lords. The rest of their time is spent according to their humour or disposition, either, as may be supposed, in literary pursuits, or in making decent cheer, or in holy visions of a speedy translation.

*How their  
time is chiefly  
spent.*

The

The dignitaries who stand next in order to the bishops are no less at leisure. SECTION XLV.

*The dignitaries*  
They preach twice or thrice annually, appear in their stalls at certain seasons; and, if in the rank of arch-deacons, make twice in three years a short visitatorial circuit. They have little communication with the people, are frequently seen at court, and at the levees of men in power, and chiefly, it is said, on the demise of a bishop: But doubts without any ambitious views of obtaining a mitre \*\*.

The rest of the clergy consist mostly *Parish priests.* of parish priests, who are called, *to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and*

\*\* "The superior clergy are, in general, ambitious, and eager in the pursuit of riches; flatterers of the great, and subservient to party-interest; negligent of their own immediate charges, and also of the inferior clergy, and their immediate charges." Hartley's *Obs. on Man*, Vol. II. p. 450.



SECTION  
XLV.

*Their obligations:*

*to provide for the Lord's family; to seek for*

*CHRIST'S sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through CHRIST for ever. And they are considered, as giving themselves wholly to this office, and drawing all their cares and studies this way.*

*Divided into three classes, the exemplary, the decent, and the secular.*

But what is their real character and conduct? To present this more distinctly, we may divide them into three classes, which we may style the *exemplary*, the *decent*, and the *secular*.

*Character of the exemplary.*

In the first we may comprehend such members of this body, who are of good learning and manners, serious in their ministrations, zealous advocates of religion and virtue, maintainers of hospitality, friends of the sick and needy, of the fatherless and widow; and who seem the remains of a better age. But  
their

their number is comparatively small, and probably fast decreasing †.

SECTION  
XLV.



In the second class, we may rank *Of the decent.* those who uniformly observe the offices of the church, but with little apparent sense of holy things; as if they imagined a *formal* discharge of parochial duty sufficient. Some of them are undoubtedly men of excellent learning, and in general they are regular in their manners, grave in their apparel and deportment, but so perfectly remote from any unpolite severities, which might raise an idea of superstition, that they will occasionally condescend to sustain

† Dr. Hartley, after saying that, “the inferior clergy imitate their superiors, and, in general, take little more care of their parishes, than barely what is necessary to avoid the censure of the law;” observes, there are some of a different character; “men eminent for piety, sacred learning, and the faithful discharge of their duty, and who, it is not to be doubted, *mourn in secret for the crying sins of this and other nations.*” Vol. II. p. 450-1.

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SECTION  
XLV.

parties in games branded by the church \*, in order more effectually to prevent this odious impression: But this being done sparingly, and from a motive so prudent, they may be thought still to preserve a certain decency of character.

*And of the secular.*

But we cannot entertain this opinion of such who have thrown off all appearance of regard to the duties of their profession. These constitute our third class. Their views may be considered as purely *secular*, though their conduct varies, as in other bodies of men, according to their age, their dispositions, and other circumstances. Some of them are vigilant and thrifty watchmen, who, instead of wandering

\* In the 75th Canon, it is said, "No ecclesiastical person shall at any time — give themselves — to drinking or riot, spending their time idly by day or by night, playing at *dice*, *cards*, or *tables*, or any other unlawful game."

abroad,

abroad, are continually perambulating  
 their parishes, and curiously prying  
 into the farmers' yards and grounds,  
 lest the Church should receive any de-  
 triment. Others of more ambitious  
 spirits, are rather attentive to surprize  
 the favour of the *great*, than a few  
*chicks* and *goslings*; and if they cannot  
 succeed by some political pamphlet, or  
 their address at a parliamentary elec-  
 tion, they are content to ply in the  
 character of chaplains or mean para-  
 sites. Some again are indolent Epi-  
 cures, who literally convert their bene-  
 fices into good livings. Others are  
*men of the field*, who can point their ar-  
 tillery or spring a fence with a lauda-  
 ble dexterity. And many are mere  
*coxcombs*, who affect in their dress and  
 manners the *appearance* of gentlemen,  
 and resort to every place of fashionable  
 dissipation. And yet all these are per-

SECTION  
XLV.

