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1807.

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CHRISTIAN HERO:

AN ARGUMENT, PROVING THAT NO

PRINCIPLES

BUT THOSE OF

RELIGION

ARE SUFFICIENT

TO MAKE A GREAT MAN.

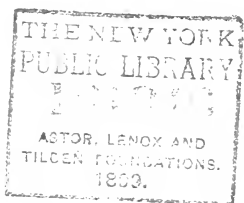
BY SIR RICHARD STEELE.

— *Fragili quarens illidere dentem*
Offendet solido —. HOR.

PRINTED BY SMITH & MAXWELL,
NO. 28, NORTH SECOND STREET,
PHILADELPHIA.

1807.

9 P. 234



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

LORD CUTTS,

Colonel of His Majesty's Coldstream Regiment of Guards, &c.

MY LORD,

THE address of the following papers is so very much due to your LORDSHIP, that they are but a mere report of what has past upon my guard to my commander, for they were writ upon duty, when the mind was perfectly disengaged, and at leisure, in the silent watch of the night, to run over the busy dream of the day; and the vigilance, which obliges us to suppose an enemy always near us, has awakened a sense that there is a restless and subtle one, which constantly attends our steps, and meditates our ruin.

Thoughts of this nature a man may, with freedom, acknowledge to your Lord-

ship, who have ever been so far from running into the fashionable vice of exploding religion, that your early valour first appeared against the professed enemies of Christianity; and Buda had transmitted you to late posterity, but that you yourself have obliterated your part in that glorious scene by the fresher memory of you, at Limerick and Namur.

With one honest purpose of life, and constant service of one interest, and one cause, In what country have you not fought? In what field have you not bled? But I know I here offend you, nor will you allow warmth in commendation to be like a friend; but if, my Lord, to speak you generous, honest, and brave be not so, I do assure you, it is the only thing I shall ever do, in common with your enemies.

I said your enemies; but if there are any, who have ignorance or malice enough to be such, their little hates must be lost in the distinction the better world allow you; and that country (whose discerning is refined by a learned and elegant university) has done you so great an honour, in making you unanimously their representative in

Parliament, that they who would oppose your reputation, do but confess they are unacquainted with what passes in the world, and strangers to the residence of knowledge and virtue.

It was there you received those rudiments of honour, which have rendered your life conspicuous enough to make you appear a worthy descendent of an ancient and distinguished family, which has served the crown in the most eminent stations, and been equally favourites of their country; it was there you received those impressions, which inspire that true use of your being, which so justly divides your time between labour and diversion, that the one does but recreate for the other, and which give a generous contempt of both, when they come in competition with the service of that country, which you love, and that God, whom you worship.

Go on, my Lord, thus to contemn, and thus to enjoy life; and if some great English day does not call for that sacrifice, which you are always ready to offer, may you, in a mature age, go to sleep with your ancestors, in expectation not of an imaginary fame, but a real immortality.

As for the present I now make you, if you will accept it with your usual goodness and affection to me, I shall entertain no further hopes; for as your favour is my fortune, so your approbation is my fame.

I am, my Lord, your Lordship's

Most obedient, most faithful,

And most humble servant,

RICHARD STEELE.

*Tower Guard,
March 23, 1701.*

PREFACE.

THE world is divided between two sorts of people, the men of wit and the men of business, and these two have it wholly in their power; but however mighty the latter may esteem themselves, they have much the less share in the government of mankind, and till they can keep the others out of company as well as employment, they will have an almost irresistible dominion over us: for their imagination is so very quick and lively, that in all they enjoy or possess, they have a relish highly superiour to that of slower men; which fine sense of things they can communicate to others in so prevailing a manner, that they give and take away what impressions they please; for while the man of wit speaks, he bestows upon his hearers, by an apt representation of his thoughts, all the happiness and pleasure of being such as he is, and quickens our heavier life into joys we should never of ourselves have tasted, so that we are, for our own sakes, his slaves and followers: but indeed they generally use this charm-

ing force with the utmost tyranny, and as it is too much in their power, misplace our love, our hatred, our desires, and aversions, on improper objects; so that when we are left to ourselves, we find truth discoloured to us; and they of faculties above us have wrapt things, in their own nature of a dark and horrid aspect, in so bright a disguise, that they have stamped a kind of praise and gallantry on some vices, and half persuaded us that a whore may be still a beauty, and an adulterer no villain.

These ills are supported by the arbitrary sway of legislative ridicule, while, by I know not what pedantry of good breeding, conversation is confined to indifferent, low, or perhaps vicious subjects; and all that is serious, good or great, almost banished the world: for in imitation of those we have mentioned, there daily arise so many pretenders to do mischief, that what seemed at first but a conspiracy, is now a general insurrection against virtue; and when they, who really have wit, lead the way, it is hardly to be prevented, but that they must be followed by a crowd, who would be such, and make what shift they can to appear so, by helping one defect with another, and supplying want of wit with want of

grace, and want of reputation with want of shame.

Thus are men hurried away in the prosecution of mean and sensual desires, and instead of employing their passions in the service of life, they spend their life in the service of their passions; yet, though it is a truth very little received, that virtue is its own reward, it is surely an undeniable one, that vice is its own punishment; for when we have given our appetites a loose rein, we are immediately precipitated by them into unbounded and endless wishes, while we repine at our fortune, if its narrowness curbs them, though the gratification of them were a kindness, like the indulgence of a man's thirst in a dropsy; but this distemper of mind is never to be remedied, till men will more unreservedly attempt the work, and will resolve to value themselves, rather upon a strong reason to allay their passions, than a fine imagination to raise them.

For, if we best judge of things, when we are not actually engaged or concerned in them, every man's own experience must inform him that both the pleasures we follow, and the sorrows we shun, are in nature

very different from what we conceive them, when we observe that past enjoyments are anxious, past sufferings pleasing in the reflection; and since the memory of the one makes us apprehend our strength, the other our weakness, it is an argument of a trivial mind to prefer the satisfactions, that lead to inquietude before pains, that lead to tranquillity.

But if that consists (as it certainly does) in the mind's enjoyment of truth, the most vexatious circumstance of its anguish, is that of being in doubt; from which men will find but a very short relief, if they draw it from the collections or observations of sedentary men, who have been called wise for proposing rules of active life, which they cannot be supposed to understand: for between the arrogant and fanatick indolence of some, and the false and pleasurable felicity of others (which are equally chimeras) a man is so utterly divided, that the happiness of philosophers appears as fantastick as the misery of lovers.

We shall not, it is hoped, be understood, by saying this, to imagine that there is a sufficient force in the following short essay,

to stem the universal and destructive torrent of error and pleasure; it is sufficient if we can stand without being carried away with it, and we shall very willingly resign the glory of an opposition, if we can enjoy the safety of a defence; and as it was at first attempted to disengage my own mind from deceiving appearances, so it can be published for no other end, but to set others a thinking with the same inclination: which whoever will please to do, will make a much better argument for his own private use, than any body else can for him: for ill habits of the mind, no more than those of the body, are to be cured by the patient's approbation of the medicine, except he will resolve to take it; and if my fellow-soldiers (to whose service more especially I would direct any thoughts I were capable of) would form to themselves (if any do not) a constant reason for their actions, they would find themselves better prepared for all the vicissitudes they are to meet with, when instead of the changeable heat of mere courage and blood, they acted upon the firm motives of duty, valour, and constancy of soul.

For (however they are disesteemed by some unthinking, not to say, ungrateful

men) to profess arms, is to profess being ready to die for others; nor is it an ordinary struggle between Reason, Sense, and Passion, that can raise men to a calm and ready negligence of life, and animate them to assault without fear, pursue without cruelty, and stab without hatred.

But virtuous principles must infallibly be not only better than any other we can embrace, to warm us to great attempts, but also to make our days in their ordinary passage slide away agreeably: for as nothing is more daring than Truth, so there is nothing more cheerful than Innocence: and indeed I need not have been beholden to the experience of a various life to have been convinced, that true happiness is not to be found but where I at present place it; for I was long ago informed where only it was to be had, by the Rev. Dr. Ellis, my everhonoured tutor, which great obligation I could not but mention, though my gratitude to him is, perhaps, an accusation of myself, who shall appear to have so little profited by the institution of so solid and excellent a writer, though he is above the temptation of (what is always in his power) being famous.

THE
CHRISTIAN HERO.

IT is certainly the most useful task we can possibly undertake, to rescue our minds from the prejudice with which a false and unreasonable fondness of ourselves has enslaved us. But the examination of our own bosoms is so ungrateful an exercise, that we are forced upon a thousand little arts, to lull ourselves into an imperfect tranquillity, which we might obtain sincere and uninterrupted, if we had courage enough to look at the ghastly part of our condition: but we are still flatterers to ourselves, and hypocrites the wrong way, by choosing, instead of the solid satisfaction of innocence and truth, the returning pangs of conscience, and working out our damnation, as we are taught to do our happiness, *with fear and trembling.*

But this misfortune we owe, as we do most others, to an unjust education, by which we are inspired with an ambition of acquiring such modes and accomplishments, as rather enable us to give pleasure and entertainment to others, than satisfaction and quiet to ourselves: so fantastical are we as to dress for a ball when we are to set out on a journey; and upon change of weather, are justly derided, not pitied, by the beholders. How then shall we prepare for the unaccountable road of life, when we know not how long or how short it will prove, or what accidents we shall meet in our passage? Can we take any thing with us that can make us cheerful, ready and prepared for all occasions, and can support us against all encounters? Yes, we may, (if we would receive it,) a confidence in God. Yet, lest this be imposed upon men by a blind force of custom, or the artifice of such persons whose interest perhaps it may be to obtrude upon our mirth, and our gayety, and give us a melancholy prospect, (as some men would persuade us) to maintain themselves in the luxury they deny us; let us not be frightened from the liberal use of our senses, or meanly

resign our present opinions, till we are convinced from our own reflection also, that there is something in that opinion which can make us less insolent in joy, less depressed in adversity, than the methods we are already engaged in. And, indeed, the chief cause of irresolution in either state, must proceed from the want of an adequate motive to our actions, that can render men dauntless and invincible both to pleasure and pain.