SECTION XLV. sons who engage themselves *to be whole-*  
*some examples and patterns to the flock of*  
 CHRIST, *laying aside the study of the world*  
*and the flesh.*

*Lust of plural-*  
*ities.*

I would only observe further under this head, that a priest is seldom satisfied with a single benefice, however plentiful; he is still grasping at pluralities; but whether this arises from a pious wish of extending his labour, which he usually devolves on half-starved curates, or from a lust of the spoils, the world seems at no loss to determine.

SECTION  
XLVI.

## SECTION XLVI.

**A**FTER this survey of the esta-<sup>Transitions to</sup> blished clergy, 1st. In their de-<sup>the Dissenters</sup> signation. 2dly. In their education. 3dly. In their preaching, both in its matter, its manner, and effects. 4thly. In their apologetic writings. 5thly. In their general literature. And, lastly, In the conduct of their lives: The natural order of our subject would appear to lead us, after this fruitless search within the limits of the establishment, to extend our view to the teachers and doctrines of the various religious sects which lie out of its pale. But this would spin out our discourse too far, and requires more minute and accurate observations than I have made; and besides, is not essential to my de-

SECTION  
XLVI.

sign: Since the establishment comprehending the much greater part of the nation, the religious character of both must materially be the same. I shall therefore content myself on this occasion with a few general remarks.

*In their general manners and conduct nearly on a level with the church.*

And first I would observe, that the Dissenters (for so the sectaries at large are denominated) by no means answer to their description in history. They have happily shaken off the gravity of the former age, and it is but rarely that you meet with a *relick* of Puritanic solemnity. And, in short, they are commonly as gay and luxurious, and nearly as indevout, as their brethren of the church.

*Their religious assemblies.*

In their religious assemblies, indeed, they retain a kind of formality, which at first carries a specious appearance; but on examination we shall find it is  
little

little better than a shadow of ancient piety, and will probably vanish with the present generation.


SECTION  
XLVI.

Their ministers (if I might hazard a <sup>*Their ministers.*</sup> conjecture) are mostly inferior to the clergy in literature, and perhaps have somewhat the advantage in point of religion. They certainly are more conversant with the *Bible*, and in general seem less remote from the standard of national orthodoxy, which (as we have before seen) they are still bound to subscribe, notwithstanding their late addresses to Parliament\*. But probably in some future struggle they will succeed; and in due time, perhaps, erect the banner of liberty and philosophy upon the ruins of the church. However, they have some lively geniusses

\* They obtained relief in this point a few years ago.



SECTION  
XLVI.

among them, who indulge themselves  
 with this triumphant prospect.

*The metho-  
dists.*

I observe one body of men who appear to occupy the interval between the two parties, and are considerable in point of numbers. They originated I find about half a century ago in one of the universities, and immediately made a rapid progress. Their beginnings seem to have been marked with a degree of enthusiasm, which naturally cleaves to a reforming spirit in its first effervescence. Their general intentions however I conceive were laudable, and honestly directed in opposition to the corruptions of the age. It is therefore no wonder that they incurred much odium, which will ever be the case with men who contend with public vices and errors. They ascribed the common depravity of manners to a departure  
 from

from the doctrines of Christianity; and particularly endeavoured to restore the established articles of the national faith to their former credit; which highly it seems provoked the resentment of the national clergy. I have not been wholly inattentive to their preachers, and I must do them the justice to own, that they speak like men convinced of the reality and importance of what they deliver, and who truly mean the good of their hearers: Only they may do well to distinguish always betwixt *zeal* and *knowledge*; and at the same time, to be a little more attentive, not to offend the eye or ear of a stranger by uncouth gestures or a stupid vociferation. However they are in general very seriously heard by their numerous auditories: So that there is one presumption at least in their common favour,

SECTION  
XLVI.