It were not then, methinks, a useless inquiry to search into the reason that we are so willing to arm ourselves against the assaults of delight and sorrow, rather with the dictates of morality than those of religion; and how it has obtained, that when we say a thing was done like an old Roman, we have a generous and sublime idea, that warms and kindles in us, together with a certain self-disdain, and desire of imitation; when, on the other side, to say, it was like a primitive Christian, chills ambition, and seldom rises to more than the cold approbation of a duty, that perhaps a man wishes he were not obliged to. Or, in a word, Why is it that the heathen struts, and the Christian sneaks in our

imagination? If it be as Machiavil says, that religion throws our minds below noble and hazardous pursuits, then its followers are slaves and cowards; but if it gives a more hardy and aspiring genius than the world before knew, then he, and all our fine observers who have been pleased to give us only heathen portraitures, to say no worse, have robbed their pens of characters the most truly gallant and heroick that ever appeared to mankind.

About the time the world received the best news it ever heard, the men whose actions and fortunes, are most pompously arrayed in story, had just acted or were then performing their parts, as if it had been the design of Providence to prepossess, at that time, after a more singular manner than ordinary, the minds of men with the trappings and furniture of glory and riches, to heighten the virtue and magnanimity of those who were to oppose them all, by passing through wants, miseries and disgraces; and, indeed, the shining actions of these illustrious men do yet glare so much in our faces, that we lose our way by following a false fire, which, well considered, is but a delusive vapour of the

earth, when we might enjoy the leading constant light of Heaven.

To make, therefore, a just judgment in our conduct, let us consider two or three of the most eminent heathen, and observe whether they, or we, are better appointed for the hard and weary march of human life; for which examination we will not look into the closets of men of reflection and retirement, but into the practice and resolution of those of action and enterprise. There were never persons more conspicuously of this latter sort, than those concerned in the fortunes and death of Cæsar; and since the pulse of man then beat at the highest, we will think it sufficient to our purpose carefully to review him, and them, as they march by us, and if we can see any apparent defect in their armour, find out some way to mend it in our own. But it will require all our patience, by taking notice of the minutest things, to come at (what is absolutely necessary to us) the recesses of their hearts, and folds of their tempers.

Sallust has transmitted to us two very great, but very different personages, Cæsar and Cato, and placed them together in

the most judicious manner for appearing to advantage, by the alternate light and shade of each other. Cæsar's bounty, magnificence, popular and sumptuous entertainments, stole a universal affection; Cato's parsimony, integrity, austere and rigid behaviour commanded as universal reverence: none could do an ungentle thing before Cæsar, none a loose one before Cato: to one it was recommendation enough to be miserable, to the other to be good: to Cæsar all faults were pardonable, to Cato none: one gave, obliged, pitied and succoured indifferently; the other blamed, opposed and condemned impartially: Cæsar was the refuge of the unhappy, Cato the bane of the wicked: Cato had rather be than seem good; Cæsar was careless of either, but as it served his interests: Cato's sword was the sword of justice, Cæsar's that of ambition: Cæsar had an excellent common sense and right judgment of occasion, time and place; the other blunt man understood not application, knew how to be in the right, but was generally so out of season: Cæsar's manner made even his vice charming, Cato's even his virtue disagreeable: Cæsar insi-

nuated ill, Cato intruded good: Cæsar in his sayings, his actions, and his writings was the first and happiest of all men: in his discourse he had a constant wit and right reason; in his actions gallantry and success; in his writings, every thing that any authour can pretend to, and one which perhaps no man else ever had; he mentions himself with a good grace. Thus it was very natural for Cæsar, adorned with every art, master of every necessary quality, either for use or ornament, with a steady and well-placed industry to out-run Cato, and all like him, who had none and desired none but (an ever weak party) the good for his friends.

Now this sort of men were Cæsar and Cato, and by these arts they arrived at that height, which has left one's name proverbial for a noble and princely nature, the other's for an unmoved and inexorable honesty: yet without following them through all the handsome incidents and passages of life, we may know them well enough in miniature, by beholding them only in the manner of dying: for in those last minutes, the soul and body both collect all their force, either bravely to op-

pose the enemy, or gracefully receive the *conqueror*, Death.

Cæsar, by a long tract of successes, was now become apparent master of his country; but with a security that is natural to gallant men, heroically forgave the most inveterate of his opposers: now was he followed with applause, renown, and acclamation: his valour had subdued the bodies, his clemency the minds of his enemies: and how blessed must the earth be under his command, who seems to court dominion for no other end, but to indulge an insatiable mind in the glorious pleasures of bestowing and forgiving? this was the figure Cæsar bore in the world's opinion, but not in Cato's. He was there a tyrant in spite of the gloss of success and of fortune, which could not create appearances, bright enough to dazzle his eyes from seeing the traitor in the conqueror: he knew to give a man his own as a bounty was a more impudent robbery, and a wrong improved by the slavery of an obligation: he justly and generously disdained that his fellow-citizen should pretend to be his lord; to his honest mind a pardon was but a more

arrogant insult, nor could he bear the apprehension of seeing his equal inflict upon him a *tyrannical forgiveness*: what then must this unhappy good man do? Whither shall oppressed virtue fly from slavery? From *slavery*? *No*. He is still free lord of himself, and master of his passions, Cæsar is the captive, he is shackled, he is chained; and the numerous troops which he boasts, the companions of his triumphs and his glories, are but so many witnesses of his shame and confusion, to whom he has, by an open usurpation, manifested his broken faith, false profession, and prostituted honour. But how far this impression of intrinsic glory and happiness in sincere, though distressed virtue, and the sense of a wicked man's abject, though prosperous condition (which Cato's philosophy gave him) did avail in his afflicted hours, the resolution he is going to take will demonstrate.

He had now at Utica fresh and shocking intelligence of the gathering adherents to his enemy, and could read, in his own company, the mere followers of fortune in their countenance, but observed it with a negligent and undaunted air, concerned

only for the fate of others, whose weak pity of themselves made them the objects of his compassion also. It was visible by a thousand little officious things he did, he was resolved to leave this bad world: for he spent the day, which he designed should be his last, in a certain vanity of goodness: he consulted, persuaded, and despatched all he thought necessary for the safety of those that were about him; which services they received from him, whose intent they saw with tears, and shame, and admiration.

He continued the whole evening this affected enjoyment of his friends' anxiety for him, which he raised by set discourses, and abated, or rather confirmed by a studied indifference, until he went to bed, where he read Plato's *Immortality and Guesses at a future Life*: at last he inquired for his sword, on purpose mislaid by his son; they did not immediately bring it, which he seemed to take no notice of, but again fell to his book: after his second lecture, he again wanted his sword: their hesitation in letting him have it, threw him into an unseemly rage, and expostulation with his friends, whose obliging

sorrow withheld it: What has he done, what has he committed, to be betrayed into the hands of his enemy? Had Cato's wisdom so far left him, that he must be disarmed, like a slave and a madman? What had his son seen so indiscreet in his father that he was not to be trusted with himself? To all this cruel and intemperate question, he was answered with the humblest behaviour, tenderest beseeching, and deepest esteem: they implored his stay among them as their genius, their guardian, and benefactor; among the rest, a fond slave was putting in his resistance, and his affliction, for which he dashed the poor fellow's teeth out with his fist, and forced out of the room his lamenting friends, with noise, and taunt, and tumult; a little while after he had his hand, with which he struck his servant, dressed, lay down, and was heard to snore; but sure we may charitably enough believe, from all this unquiet carriage, that the sleep was dissembled, from which as soon as he awaked, he stabbed himself, and fell on the floor: his fall alarmed his wretched dependants, whose help he resisted by tearing open his own bowels,

and rushing out of life with fury, rage, and indignation.

This was the applauded exit of that noble Roman, who is said with a superiour and invincible constancy to have eluded the partiality of fortune, and escaped the incursion upon the liberty of his country: it seems then, had he lived, his own had been lost, and his calling himself still free, and Cæsar the usurper, a bondman and slave, were but mere words; for his opinion of things was in reality, stunned by success, and he died disappointed of the imaginary self-existence his own set of thoughts had promised him, by an action below the precepts of his philosophy, and the constancy of his life.

Thus did Cato leave the world, for which, indeed, he was very unfit, in the hands of the most skilful man in it, who at his entrance on its empire excelled his past glorious life, by using with so much temper and moderation, what he had purchased with so much bloodshed and violence: but we must leave at present this busy and *incessant* mind to the meditation of levelling inaccessible mountains, checking the course of the ocean, and correcting

the periods of time: we must leave him employed in modelling the universe, (now his own) in the secure enjoyment of a life hitherto led in illustrious hazards, and now every way safe, but where it is its beauty to lie open, to the treachery of his friends.

Among the many pretenders to that character was Cassius, an able and experienced soldier, bound to him by no less an obligation, than the giving him life and quarter in battle; he was of a dark, sullen, and *involved* spirit, quick to receive, but slow to discover a distaste; his anger never flew into his face, but descended to his heart, which rankled and preyed upon itself, and could not admit of composure, either from religion or philosophy; but being a perfect *epicurean*, and fancying there were none, or if any, only lazy and supine deities, must necessarily terminate his hopes and fears in himself, and from his own arm expect all the good and evil of which his life was capable: this man, in his temper uneasy, and picqued by a certain partiality of Cæsar's to his disadvantage, could not satisfy a sedate bloody humour by any less reparation than his ruin; and having a revengeful bias of mind,

a short memory of kindnesses, and an indelible resentment of wrongs, resolved to cancel an odious benefit, by a pleasing injury: to this determination he was prompted by the worst *only good* quality a man can have, an undaunted courage, which fermented in him a restless and *gnawing* meditation of his *enemy's*, that is, his *benefactor's death*; a thought befitting the greatness of his ambition, and the largeness of his pernicious capacity; his capacity! which consisted in a skilful dissimulation of his faults; for being full of those vices which nearly approach, and easily assume the resemblance of virtue, and seldom throw a man into visible and obvious follies, he so well accommodated his ill qualities to the good ones of those with whom he conversed, that he was very well with the best men by a similitude of their manners; his avarice obtained the frugal; his spleen, and disrelish of joy, the sober and abstinent; his envy and hatred of superiours, the asserters of publick liberty: this considerable wretch skilfully warmed and urged some of his own temper, whom he knew ready for any great mischief, to pull down the overgrown Cæsar, and en-

snared others, by the specious pretence of a sincere love to his country, to meet all hazards for her recovery. These illustrious ruffians, who were, indeed, men of the most weight, and the boldest spirits of the Roman empire, designed to despatch him in the eye of all the world, in open senate; but neither their quality nor accomplishments were great enough to support them in so nefarious an attempt, without there could be an expedient thought of, to give it a more sacred esteem, than any of their characters could inspire: it was, therefore, necessary to make Marcus Brutus of the conspiracy.

This gentleman possessed the very bosom of Cæsar, who having had a notorious intrigue with his mother, was believed to have thought him his son; but whether that, or an admiration of his virtue, was the cause of his fondness, he had so tender a regard for him, that at the battle of Pharsalia he gave it in orders to the whole army, if he would not take quarter to let him escape: he was, like Cæsar, addicted to letters and arms, and though not equal to him in his *capacity for either*, above him in the use of both. He never drew his

sword but with a design to serve his country, nor ever read with any other purpose but to subdue his passions, so that he had from books rather a habit of life, than a faculty of speech; in his thoughts as well as actions, he was a strict follower of honesty and justice; all he said, as well as all he did, seemed to flow from a publick and unbiassed spirit: he had no occasion for the powers of eloquence to be able to persuade, for all men knew it was their interest to be of his mind; and he had, before he spoke, that first point, the good will of his audience, for every man's love of himself made him a lover of Brutus. He had this eminence without the least taint of vanity, and a great fame seemed not so much the pursuit, as the consequence of his actions: thus should he do a thing which might be liable to exception, men would be more apt to suspect their own judgment than his integrity, and believe what ever was the cause of the action, it must be a good one, since it moved him: and though a perfect love of mankind was the spring of all he acted, that human temper never threw him into facility, but since he knew an ungrounded compassion to one

man might be a cruelty to another, mere distresses without justice to plead for them could never prevail upon him, but, all gentle as he was, he was impregnable to the most repeated importunity, even that of his own good nature.

Such was the renowned Brutus, and one would think a man, who had no ill ambition to satisfy, no loose passions to indulge, but whose life was a regular, easy, and sedate motion, should be in little temptation of falling into a plot; but ill men, where they cannot meet a convenient vice, can make use of a virtue to a base purpose.

He was lineally descended from the famous Brutus, that extinguished the Tarquins, whose debauches and cruelties made a regal name in Rome as justly odious, as that of the Bruti venerable for the extirpation of it; and Cæsar had very lately, in the midst of an absolute and unlimited power, betrayed a fantastick ambition of being called king, which rendered him obnoxious to the malice of the conspirators and the virtue of Brutus. This was the place where the magnanimity of that patriot seemed most accessible, for it was

obvious, that he, who wanted nothing else to spur him to glorious attempts, must be also animated by the memory of illustrious ancestors, and not like narrow and degenerate spirits, be satisfied with the phantom of honour derived from others, from whom, without a similitude of virtue, it is an unhappy distinction to descend.

Yet however hopeful this handle appeared, they could not so abruptly attempt upon his awful character, as immediately to propose the murder to him, without some distant preparation of mind to receive it. There were, therefore, these words frequently dropt in his way, from unknown hands: thou art no longer, Brutus; thou art asleep, Brutus; and the like: by which artifice he grew very thoughtful and busy with himself, about the purpose of these advertisements: one of such moments Cassius took hold of, and opened to him the great design for the liberty of his country from Cæsar's usurpation: there needed no more to make him do a thing, but his belief that it was just; he soon consented that Cæsar deserved to die, and since he did, to die by his hand: gaining this personage, made all ripe for execution,

and Cassius possessed a full satisfaction, in that he had engaged a man in the attempt, who in the eyes of the people, instead of being sullied by it, would stamp a justice and authority upon the action; whose confirmed reputation was sufficient to expiate a murder, and consecrate an assassination.

Yet though his justice made him readily consent to Cæsar's death, his gratitude, upon reflection, shook his resolution to act in it; all which conflict with himself we cannot view without the incident of Porcia's story.

This lady observed her husband fall on a sudden from an easy, placid, and fond, into a troubled, short, and distracted behaviour; she saw his mind too much employed for the conjugal endearments, and kind tendernesses, in which she was usually happy, yet upon this observation grew neither jealous nor sullen, but mourned his silence of his affliction to her with as deep a silence: this lady, I say, this noble Roman wife turned all her suspicion upon herself, and modestly believed it was her incapacity for bearing so great a secret, as that which discomposed the steadfast Brutus, made him conceal from her an affliction,

which she thought she had a title to participate; and, therefore, resolved to know of herself, whether his secrecy was a wrong to her before she would think it so; to make this experiment, she gave herself a deep stab in the thigh, and thought if she could bear that torture, she could also that of a secret; the anguish and concealment of her wound threw her into a fever, in that condition she thus spoke to her husband:

“ I, Brutus, being the daughter of Cato, was given to you in marriage, not like a concubine, to partake only of the common civilities of bed and board, but to bear a part in all your good and all your evil fortunes; and for my part, when I look on you, I find no reason to repent this match; but from me, what evidence of my love, what satisfaction can you receive, if I may not share with you in your most hidden griefs, nor to be admitted to any of your counsels, that require secrecy and trust? I know very well, that women seem to be of too weak a nature to be trusted with secrets; but certainly, Brutus, a virtuous birth and education, and a conversation with the good and honourable, are of some

force to the forming our manners, and strengthening our natural weakness; and I can boast that I am the daughter of Cato, and the wife of Brutus. In which two great titles, though before I put too little confidence, yet now I have tried myself, I find that even against grief and pain I am invincible.”*

She then told him what she had done; but it is not easy to represent the kind admiration such a discourse must give a husband; and the sweet transport that was drawn from their mutual affliction, is too delicate a touch of mind to be understood but by a Brutus and a Porcia. Yet though he was not too wise to be tender to his wife, when he had unbosomed himself, in spite of this last action, and a thousand nameless things, that occurred to his memory to soften him, he left his illustrious heroine in her pains and her sorrows, to pursue his publick resolutions. But he is gone, and she can burst into those tears which the awe of his virtue had made her smother; for how, alas! shall the heart of woman receive so harsh a virtue, as to gra-

* *Vide* Mr. Duke's translation of the Life of Brutus.

tify her husband's will, by consenting to his ruin? How shall she struggle with her own weakness and his honour? But while she lay in his bosom she learned all the gallantry of it, and when she ponders his immortal fame, his generous justice, and Roman resolution, her mind enlarges into a greatness, which surmounts her sex, and her affection: when she views him in the conspicuous part of life, she can bear, nay, triumph in his loss; but when she reflects and remembers their tender hours, thus would he look, thus would he talk, such was his gesture, mein, the mirth, the gaiety of the man she loved (which instances are more intimate objects of affection, than men's greater qualities) then she is all woman, she resigns the great, but laments the agreeable man: Can then my Brutus leave me? Can he leave these longing arms for fame? She has no just notion of any higher being to support her wretched condition; but however her female infirmity made her languish, she has still constancy enough to keep a secret that concerns her husband's reputation, though she melts away in tears, and pines into death in contemplation of her sufferings.

Such must have been the soliloquy of this memorable wife, who has left behind her an everlasting argument, how far a generous treatment can make that tender sex go even beyond the resolution of man, when we allow that they are by nature formed to pity, love, and fear, and we with an impulse to ambition, danger, and adventure.

The world bore a gloom and heavy presage of Cæsar's approaching fate. It is said wild beasts came into the most frequented parts of the city, apparitions in the streets, unusual illuminations in the skies, and inauspicious sacrifices damped the hearts of all men, but the assassins, who, with an incredible calm of mind, expect the opportunity of satiating their vengeance in the blood of the usurper; yet was not Cassius himself wholly unconcerned, for though he was as great an atheist as any among us can pretend to be, he had the weakness and superstition, at that time, to invoke a statue of Pompey for his assistance. It is as observable, that Cæsar, the evening before his fate, in a supper-conversation (at one of his murderer's houses) on the subject of death, pronounced a sudden one to be the most desirable, and a lit-

tle shogged with reiterated ill omens, and touched with the foreboding dreams and frights of a tender wife, resolved to forbear going to the senate on the morning appointed for his *execution*; which difficulty D. Brutus undertook to get over; a gentleman so superlatively excellent that way, that he could not only, upon such an occasion, appear composed, but also in very good humour; this *sneering* ruffian rallied away his fears, and with a very good mien conducted his friend to his murder.