SECTION XLVI. FOUR, *They appear to be in earnest* ||.

*The Quakers.*

I shall just take notice of another sect, more singular in their manners than any of the rest. They arose in the last century during a civil war, which was fruitful in extraordinary productions, both religious and political. Their founder seems to have been

|| Dr. Hartley, who wrote not long after the rise of this sect, observes as follows: "There are great complaints made of the irregularities of the methodists, and, I believe, not without reason. The surest means to check these irregularities is, *for the clergy to learn from the methodists what is good in them*, to adopt their zeal, and concern for lost souls: This would soon unite all that are truly good among the methodists to the clergy, and disarm such as are otherwise. And if the methodists will hearken to one, who means sincerely well to all parties, let me intreat them to reverence their superiors, to avoid spiritual selfishness, and zeal for particular phrases and tenets, and not to sow divisions in parishes and families, but to be peace-makers, as they hope to be called the children of God. THE WHOLE WORLD WILL NEVER BE CONVERTED BUT BY THOSE WHO ARE OF A TRULY CATHOLIC SPIRIT." *Obs. on Man*, Vol. II. p. 452-3.

a well-

a well-meaning fanatic, who strolled SECTION  
about the island, scattering certain XLVI.  
mystic opinions, and courting stripes  
and imprisonments; and for some years  
his followers copied his example. But  
by degrees they settled into an orderly  
community, and are at present chiefly  
remarkable for their plain dress, their  
phraseology, and, what is more to their  
honour, for their sobriety and integri-  
ty. Like the followers of Confucius  
they have no priests; unless we should  
suppose them indiscriminately of the  
sacerdotal race, since every one is at li-  
berty, both male and female, to ha-  
rangue in their religious assemblies.  
How this is made consistent with the  
Apostolic prohibition †, I have not  
looked into their commentaries to be  
informed. But let it not be imagined  
from this circumstance, that their reli-

\* I Cor. ch. xiv. ver. 34-5.

SECTION  
XLVI.

gion is a friend to loquacity; for I am told it is no uncommon thing in their meetings, when there happens to be no particular *afflatus*, to sit together all the time in profound silence.

*The sectaries in general, together with the establishment, seem verging to one common state of irreligion.*

But most of these various sects (if not all of them), together with the establishment, appear to be verging, in some degree, towards one common state of irreligion, and thus unhappily to be growing into mutual conformity. The distinction that remains consists chiefly in a few peculiarities in doctrine, and modes of worship: For as to the conduct of life, whether in private, or in the world at large, the difference is not very conspicuous. Even the formal sectary we last mentioned has learned to be less rigid, and can shape himself to the fashion of the times. They seem to have come to these liberal terms

terms of accommodation : *To let every one enjoy his own way and opinion without expostulation or disturbance.* Sincerity is substituted for truth, and charity is the *bond of imperfection* \*. They cannot indeed agree to worship God in the same temple, but they *can* agree *not* to worship him in their houses : they can agree to mingle at theatres, and other places of dissipation : they can agree to be profane, luxurious, and unjust. There are, no doubt, many individual exceptions ; but I think it will hardly be contested, that the disposition here described, while it manifestly prevails in the national Church, is at the same time gaining ground upon most of the other parties.

\* An allusion plainly to Col. iii. 14.

SECTION  
XLVI.



SECTION  
XLVII.