When he came into the senate they rose to him, and with a pretended joint petition for a banished man, the assassins pressed about him, as soon as he was seated: he severally checked their importunity, but while they were thus employed, one of them gave the sign by throwing his robe over his neck; another, oppressed with the grandeur of the attempt, made at him an irrelative pass: he briskly opposed the villain, and called him so; they all rushed on him with drawn poniards, still he resisted till he saw Brutus coming on, then with a generous and disdainful resignation, yielded to the stroke of a pardoned, obliged, and rewarded friend. But there are in England

a race of men, who have this action in the most professed veneration, and who speciously miscale the rancour, malice, and hatred of all happier and higher than themselves, (which they have in common with Cassius) gallantry of mind, disdain of servitude, and passion for publick good, which they pretend to with Brutus; and thus qualified with ill, set up for faction, business, and enmity to kings. But it is to be hoped these men only run round till they are giddy, and when all things turn too, fancy themselves authours of the motion about them, and so take their vertigo for their force; for sure they have a futile pretence to a good publick spirit, who have an ill private one.

But there lies the mighty Cæsar, an eternal instance how much too generous and too believing those unhappy princes are, who depend on the tie of men's obligations to them, without having their opinions on their side; for nothing hinders a man's walking by the principles of his soul, but an opportunity to exert them; when that occurs, the secret enemy throws off his mask, and draws his dagger.

Yet reflections of this nature are somewhat foreign to our purpose; we must, therefore, follow these bloody men, to a fate as violent as they gave their benefactor; for it was in Providence to frustrate their counsels, by turning that virtue to their ruin, which they had ensnared for their protection. The fearless Brutus had too much clemency, to make this blow safe by the execution of the nearest adherents to Cæsar; his safety consisted in his unbiassed mind and undaunted resolution, which would not let him stoop to the taking away any life below that of the greatest of mankind.

However, this injury was repaired to Cæsar, for he was voted a god in the very place where he ceased to be a man, which had been a good saving clause, could they have persuaded his successour, Octavius, also to have been contented with omnipotence; but the young scholar was so much enamoured with this world, that he left his book to disturb and rule it; and to compass his end, took upon him the hopeful resolution of sparing no man, from a reflection, perhaps, that his uncle was ruined by mercy in his victories.

But it is not our business, to fall into an historical account of the various occurrences, which happened in the war between the Cæsarian army and that of the conspirators, any further than it is necessary for judging how far the principles they walked by were useful to them in their greatest extremities. As Brutus one evening sat pensive and revolving the passages of life, and the memory of Cæsar occurred to him, now perhaps not as a traitor, a tyrant, or usurper, but as one he loved and murdered, an apparition appeared, (or he thought appeared to him) which told him he was his evil genius, and would meet him at Philippi, to which he calmly answered, *I will meet thee there*: but he communicated a sad impression, which this made upon him to Cassius, who in an *epicurean* manner gave him a superficial comfort, by discourses of the illusions, our fancies, our dreams, and our sorrows imprint upon the mind, and make an imaginary a real torment. Yet the night before the fatal battle he inquired, (in case of a defeat) his resolution as to flight and death. To which Brutus:

“ When I was young, Cassius, and unskilful in affairs, I was engaged, I know not how, into an opinion of philosophy, which made me accuse Cato for killing himself, as thinking it an irreligious act against the gods, nor any ways valliant among men, not to submit to divine providence, nor be able fearlessly to receive and undergo whatever shall happen; but to fly from it: but now in the midst of dangers I am quite of another mind, for if Providence shall not dispose what I now undertake according to our wishes, I resolve to try no farther hopes, nor make any more preparations for war, but will die contented with my fortune, for I already have given up my life to the service of my country on the Ides of March, and all the time that I lived since, has been with liberty and honour.”*

However gallant this speech may seem at first sight, it is, upon reflection, a very mean one; for he urges no manner of reason for his desertion of the noble principle of resignation to the divine will, but his dangers and distresses, which indeed is no more than if he had plainly confessed, that

* *Vide* Mr. Duke’s translation of the *Life of Brutus*.

all the schemes we can form to ourselves in a composed and prosperous condition, when we come to be oppressed with calamities, vanish from us, and are but the effects of luxuriant ease and good humour, and languish and die away with them: but to make this a fair deduction from this discourse, let us impartially (but with tenderness and pity) look at him in his last pangs: at the battle of Philippi, Brutus commanded the right, Cassius the left of the line: the first broke the opposite wing of the enemy, the second was himself forced. But by a failure in their orders and intelligence, each was ignorant of the other's fortune; Brutus followed his blow, and his heat drove him too far before he thought of Cassius, whom at last with a strong detachment, he returns to relieve. His friend retreated to a rising ground, to view and bewail the fate of their cause, and commanded an officer to observe that body marching towards him: the gentleman soon found them friends, and confidently rid in among them; they as kindly enclosed him to inquire news: upon seeing this, the miserable Cassius concluded him taken by the enemy, and giving all for lost, retired

into a tent, where he was, by his own order, killed by a servant.

Here Brutus, whom neither the fondness of an excellent wife, obligations to a generous friend, or a message from the dead could divert from meeting all encounters, sinks and falls into the most extreme despair.

He, with some others that escaped the pursuit, retired to a thicket of a wood, where also finding they were traced, it was proposed still to fly: but he, after having expressed a satisfaction (but a false one, since he could not live with it) in his integrity, which he preferred to the successes of his enemies, ran upon his sword, and transfixed that great heart with a superfluous blow, which sure was before stabbed with the killing reflection upon *et tu Brute!*

Here let us throw a veil over this mistaken great man, and if possible cover him from human sight forever, that his seduced and *ambiguous* virtue may be no more prophaned, as an umbrage to the counsels of perjured friends, sacrilegious regicides, and implacable desperadoes.

Now the use we make of these reflections, is, that since we have seen the mighty

Cæsar himself fall into superstition at the thought of his exit, since Cato's firm constancy, Brutus's generous zeal, and Cassius's steady malice, all ended in the same dereliction of themselves, and despondence at last, we may justly conclude, that whatever law we may make to ourselves, from the greatness of nature or the principles of philosophy, for the conduct and regulation of life, is itself but an artificial passion, by which we vainly hope to subdue those that are natural, and which will certainly rise or fall with our disappointment or success, and we that are liable to both are highly concerned to be prepared for either: at which perfection there is no nearer way to arrive, but by attending our own make, and observing by what means human life, from its simple and rural happiness, swelled into the weighty cares and distractions with which it is at present enchanted; and from this knowledge of our misery, *extract* our satisfaction.

CHAPTER II.

MAN is a creature of so mixed a composition, and of a frame so inconsistent and different from itself, that it easily speaks his affinity to the highest and meanest beings: that is to say, he is made of body and soul, he is at once an *engine* and an *engineer*: though indeed both that body and soul act in many instances separate and independent of each other: for when he thinks, reasons, and concludes, he has not in all that work the least assistance from his body: his finest fibres, purest blood, and highest spirits are as brute and distant from capacity of thinking, as his very bones; and the body is so mere a machine, that it hungers, thirsts, tastes, and digests, without any exerted thought of the mind to command that operation: which when he observes upon himself, he may, without deriving it from vapour, fume, or distemper, believe that his soul may as well exist out of, as in that body from which it bor-

rows nothing to make it capable of performing its most perfect functions. This may give him hopes, that though his trunk return to its native dust he may not all perish, but the inhabitant of it may remove to another mansion; especially since he knows only mechanically that they have, not demonstratively how they have, even a present union.

And since this mind has a consciousness and superiour reflection upon its own being and actions, and that thoughts flow in upon it, from it knows not what source, it is not unnatural for it to conceive, that there is something of a nature like itself, which may imperceptibly, act upon it, and where it cannot deduce its reasonable performances from any corporeal beginning, draw hopes or fears from some being thus capable to impress pleasure or torment; which being it cannot but suppose its authour.

But this its authour is incomprehensible to the soul (which he has thought fit to imprison in sense and matter) but as he is pleased to reveal himself, and bestow upon it an expectation of its enlargement; yet were we to take the account which poetical writers give, and suppose a creature with

these endowments wandering among other wild animals, the intelligent savage would not be contented with what rapine or craft could gain from his brethren beasts, but his condition would still be as necessitous for his better part; and his dark natural inquiry would make him, for want of a more just knowledge of his Creator, fall into superstition, and believe every fountain, grove, and forest, inhabited by some peculiar deity, that bestowed upon mankind the stream, the shade, and the breeze.

But we are informed that the wonderful Creator of all things, after he had given the rivers to flow, the earth to bring forth, and the beasts to feed, saw and approved his work, but thought a dumb, brute, and mechanick world an imperfect creation till inhabited by a conscious being, whose happiness should consist in obedience to and a contemplation on, him and his *wonders*.