## SECTION XLVII.

*A Critique on  
the two learn-  
ed bodies of  
law and phy-  
sic.*

WE have taken no distinct notice of the two learned bodies of law and physic; and it would only have supplied us with a few more shades to the pictures. They seem to be remarked for irreligion even in this age and country ††. That many of

†† "It is common for young students in these professions [viz. law and physic], says Dr. Hartley [who was himself a physician], to lift themselves on the side of irreligion, and become nominal infidels *of course*, and from fashion, as it were, and without pretending, as indeed there could be no reasonable pretence, to have examined into the merits of the cause. Which *blind and implicit faith in the blind*, in one does not know what or whom, would be most unaccountable in those who profess *infidelity*, were it not, that this is in every other instance a contradiction to itself, and must be so, on account of the wilful infatuation from which it arises." *Obs. on Man*, Vol. II. p. 445-6.

them

them are possessed of great professional talents, is out of question; and not a few of them are distinguished for their general learning. So that they may justly be considered as rivals of the clerical order in the cultivation of arts and sciences, and of every branch of polite literature: And this is eminently the case with the medical faculty. But now we have gone to the extent of our eulogium. For while the lawyer is profoundly versed in the constitution of his country, he is frequently ignorant of the law of heaven! And while the physician is admiring the exquisite artifice displayed in the structure of the human body, and the laws of its oeconomy, he mostly ascribes them to an imaginary power called *Nature*: And is so much a stranger to his soul, that he is often ready to doubt its existence, and whether it be any thing more than



SECTION  
XLVII.

a mere quality of the machine when  
 duly organized and set in motion!  
 And thus corporeal, or Dame Nature  
 (as sometimes entitled), and the British  
 constitution, are the principal *divinities*  
 they choose to worship.

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## SECTION XLVIII.

SECTION  
XLVIII.

*The marine  
 and military  
 departments.*

WE have also omitted any parti-  
 cular inspection into the marine  
 or military departments. And in the  
 present stage of our enquiry, after we  
 have searched into colleges and temples  
 with such small success, there remains  
 but little encouragement to look for  
 Christianity in camps and navies.—  
 These are seldom the resorts of reli-  
 gion in other countries; and I have  
 not

not heard that the mariners or foldiers of this island are more likely to attract her visits ††. I have heard, on the contrary, that they mostly discover a daring impiety, beyond the example of other nations. And this may appear not improbable when we consider, that they are chiefly collected from the refuse of a people, such as we have seen, and some of them compelled into the service. To say that they are brave, is but to say that they are Britons: And that there are instances among them, and in every rank of gradation, of men as religious and virtuous as they are brave, I gladly acknowledge: But at

SECTION  
XLVIII.

†† “It was remarkable in the late war, that when all the different nations which composed the confederate army were performing their daily devotions, the — soldiers only seemed to have no sense of *the being of a God.*” Quoted by Harris in his life of Cromwell, p. 81, from Hanway’s Travels, published in 1753.

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SECTION  
XLVIII.

the same time I must be permitted to regret, that they are too few in number to affect their general character.

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## SECTION XLIX.

SECTION  
XLIX.

*The number of charitable foundations redounds most to the national honour.*

THE circumstance which most redounds to the national honour, and which I note with peculiar satisfaction, is the number of charitable foundations which are seen scattered through the island, and which almost crowd the metropolis. Perhaps if their revenues were less employed in exterior splendour, it would still be an addition on the side of humanity. However, they are undoubtedly noble monuments of British dignity and generosity. And such of them as arose in former times, I will

I will presume to have been established by religion. But whether those of a recent original can be justly ascribed to the same cause, I leave every one to determine from our past observations, or from his own. I need not say that Pride can erect hospitals as well as Virtue; and that compassion to the distressed has no inseparable connection with the fear or love of God. Heathen nations are not destitute of humanity: they are men, although not Christians. In our empire the Prince annually extends his bounty to the necessitous with a royal munificence ||; and the poor in every city or town are indulged

SECTION  
XLIX.*The state of the  
poor in China.*

A a 2 with

|| "The alms the Emperor gives every year is one of the most magnificent things that can be said of him: it exceeds four millions; an action worthy the greatest monarch in the universe. What I most admired in it is, that the present Emperor's father having been petitioned to apply that sum to his own use, on pretence that the exchequer was low, being exhausted by the wars, he answered,

That

SECTION  
XLIX.

with a particular protector §. And I would further observe that mendicants are by no means with us so frequent as in this island §§. These instances I conceive will easily be admitted in favour of Chinese humanity and polity; and I am far from ascribing them to any higher principles.