For this reason man was created with intellectual powers and higher faculties, who immediately beheld with joy and rapture, a world made for the support and admiration of his new being; how came he into this happy, happy state! whence the

order! the beauty! the *melody* of this *living* garden! Are the trees verdant? do the birds sing? do the fountains flow for no other reason but to delight and entertain him! how does he pass through the most bright and delicious objects, and how does he *burn* to utter himself upon the *ecstatick* motions which they give him! in such sweet inquietude were the first hours of the world spent, and in this *lassitude* of bliss and thought our parent fell into a profound sleep, when his maker, who knew how irksome a lonely happiness was to a sociable nature, formed out of his side a companion, woman: he awaked, and by a secret sympathy beheld his wife: he beheld his own rougher make softened into sweetness, and tempered into smiles: he saw a creature (who had as it were Heaven's second thought in her formation) to whom he could communicate his conceptions, on whom he could *glut* his eyes, with whom he could ravish his heart: over this consort his strength and wisdom claimed, but his affection resigned the superiority: these both *equal* and both *superiour* were to live in perfect tranquillity, and produce as happy a progeny: the earth and all its fruits

were theirs, except only one tree: which light *injunction* was all that was required of them as an instance of their obedience and gratitude to his bounty, who had given them every thing else. But such was their vanity and ingratitude, that they soon forgot the dependence suitable to a borrowed being, and were deluded into an empty hope of becoming, by their transgression, like their Creator, and (though just born of the dust) proud enough from that noexistence to disdain one that was precarious: they did *therefore eat* and were undone; they offended God, and like all *their* succeeding criminals against him, were conscious that they did so. Innocence and simplicity were banished their bosoms, to give way to remorse and conviction. Guilt and shame are the new ideas they have plucked from the tree of knowledge: their affronted Creator pronounces upon them a sentence, which they now think more supportable than the pain of his offended presence, which he withdrew; and commanded Nature to give them no further voluntary obedience; so that he was now to extort from her the continuance of their wretched condition by toil and labour, and she

to bring forth heirs to it with pangs and torture.

This is the account we have from a certain neglected book, which is called, and for its genuine excellence above all other books deservedly called *THE SCRIPTURE*: and, methinks, we may be convinced of the truth of this history of our parents, by the infallible spots and symptoms of their hereditary disease in our tempers, pride and ingratitude: for what is more natural to us, than by an unreasonable self-opinion, (though we cannot but feel that we are but mere creatures and not of ourselves) to assume to ourselves the praise and glory of our capacities and endowments! And how lazy, how unwilling are we to *eradicate* the deep and inward satisfaction of self-admiration? However, it must be confessed, that it is the most senseless and stupid of all our infirmities, for till you can remember and recount to us, when that thinking, *throbbing* particle within, first resolved to *wear* a body, when it spun out its arteries, fibres, and veins, contrived the warm circulating stream that runs through them, when you first ventured to let the heart pant, the lungs suck air, and at last

to lanch the whole tender machine into the hazard of motion; till, I say, you can acquaint us with all this, you must kneel and fall down before him, by whom you were thus fearfully and wonderfully made.

But the first pair, now suspicious of each other, banished the more immediate influence and presence of their Almighty Protector, were liable (naked and distressed as they were) to be entangled by the thorn and the brier, and torn by the lion and the wolf, who have ever since been prompted to fly in the faces of the detested ingrates: therefore the increasing world, for their defence against themselves and other animals, were obliged to go into contracts and policies, so that human life (by long gradation) ascended into an art: the tongue was now to utter one thing, and the bosom to conceal another; and from a desire of superiority in our depraved natures, was bred that unsatisfied *hunger*, ambition; a monstrous excrescence of the mind, which makes superfluity, riches, honour, and distinction, but mere necessities of life, as if it were our fate in our fallen condition (lest a supply of what frugal nature desires should be obtained) to find out an indigence fo-

reign to us, which is incapable of being relieved, and which (to confirm our want and misery) increases with its acquisitions: under this leading crime, are envy, hatred, cruelty, cunning, craft, and debate, mustered and armed; and a battalion of diseases, torments, and cares, the natural effects of those evils, become our bosom companions; from which no arms can rescue, no flight secure us, but a return to that God, in whose protection only is our native lost seat of rest and tranquillity. To which abode, since our expulsion, we cannot dare to approach, but guilt, which runs even to succours it knows vain, makes us, with our first parents in the same circumstances, hide from Omnipotence: I said in the same circumstances, for we have not only implicitly committed their crime, as we were in them, but do also actually repeat it in our own persons: for when a created being relinquishes the power of its Creator, and instead of relying on his conduct and government, draws to itself an independent model of life, what does it but pluck from the tree of knowledge, and attempt a theft of understanding, from him who is Wisdom itself? This is a tremendous conside-

ration, yet is there not that man breathing, who has any where placed his confidence but in God, and considers seriously his own heart, but feels its weight, nor can the bosom under it receive any impression, but that of endless despair.

But behold the darkness disperses, and there is still hope breaking in upon our sorrow, by the light of which we may again lift up our eyes and see our Maker: for in the midst of our deserved misery, our reconciliation is coming on through a mediator, who is perfectly unconcerned in our crime: but though innocent of our transgression, assumes that and our nature, and, as an atonement for us, offers his life a ransom, with this regard on our part, that as it is an expiation, it is also an example: an example to instruct us, that not only the first command laid upon us was a reasonable one, but also the present life easy and supportable, for he himself voluntarily undergoes it in its greatest calamities: he, who had all things in his power, and wanted all things, by enforcing an abstinent use of wealth, and patient enduring of poverty, restores us not only to the bliss of leading this life with satisfaction and resig-

nation to the divine will, (which only is our true life) but by a short passage through a momentary death, translates us to a happy everlasting existence, incapable of sorrow, weariness, or change: to accomplish which great revolution, our glorious deliverer from ourselves designed to establish his empire, not by conquest, but a right much more lasting, *arduous* and *indisputable conviction*; for our slavery being intellectual and in our own bosoms, the redemption must be there also; yet the world, enchanted with its own imaginary notions of freedom, knew not how to receive so abstracted a manumission, but contemned the promise of restoration to *life* and *liberty* from a poor man, who himself enjoyed none of the advantages which arise from those *dear* (but *misunderstood*) appellations.

May we then without blame approach and behold this sacred and miraculous life? How, alas! shall we trace the mysterious steps of God and man? how consider him at once in subjection to, and dominion over nature?

The more apposite (though most slow) method of reducing the world to its obedi-

ence, was that our blessed Saviour should appear in that despicable attire, which he did, without any of those attendant accidents, which attract the eye, and charm the imagination: for the knowledge which he was to introduce, being an eternal truth; the proper mansion for it was in the reason and judgment, into which, when it had once entered, it was not to be removed by any impressions upon the lower faculties, to which it was not to be beholden for a reception. There is not, therefore, one instance in the New Testament of power exerted to the destruction, though so many to the preservation of mankind: but to a degenerate race, he that heals is less valuable than he that kills: confusion, terrour, noise, and amazement, are what only strike servile minds; but order, symmetry, silent awe, blessings and peace, are allurements to the open, simple, innocent, and truly knowing; yet the very nation among whom the holy JESUS descended to converse, had (if we may so speak) in a manner tired Heaven with appearing in the more pompous demonstrations of its power: they passed through waves *divided* and *erect* for their march, they were supernaturally fed

in a wilderness, a mountain shook, and thunder uttered their law; nations were destroyed to gain them inheritance! but they soon forgot their benefits, and upon the least cessation of fear and miracle, they deserted their Creator, and returned to their own handiwork deities, who were as senseless of their makers, as themselves were of theirs.

Thus shortlived is wonder, and thus impotent to fix (what we have said our lawgiver designed) conviction. For which reason our astonishment in the New Testament is more sparingly raised, and that only to awaken our attention to plain, easy, and obvious truths (which support themselves when received) by the authority of miracles.

We read that he was led into a wilderness, where he wonderfully bore hunger and want for forty days; in the height of which exigence and necessity, the tempter came to him and urged him, if he were the son of God, to relieve his present misery, by turning the stones into bread; which attempt when he found fruitless, and observed that he would use no supernatural relief, but bear human nature and its infir-

mities, he attacks him the most acceptable way to our weakness in the supplies of pride and vanity: he showed him the kingdoms and glory of the world, (which he had purchased from man by his defection from God) and offered him the dominion of them if he would worship him; but our Lord contemned this also, and in his want and poverty retired into a private village, where, and in the adjacent parts if the necessitous man lay in obscurity, the merciful God did not, for he never discontinued his visible benign assistance, to the relief of the diseased, the possessed, and the tormented.

In his admirable sermon upon the Mount, he gives his divine precepts in so easy and familiar a manner, and which are so well adapted to all the rules of life and right reason, that they must needs carry throughout a self-evident authority to all that read them; to those that obey them, from the firm satisfaction which they inspire; to those that neglect them, from the anxiety that naturally attends a contrary practice: There is the whole heart of man discovered by him that made it, and all our secret impulses to ill, and false appearances of good, exposed and detected: among other

excellent doctrines, one which, methinks, must be, to those who are so hardened as to read the divine oracles with unbelief, an irrefragable argument of his divinity: "But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Now it cannot enter into the heart of man, that any but God could be the authour of a command so abstracted from all worldly interest; for how absurd were it in a being, that had not an intercourse with our souls, or knew not their most secret motions, to direct our application to itself, so strictly apart, and out of the observation of any power less than ubiquitary?

There came to him a captain, in the behalf of his servant, grievously tormented with the palsy: our Lord promised him to come and heal him; but the soldier (with an openness and sincerity of mind peculiar to his profession) who could not believe in, or serve him, but with his whole heart, told him, he knew nature was in his power with as despotick a subjection, as his men were under his, begged him only to speak

him whole, and he knew he would be so: our Saviour extolled his honest, frank, and unreserved confidence, gave him a suitable success, sending him away with this glorious eulogium, that he had not found such faith, no, not in Israel.