That since his predecessors had given a testimony of their piety, by distributing such large alms, he would neither cut off, nor retrench it. What could any catholic prince have done more glorious? In all towns and cities, there is a number of poor maintained at the King's cost, 100 in some, 60 in others, according to the greatness of the place." Navarette, p. 27.

§ "There are many poor besides those the Emperor maintains.—They have their advocate or protector in every city and town, and they all pay him contribution out of their gettings. Whenever any of them is brought before a court, this man appears, and pleads for them; and it is strange to see that judgment is always given for the poor, which makes people stand in awe of them; nobody dares so much as give them an ill word, but rather will let them have any thing they ask for." Ibid. p. 28.

§§ Some of the Chinese shrewdly asked the missionaries, Whether there were any beggars in Europe?

## RECAPITULATION.

**A**ND thus we have endeavoured to trace the state and influence of Christianity among the people of this island. We have considered their general conversation, in which we might suppose the natural character to be strongly expressed; and we discovered, that religion was an heterogeneous ingredient, which only occasioned an angry ferment with British sense and

Europe? To this, says Navarette, we answered cautiously, telling them, that there are some whom God has left, that the rich may not want objects for their charity. But still they urged disdainfully, If all men in your countries follow the Christian doctrine, there is no doubt but they are as strictly united in love as if they were one man's children; and consequently the rich man will share his wealth with him that wants, and so every one must have enough: And truly (says our author) it was so in the primitive church, when all things were in common, and none wanted necessaries. Ibid.

A a 3 politeness.

politeness. We have viewed their religious assemblies, and have remarked the hypocrisy and levity of their devotions, and the thinness of their numbers; which led us to observe, that the day set apart for these holy conventions is generally profaned, and especially by the wealthy citizens, and *the great men of the land*. We have looked into their families, and have found them without prayer, or regard to the *volume* containing the records of their religion: And from this last circumstance, we have remarked their general want of zeal in propagating its doctrines among other nations. We have then proceeded to view them in their conduct and manners: We have descended to their tables, their dress, their stately mansions and equipage, which we have found equally inconsistent with good morals and sound polity.

lity. We have touched upon their flagitious lewdness and gallantries, and the shameless effrontery of their prostitutes; which led us, from their close connection, to bestow a censure on their theatrical exhibitions, and the general strain of their amusements. Their modes of polite education have next passed in review; and we found them more corporeal than spiritual, and more Pagan than Christian. And upon this occasion, we were naturally induced to cast a particular eye upon their two famous universities, and we remarked their disregard to religion, their relaxed discipline, their desultory studies, and their diminished credit: Nor did we omit a stricture on the formerly celebrated society of royal denomination. We then proceeded to a transient survey of their authors, and we observed, that the most pernicious



class of this numerous body were chiefly in vogue: And that the humble tribe of periodical essayists (the next in public favour), although by far less exceptionable, and some of them in certain respects entitled to applause, did not seem on the whole of advantage to Christianity. We then made our remarks on the metaphysicians, the deists, the rationalists and free-thinkers, who have either endeavoured to supersede or confute the Christian system, or by ingenious comments to transform it into a scheme of their own: Without omitting those wise *raillieurs*, who discover a laudable disposition to laugh every thing that is reasonable or decent out of the world. And after paying our respects to a few great writers, we next turned our attention to the seat of the national wisdom, where we supposed that Christianity,

nity, though banished from the rest of the island, would have met with a sure refuge; but we have seen that it was merely a political sanctuary, where it scarce found an advocate but on the footing of state expedience: Nay, it has appeared in the progress of our enquiry, that even the Being and Providence of God meet with little reverence or acknowledgment in the British Parliament; and that virtue, decency, and morals, are seldom the objects of their public deliberations. From the senate we made a transition to the church; and, after a particular survey of the established clergy, we have found them, to say the least, neither theologians, orators, nor saints: And towards completing the picture, we have taken a short view of the sectaries, who in general have appeared to us, with the national church at their

their head, to be verging to one common state of indifference to all religion. And we then closed with a few supplementary observations.

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### C O N C L U S I O N .

**E**ITHER the Christian revelation is true, or it is false. If it is false, we may with some appearance congratulate the greater part of the British nation, that they have either altogether, or very nearly, discovered the imposture: I would, however, beg leave to offer a remark upon this occasion. That there is a supreme God: That he ought to be worshipped: That this worship chiefly consists in piety and virtue: That we should repent

of our sins: And that future rewards and punishments await the righteous and the wicked. These are principles which a great deistical oracle, and the first who is said to have appeared on British ground, pronounces common notices inscribed on the minds of all men, and universally acknowledged in all ages, nations, and religions†: Now I would observe, that although it should be deemed unreasonable to admit these principles upon the credit of the Christian system, yet on account of their own intrinsic verity and importance, vouched, as the above oracle asserts, by the universal suffrage of mankind, they ought still to be held in the highest veneration, and most religiously observed. And unless this be done, I

† See *Leland's View of the Deist. Writers*, Vol. I. p. 3 and 4—and *Locke on Hum. Und. B. I. Ch. iii. §. 15.*

shall

shall be led to suspect, that the main quarrel with Christianity is upon other grounds, than any uncontrollable demonstrations or good evidences of its false pretensions to divine inspiration and authority.

But if the Christian religion be indeed what it declares itself, a revelation from heaven: If a chief part of its design be to renovate, to purify and exalt our nature: If it be the greatest and last effort of divine love and wisdom for the happiness of mankind: If this be so:—What a scene has passed before us! How different from the prospect I had indulged in imagination! I had figured to myself a people, not only of superior knowledge and virtue, but of a rational and sublime devotion, which bespoke a nearer relation to the DEITY! How mortifying

ying then must have been my disappointment, when, awaking from this flattering dream, I found myself in the midst of a nation, not without noble instances of learning, indeed, and abilities of every kind, but immoral in a high degree, and so uninspired with devotion, that its most glaring characteristics are indifference or contempt for all religion †: Its higher ranks being chiefly either pretended free-thinkers, or mean profligates; its commonalty sunk in sottish ignorance; and its priests either slumbering in unconcern, or scrambling for preferment\*! Surely

‡ “ Our ancestors, a few centuries ago, were sunk into the most abject superstition; last century they were inflamed with the most furious enthusiasm; AND ARE NOW SETTLED INTO THE MOST COOL INDIFFERENCE WITH REGARD TO RELIGIOUS MATTERS, THAT IS TO BE FOUND IN ANY NATION OF THE WORLD.” *Hume’s Essays*, Vol. I. p. 232. [8vo. 1764.]

\* These three great divisions of the community were *characterized* about 80 years ago, by an author, who

who was neither unacquainted with the church nor the world, and whom I shall therefore take the liberty of citing once more on this occasion.

Speaking of the *gentry*, he says, "They are for the most part the worst instructed and least knowing of any of their rank, I ever went amongst."

And again: "The gentry are not early acquainted with the principles of religion: So that, after they have forgot their *catechism*, they acquire no more new knowledge, but what they learn in *plays* and *romances*: They grow soon to find it a modish thing, that looks like wit and spirit, to laugh at religion and virtue, AND SO BECOME CRUDE AND UNPOLISHED INFIDELS."

In speaking of the *nobility*, however, he is more guarded.

Of the *commonalty*, he says, "It is not to be conceived how ignorant they are in matters of religion."

And with respect to *the main body of the clergy*, he observes, "It has always appeared dead and lifeless to me, and instead of animating one another, they seem rather to lay one another asleep."