Thus did he bestow mercy and salvation upon the easy and common terms of ordinary friendship, as if there needed nothing to make him, but believing he would be, their benefactor. And who, in the least affairs, is a friend to him that distrusts him?

In plain and apt parable, similitude and allegory, he proceeded daily to inspire and enforce the doctrine of our salvation; but they of his acquaintance, instead of receiving what they could not oppose, were offended at the presumption of being wiser than they: Is not this the carpenter's son, is not his mother called Mary, his brethren, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? They could not raise their little ideas above the consideration of him, in those circumstances familiar to them, or conceive that he who appeared not more terrible and pompous, should have any thing more exalted than themselves; he, in that place, therefore, would not longer ineffectually exert

a power, which was incapable of conquering the prepossession of their narrow and mean conceptions.

Multitudes followed him, and brought him the dumb, the blind, the sick, and the maim; whom, when their Creator had touched, with a second life they saw, spoke, leaped, and ran; in affection to him, and admiration of his actions, the crowd could not leave him, but waited near him three days, till they were almost as faint and helpless as others they brought for succour: he had compassion on them, commanded them to be seated, and with seven loaves, and a few little fishes, fed four thousand men, besides women and children: Oh, the ecstatick entertainment! when they could behold their food immediately increase to their distributer's hand, and see their God, in person, feeding and refreshing his creatures: Oh, envied happiness! but why do I say envied, as if our good God did not still preside over our temperate meals, cheerful hours, and innocent conversations.

But though the sacred story is every where full of miracles, not inferiour to this, and though in the midst of those acts of

divinity, he never gave the least hint of a design to become a secular prince, or in a forcible or miraculous manner to cast off the Roman yoke they were under, and restore again those disgraced favourites of Heaven, to its former indulgence, yet had not hitherto the apostles themselves (so *deep-set* is our natural pride) any other than hopes of worldly power, preferment, riches, and pomp: for Peter, who, it seems, ever since he left his net and his skiff, dreamed of nothing but being a great man, was utterly undone to hear our Saviour explain to them, upon an accident of ambition among them, that his kingdom was not of this world; and was so scandalized, that he, whom he had so long followed, should suffer the ignominy, shame, and death, which he foretold, that he took him aside and said, “Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee;” for which he suffered a severe reprehension from his master, as having in his view the glory of man, rather than that of God.

The great change of things began to draw near, when the Lord of Nature thought fit, as a saviour and deliverer, to make his publick entry into Jerusalem,

with more than the power and joy, but none of the ostentation and pomp of a triumph: he came humble, meek, and lowly; with an unfelt new ecstasy, multitudes strowed his way with garments and olive branches, crying with loud gladness, and acclamation, *Hosannah to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!* At this great King's accession to the throne, men were not ennobled, but saved; crimes were not remitted, but sins forgiven; he did not bestow medals, honours, favours, but health, joy, sight, speech! The first object the blind ever saw, was the authour of sight, while the lame ran before, and the dumb repeated the hosannah! Thus attended, he entered into his own house, the sacred temple, and by his divine authority expelled traders and worldlings that profaned it; and thus did he, for a time, use a great and despotick power, to let unbelievers understand, that it was not want of, but superiority to, all worldly dominion, that made him not exert it: but is this then the Saviour, is this the Deliverer? Shall this obscure Nazarene command Israel, and sit in the throne of David? Such were the unpleasant forms that ran in the thoughts

of the then powerful in Jerusalem, upon the most truly glorious entry that ever prince made; for there was not one that followed him, who was not in his interest; their proud and disdainful hearts, which were putrified with the love and pride of this world, were impregnable to the reception of so mean a benefactor, and were now enough exasperated with benefits to conspire his death: our Lord was sensible of their design, and prepared his disciples for it, by recounting to them now more distinctly what should befall him; but Peter, with an ungrounded resolution, and in a flush of temper, made a sanguine protestation; that though all men were offended in him, yet would not he be offended. It was a great article of our Saviour's business in the world, to bring us to a sense of our inability, without God's assistance, to do any thing great or good; he therefore told Peter, who thought so well of his courage and fidelity, that they would both fail him, and even he should deny him thrice that very night.

But what heart can conceive, what tongue utter the sequel? Who is that yonder buffeted, mocked and spurned? Whom

do they drag like a felon? whither do they carry my Lord, my king, my Saviour and my God? and will he die to expiate those very injuries? see where they have nailed the Lord and giver of life! how his wounds blacken! his body writhes, and heart heaves with pity, and with agony! Oh Almighty Sufferer, look down, look down from thy triumphant infamy; lo, he inclines his head to his sacred bosom! hark, he groans; see he expires! the earth trembles, the temple rends, the rocks burst, the dead arise; Which are the quick? which are the dead? Sure nature, all nature is departing with her Creator.

CHAPTER III.

THERE was nothing in our Saviour's own deportment, or in the principles he introduced for our conduct, but what was so far from opposing, that they might naturally fall in with the statutes or forms of any civil government whatever, and regarded them no otherwise than to make us more obedient to them: yet the professors of this doctrine were told they were to meet but very little quarter, for the acceptable service they were to do them, but must lay down their very lives to bring us to a contempt of their grandeur in comparison of greater and higher pursuits: in order to this great end, their despicable artillery were poverty and meekness; the consideration therefore of those arms is no digression from our purpose: it is in every body's observation with what disadvantage a poor man enters upon the most ordinary affairs, much more disputing with the whole world, and in contradiction of the rich, that is, the

wise; for as certainly as wealth gives acceptance and grace to all that its possessor says or does, so poverty creates disesteem, scorn and prejudice to all the undertakings of the indigent: the necessitous man has neither hands, lips, nor understanding, for his own or friend's use, but is in the same condition with the sick, with this difference only, that his is an infection no man will relieve, or assist, or if he does, it is seldom with so much pity, as contempt, and rather for the ostentation of the physician, than compassion on the patient: it is a circumstance, wherein a man finds all the good he deserves inaccessible, all the ill unavoidable; and the poor hero is as certainly ragged, as the poor villain hanged: under these pressures the poor man speaks with hesitation, and undertakes with irresolution, and acts with disappointment: he is slighted in men's conversation, overlooked in their assemblies, and beaten at their doors: But from whence alas has he this treatment? From a creature that has only the supply of, but not an exemption from the wants, for which he despises him: for such is the unaccountable insolence of man, that he will not see that he who is supported, is

in the same class of natural necessity with him that wants a support; and to be helped, implies to be indigent. In a word, after all you can say of a man, conclude that he is rich, and you have made him friends; nor have you utterly overthrown a man in the world's opinion, until you have said he is poor: this is the emphatical expression of praise and blame, for men so stupidly forget their natural impotence and want, that riches and poverty have taken in our imagination the place of innocence and guilt; he therefore that has suffered the contumelies, disappointments and miseries which attend the poor man's condition, and without running into base, indecent or servile arts for his redress, hath returned upon an insolent world its scorn, he (I say) has fought a nobler fight, conquered greater difficulties, and deserves a brighter diadem, than ever fortune bestowed on the most fonded and most gaudy of her favourites; but to capaciate one's self for this hard work, how necessary is that sublime and heroick virtue, meekness, a virtue that seems the very characteristick of a Christian, and arises from a great, not a groveling idea of things: for as certainly as pride

proceeds from a mean and narrow view of the little advantages about a man's self, so meekness is founded on the extended contemplation of the place we bear in the universe, and a just observation how little, how empty, how wavery are our deepest resolves and councils; and as (to a well taught mind) when you have said a haughty and proud man, you have spoke a narrow conception, little spirit, and despicable carriage; so when you have said a man is meek and humble, you have acquainted us, that such a person has arrived at the hardest task in the world, in a universal observation round him, to be quick to see his own faults and other men's virtues, and at the height of pardoning every man sooner than himself; yet you have also given us to understand, that to treat him kindly, sincerely and respectfully, is but a mere justice to him that is ready to do us the same offices: this temper of soul keeps us always awake to a just sense of things, teaches us that we are as well akin to worms as to angels, and as nothing is above these, so is nothing below those: it keeps our understanding tight about us, so that all things

appear to us great and little as they are in nature, not as they are gilded or sullied by accident and fortune.

Meekness is to the mind, what a good mien is to the body, without which, the best limned and finest complexioned person may be very disagreeable; and with it, a very homely and plain one cannot be so; for a good air supplies the imperfection of feature and shape, by throwing a certain beauty on the whole, which covers the disagreeableness of the parts; it has a state and humility peculiar to itself above all virtues, like the Holy Scripture, its sacred record, where the highest things are expressed in the most easy terms, and which carries throughout a condescending explanation, and a certain meekness of style.