And again: "I say it with great regret; I have observed the clergy in all the places through which I have travelled, Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Dissenters; but of them all, our clergy is much the most remiss in their labours in private, and the least severe in their *lives*." See Bishop Burnet in his conclusion to *the History of his own Times*.

Whether

then we may conclude, without incurring the censure of uncharitable presumption, That if Christianity be true, as we now suppose, and which seems more than probable; and there be a people in the world in danger of utter extermination, or (in the language of their own *Scriptures*) of being swept with *the besom of destruction*, and of their remembrance being *blotted from under Heaven*, by an avenging justice: **BRITONS HAVE CAUSE TO TREMBLE \* !**

Whether all or *any* of these *bodies* have improved in their principles or conduct since the above period, I suppose the reader will be at no loss to determine.

\* "THERE IS NO Surer PROGNOSTIC OF IMPENDING RUIN IN ANY STATE, THAN TO SEE DIVINE WORSHIP NEGLECTED OR DESPISED." Machiavel. [See his Works, Vol. III. p. 53. 8vo. London 1775.]

"Our prospect is very terrible, and the symptoms grow stronger every day. The morals of a people are in this, like their fortunes; when they feel a national shock, the worst doth not show itself immediately. **THINGS MAKE A SHIFT TO SUBSIST, FOR A TIME,**



A TIME, ON THE CREDIT OF OLD NOTIONS AND DYING OPINIONS. But the youth born and brought up in wicked times, without any bias to good from early principle or instilled opinion, when they grow ripe must be monsters indeed. And it is to be feared, that age of monsters is not far off."

" Whence this impiety springs, by what means it gains ground among us, and how it may be remedied, are matters that deserve the attention of all those who have the power and the will to serve their country. *And although many things look like a prelude to some general ruin; although it is much to be apprehended, we shall be worse before we are better; yet who knows what may ensue, if all persons in power, from the supreme executor of the law, down to a petty constable, would, in their several stations, behave themselves like men, truly conscious and mindful, that the authority they are clothed with is but a derivative ray from the supreme authority of heaven? THIS MAY NOT A LITTLE CONTRIBUTE TO STEM THAT TORRENT, WHICH FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS, AND UNDER SPECIOUS PRETENCES, HATH GROWN TO SUCH A HEAD, AND DAILY GATHERS FORCE MORE AND MORE TO THAT DEGREE, AS THREATENS A GENERAL INUNDATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THESE REALMS.*" See the close of a *Discourse addressed to Magistrates, &c.* by Bishop Berkeley. [In his *Miscellanies*, published, London, 1752.]

" It would be great rashness to fix a time for the breaking of the storm that hangs over our heads, as  
it

O thou BEING OF BEINGS, who art the Father of compassions, and the source of intellectual light! Behold a poor gentile, who hath a desire to thy Name! Guard me amidst the darkness of nature and the seductions of error, and shew me the PATH OF LIFE!

it is blindness and infatuation not to see it; not to be aware, that it may break. And yet this infatuation has always attended all falling states. The kingdoms of *Judah* and *Israel*, which are the types of all the rest, were thus infatuated. It may be, that the prophecies concerning *Edom*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, *Tyre*, *Egypt*, &c. will become applicable to particular kingdoms before their fall, and warn the good to flee out of them. And *Christendom*, in general, seems ready to assume to itself the place and lot of the *Jews*, after they had rejected their *Messiah*, the Saviour of the world. LET NO ONE DECEIVE HIMSELF OR OTHERS. THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WORLD ARE EXTRAORDINARY AND CRITICAL, BEYOND WHAT HAS EVER YET HAPPENED. IF WE REFUSE TO LET CHRIST REIGN OVER US, AS OUR REDEEMER AND SAVIOUR, WE MUST BE SLAIN BEFORE HIS FACE, AS ENEMIES, AT HIS SECOND COMING." *Hartley's Obs. on Man*, [at the close,]