With this circumstance, and this ready virtue, the faithful followers of a crucified master were to shape their course to an eternal kingdom, and with that in prospect to contemn the hazards and disasters of a cruel and impenitent generation. Great were the actions and sufferings of all our blessed Saviour's Apostles, but St. Paul being peculiarly sent to us, who were, or are *Gentiles*, he methinks, more particularly

challenges our regard: God, who bestowed upon others supernaturally the gift of tongues, but not of arts, thought therefore fit to make use of him, already master in some measure of both, and qualified to converse with the politer world by his acquaintance with their studies, laws and customs: but though he shows himself by frequent brisk sallies and quick interrogatories, skilful in approaching the passions of Rhetorick, yet he is very modest in any of those ornaments, and strikes all along at reason, where he never fails to convince the attentive and unprejudiced; and though his person was very despicable (which to a stranger is almost an insuperable inconvenience) yet such was the power of the commanding truth which he uttered, and his skill how and when to utter it, that there appears every where in his character, either the man of business, the gentleman, the hero, the apostle, or the martyr; which eminence above the other apostles might well be expected from his sanguine and undertaking complexion, tempered by education, and quickened by grace: it is true indeed, he had opposed in the most outrageous and violent manner this new faith, and was necessary

to the murder of the glorious leader of the army of martyrs, St. Stephen; but that fierce disposition fell off with the scales from his eyes; and God, who ever regards the intention, changed his mistaken method of serving him, and he is now ready to promote the same religion by his sufferings, which before he would have extirpated by his persecutions. He and his companion had made very great progress in the conversion both of Jews and Gentiles, but certain unbelievers prompted the multitude to a resolution at a general assembly to assassinate them, but they, advertised of it, fled unto Lycaonia, where their actions and eloquence were very successful: but at Lystra, a certain poor cripple (from his mother's womb) heard him with very particular attention and devotion, whom the apostle (observing in his very countenance his warm contrition, and preparation of soul to receive the benefit) commanded to stand up, upon which he immediately jumped upon his legs, and walked: this miracle alarmed the whole city, who believed their Gods had descended in human shapes: Barnabas was immediately Jove, and Paul his Mercury: the priest of Ju-

piter now is coming to sacrifice to them with oxen and garlands: but they ran into the multitude; we are men like you, are subject to the same weakness, infirmities and passions with yourselves: we, alas! are impotent of the great things ourselves have done; your and our Creator, will no longer let you wander in the maze and error of your vanities and false notions of his Deity, but has sent us with instances of his omnipotence to awake you to a worship worthy him, and worthy you. Oh graceful passage to see the great apostle oppose his own success! now only his vehemence, his power and his eloquence, are too feeble when they are urgent against themselves; for which prayers and entreaties the crowd could hardly be prevailed upon, to forbear their adoration, but this applause, like all other, was but a mere gust, for the malice of certain Jews followed them from Iconium, and quickly insinuated into the giddy multitude as much rancour as they had before devotion; who in a tumultuary manner stoned St. Paul, and dragged him as dead out of the gates of the city; but he bore their affronts with much less indignation than their worship: here was in a trice

the highest and lowest condition, the most respectful and most insolent treatment that man could receive; but Christianity, which kept his eye upon the cause, not effect of his actions, (and always gives us a transient regard to transitory things,) depressed him when adored, exalted him when affronted.

But these two excellent men, though they had the endearments of fellow suffering, and their friendship heightened by the yet faster tie of religion, could not longer accompany each other, but upon a dispute about taking Mark with them, who it seems had before deserted them, their dissension grew to the highest a resentment between generous friends ever can, even to part and estrange them; but they did it without rancour, malice, or perhaps disesteem of each other; for God hath made us, whether we observe it at the instant of being so or not, so much instruments of his great and secret purposes, that he has given every individual man, I know not what peculiarly his own, which so much distinguishes him from all other persons, that it is impossible, sometimes, for two of the same generous resolutions, honesty and in-

tegrity to do well together; whether it be that Providence has so ordered it to distribute virtue the more, or whatever it is, such is the frequent effect. For these noble personages were forced to take different ways, and in those were eminently useful in the same cause; as you may have seen two chymical waters, asunder, shining and transparent, thrown together, muddy and offensive.

The apostle was warned in a vision to go unto Macedonia, whither he and his new companion, Silas, accordingly went. At Philippi he commanded an evil spirit to depart out of a young woman; but her master (to whom her distraction was a revenue, which ceased by her future inability to answer the demands usually made to her) with the ordinary method of hiding private malice in publick zeal, raised the multitude upon them, as disturbers of the publick peace, and innovators upon their laws and liberties: the multitude hurried them to the magistrates, who happening to be as wise as themselves, commanded them to be stripped, whipped, and clapped in goal: the keeper receiving very strict orders for their safe custody, put them in

irons in the dungeon; the abused innocents had now no way left for their redress, but applying to their God, who, when all human arts and forces fail, is ready for our relief, nor did Saint Paul on less occasions implore preternatural assistance:

*Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit. — HOR.*

Let not a god approach the scene,
In cases for a god too mean.

We must, to men of wit and gallantry, quote out of their own scriptures. Their generous way of devotion, and begging assistance, was giving thanks for their present extremities: in the midst of their sores and chains, they sang hymns and praises to their Creator: immediately the bolts flew, the manacles fell off, the doors were opened, and the earth shook; the goaler awakes in terrour, and believing all under his custody escaped, went to despatch himself; but Saint Paul calls to him, he comes and beholds his prisoners detained by nothing but their amazing liberty; the horror, sorrow, torture, and despair of a dungeon, turned into the joy, the rapture,

the hallelujah, the ecstasy of a heaven; he fell trembling at the apostle's feet, resigned himself to his captives, and felt in himself the happy exchange of his liberty, for that yoke in which alone is perfect freedom. Early the next morning, upon this stupendous occasion, the magistrates sent orders those men might be released: but Saint Paul, who knew he had law on his side, and that his being a prisoner made him not the less a gentleman and a Roman, scorned their pretended favour, nor would regard their message, till they had themselves in as publick a manner acknowledged their offence, as they had committed it, which they did, by attending them in the goal, and desiring, in a ceremonious manner, they would leave the city; upon which the apostle accepted his enlargement, and when he had settled what business he had in that town, left it and its rulers to forget that painful truth, which they had neither power to gainsay, nor ingenuity to acknowledge.

His taking leave of the chief of the Ephesian churches, is hardly to be read without tears, where, when he had reminded them of his whole blameless, dis-

interested, humble, and laborious carriage, he acquaints them with his resolution of going to Jerusalem and never to return thither; he knew not, he said, what would particularly befall him there, but that in general, afflictions, distresses, and indignities were the portions of his life, which he was ready to hazard or lay down in a cause, which has a certain sweetness in it, that can make a man embrace his chains, and enjoy his miseries; what could be answered to his gallant declaration and behaviour but what they did, who "all wept sore, and fell on Saint Paul's neck, and kissed him; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." Certain Jews of Asia were glad to see him again at Jerusalem, and inflamed the city with their personal knowledge of his carriage, to the disparagement of the temple, and the rites of their nation: upon which he had been torn to pieces, had he not been rescued by the commanding military officer there; of whom (going with him as a prisoner into the castle) he obtained the liberty of speaking to the people: they heard him with great attention, till he contradicted their

monopoly of God, at which they lost all order and patience. But opposition was so far from dispiriting, that it did but quicken his resolution; for his great heart, instead of fainting and subsiding, rose and biggened in proportion to any growing danger that threatened him; however, he is carried to his imprisonment, but not even there to be without debate, for he is, by the commander's order, to be scourged, to which he does not passively, or basely submit, but asserts his Roman privilege, and exemption from such indignities.

He was, thereupon, next morning brought down to a trial, by a council of his own nation, where, upon his very opening his mouth, the chief priest commanded him to be struck, for which he calls him hypocrite and false pretender to justice, who could use a man, he was to sit as judge of, so inhumanly; but his good breeding being founded upon no less a sanction than the command of God, he immediately recollects himself, and acknowledges his error and disrespect to the dignity of his office: yet observing (by this treatment from the president of the council) the usage he was to expect, by a

very skilful turn he makes friends in an assembly unanimous in his ruin, but in that only unanimous; for Pharisees, in which sect he was bred, composing part of the court, he closes with their belief of a resurrection, and there grounded the cruelty he had met with among the Jews: this put them into so great a flame, that to save him, he was forcibly taken away into the place whence he came: his enemies, galled to the quick at his escape, conspired to kill him, when (upon the high priest's request) he should be remanded to a trial: a nephew of the apostle's acquainted him with this; he was neither afraid nor amazed at the intelligence, but like a man of business and the world, discreetly and calmly ordered the youth to be introduced to the captain, whom he knew answerable for the safety of his prisoner: the officer, in the night, sent him with a strong party to Felix, the governour of the province, and directed his accusers to follow him thither: before Felix, one Tertullus, a mercenary orator, bawled an impertinent harangue, introduced with false praise of the judge, and closed with false accusation of the prisoner, who with cogent plain

truths, and matter of fact, baffled his barbarous eloquence, and obtained so good a sense of himself and his innocence with the viceroy, that he gave him a private audience on the subject of his faith; but instead of then making his court to him, he fell upon his excellency's own darling vices, talked of righteousness, temperance, and judgment, with its terrors for neglect of such duties. In those heathen times, it seems, it was usual to have excess, wantonness, and gluttony, to be the practice of courts, and the apostle so nearly touched his Lordship, that he fell into a sudden disorder before his inferiour, and dismissed him till another season; he afterwards was frequently entertained by him, not without hopes of a bribe, which was, also, in very old times, the way to the favour of the great.

But Felix now leaving his lieutenancy to Festus, this friendless good man was a proper person for a tool to his vanity, by doing an obliging thing to the Jews, in leaving him still in custody at his departure, and no less useful to his new excellency to be sacrificed to them upon his entry: for at their request to have him

brought to Jerusalem, (designing to despatch him by the way) though he at first denied, he afterwards proposed it to the apostle himself, to have the issue of his trial there: but he handsomely evaded his base condescension, and their as base malice, by appealing, as a Roman, to Cæsar himself, before whose authority he also then stood: but he is still kept in goal in the same state, to gratify the Jews, till Agrippa, the tetrarch of Galilee, came to wait on Festus, who (after he had been there some days) entertained him with the case of Saint Paul, and acquainted him that he was at a loss what to do with him: he was so odious to the Jews, that he cared not to enlarge him, and so innocent in himself, that he knew not what account to send with him to Rome. This moved Agrippa's curiosity to hear him himself; in very great pomp, he, his sister, and whole retinue came to his trial: the apostle made so excellent a defence, that mean, wronged, poor, and unfriended as he was, he was neither ridiculous nor contemptible to that courtly audience, but prevailed so far upon the greatest and wisest man there, that he forced him to declare "Thou hast

almost persuaded me to be a Christian;” it would, methinks, be a sin not to repeat his very handsome answer.

“ I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were not only almost, but altogether such as I am, except those bonds.”

His appeal made it necessary, in course of law, that he should go to Rome: in his passage thither, and in the tempest, hunger, and shipwreck, his constancy was not a support to him only, but also to the whole company; and being thrown upon a barbarous island, he did and received mutual offices among the poor savages, not yet cultivated into ingratitude. At Rome the other prisoners were carried into safe custody, but he was permitted, with a soldier only for his ward, to live in his own hired house, teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, no man forbidding him; for it was only in Nero’s reign, nor had Rome yet arrived at the exquisite and refined tyranny of an inquisition. Thus we have been distinct in running through the more illustrious passages of this consummate life and character, as they are placed in Holy Writ,

and may presume, after all the injuries we have done him, that there is not any portraiture in the most excellent writers of morality, that can come up to its native beauty; yet was not he contented to serve his God only by example, but has as eminently done it by precept; where he pursues vice and urges virtue, with all the reason, energy and force that either good sense or piety can inspire: and not upon the airy and fleeting foundation of the insensibility noble minds bear to the assaults of fortune; which has been the impertinence of heathen moralists, and among them, Seneca.

“ A good man is not only the friend of God, but the very image, the disciple, the imitator of him, and the true child of his Heavenly Father: he is true to himself, and acts with constancy and resolution. Scipio, by a cross wind being forced into the power of his enemies, cast himself upon the point of his sword; and as the people were inquiring what was become of the general; the general, says Scipio, is very well, and so he expired. A gallant man is fortune's match: his courage provokes and despises those terrible appearances,

that would enslave us: a wise man is out of the reach of fortune, but not free from the malice of it; and all attempts upon him are no more than Xerxes's arrows; they may darken the day, but they cannot strike the sun."*

This is Seneca's very spirit, opinion, and genius; but alas, what absurdity is here! after the panegyrick of a brave or honest man, as the disciple and imitator of God, this is instanced in the basest action a man can be guilty of; a general's despatching himself in an extreme difficulty, and deserting his men and his honour; and what is this but doing a mean action with a great countenance? what could this imitator of God, out of the power of fortune, do more in obedience to what they call so, than sacrificing his life to it? but this is bombast got into the very soul, fustian in thinking!

Quanto rectius hic qui nil molitur inepte.

How much better he:

“Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the works of the Lord, for-

* Le Strange, p. 3, of Seneca's *Morals*, Epist. 26.

asmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

Here is supporting ourselves under misfortunes, proposed upon the reasonable terms of reward and punishment; and all other is fantastick, arrogant, and ungrounded.

The first Epistle to Corinth is most exquisitely adapted to the present temper of England, nor did ever that city (though proverbial of it) pretend to be more refinedly pleased than at present London: but Saint Paul more emphatically dissuades from those embasing satisfactions of sense.

“ Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them.”

He, methinks, throws blush and confusion in the face of his readers, when he argues on these subjects; for who can conceive his body, the mansion of an immortal spirit, capable to receive the aspiration and grace of an eternal God, and at the same time, by gluttony and drunkenness, entertain, in that place, fuel to enflame themselves into adultery, rage and

* I Cor. 15, 58.

revenge? As if our misery were our study, and chastity, innocence, and temperance, (those easy and agreeable companions) were not preferable to the convulsions of wrath, and tortures of lust.

“ Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ, shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot?”*

How ugly has he made Corinna at one sentence! Shall I, who am conscious that he, who laid down an immaculate body, to cleanse me from the filth and stain of a polluted one, and know that the holy JESUS has promised to be present to all the conflicts of my soul, banish him thence, and be guilty of so unnatural a coition, as to throw that temple into the embraces of a mercenary strumpet?

But must we then desert Love and the fair?

The cordial drop Heav'n in our cup has thrown,
To make the nauseous draught of life go down.

No, God forbid! The apostle allows us a virtuous enjoyment of our passions; but,

* 1 Cor. 6, v. 15.

indeed, extirpates all our false ideas of pleasure and happiness in them; he takes love out of its disguise, and puts on its own gay and becoming dress of innocence; and indeed, it is, among other reasons, from want of wit and invention in our modern gallants, that the beautiful sex is absurdly and vitiously entertained by them: for there is in their tender frame native simplicity, groundless fear, and little unaccountable contradictions, upon which there might be built expostulations to divert a good and intelligent young woman, as well as the fulsome raptures, guilty impressions, senseless deifications, and pretended deaths that are every day offered her.

No pen certainly ever surpassed either the logick or rhetorick of his fifteenth chapter: how does he intermingle hope and fear, life and death? Our rising from our graves is most admirably argued on the received philosophy, that corruption precedes generation, and the easy instances of new grain, new plants, and new trees, from the minute particles of seed: and when he has buried us, how does he move the heart with an "O Death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victo-

ry!" We have, at once, all along, the quickest touches of distress and of triumph. It were endless to enumerate these excellencies and beauties in his writings; but since they were all in his more publick and ministerial office, let us see him in his private life: there is nothing expresses a man's particular character more fully than his letters to his intimate friends; we have one of that nature of this great apostle to Philemon, which, in the modern language, would, perhaps, run thus:

" SIR,

" It is with the deepest satisfaction that I every day hear you commended, for your generous behaviour to all of that faith, in the articles of which I had the honour and happiness to initiate you; for which, though I might presume to an authority to oblige your compliance in a request I am going to make to you, yet choose I rather to apply myself to you as a friend, than an apostle; for with a man of your great temper, I know I need not a more powerful pretence than that of my age and imprisonment: yet is not my petition for myself, but in the behalf of the bearer,

your servant, Onesimus, who has robbed you and run away from you; what he has defrauded you of, I will be answerable for, this shall be a demand upon me, not to say that you owe me your very self: I called him your servant, but he is now also to be regarded by you in a greater relation, even that of your fellow Christian; for I esteem him a son of mine as much as yourself; nay, methinks, it is a certain peculiar endearment of him to me, that I had the happiness of gaining him in my confinement: I beseech you to receive him, and think it an act of Providence, that he went away from you for a season, to return more improved to your service forever.”

This letter is the sincere image of a worthy, pious, and brave man, and the ready utterance of a generous Christian temper: how handsomely does he assume, though a prisoner? how humbly condescend, though an apostle? could any request have been made, or any person obliged with a better grace? the very criminal servant is no less with him than his son and his brother; for Christianity has that in it, which makes men pity, not

scorn the wicked, and by a beautiful kind of ignorance of themselves, think those wretches their equals; it aggravates all the benefits and good offices of life, by making them seem fraternal; and the Christian feels the wants of the miserable so much his own, that it sweetens the pain of the obliged, when he that gives, does it with an air that has neither oppression nor superiority in it, but had rather have his generosity appear an enlarged self-love, than diffusive bounty, and is always a benefactor with the mien of a receiver.

These are the great and beautiful parts of life and friendship; and what is there in all that morality can prescribe, that can make a man do so much as the high ambition of pleasing his Creator, with whom the methods of address are as immutable as the favour obtained by them :

Here, methinks, we could begin again upon this amiable picture, or shall we search antiquity for the period and consummation of his illustrious life, to give him the crown and glory of martyrdom? that were a needless labour, for he that has been in a battle, has to his prince the merit of having died there; and Saint

Paul has so often, in our narration, confronted death, that we may bestow upon him that celestial title, and dismiss him with the just eulogy, in his own spritely expression, that he died daily.

Now the address and constancy with which this great apostle has behaved himself in so many various forms of calamity, are an ample conviction, that to make our life one decent and consistent action, we should have one constant motive of living, and that motive a confidence in God: for had he breathed on any other cause, instead of application to the Almighty, he must (on many occasions, which we have mentioned) have run to the dagger, or the bowl of poison: for the heathen virtue prescribes death before stripes or imprisonment; but whatever pompous look, elegant pens may have given to the illustrious distressed (as they would have us think the persons are, who do evade miseries, have profused their lives, and rushed to death for relief:) if we look to the bottom of things, we shall easily observe, that it is not a generous scorn of chains, or delicate distaste of an impertinent being, (which two pretences include all the varnish that is put upon

self-murder) but it ever was, and ever will be, pride or cowardice, that makes life insupportable: for since accidents are not in our power, but will (in spite of all our care and vigilance) befall us; what remains, but that we accommodate ourselves so far, as to bear them with the greatest decency and handsomest patience we are able? and, indeed, resistance to what we cannot avoid, is not the effect of a valiant heart, but a stubborn stomach: which contumacy, till we have quite rooted out our pride, will always make things too little, and our cowardice too large: for as fear gives a false idea of sufferings, and attempts, as above our strength, though they are not such, so vanity makes things despicable, and beneath us, which are rather for our honour and reputation; but if men would sincerely understand that they are but creatures, all the distinctions of great and little, high and low, would be easily swallowed up in the contemplation of the hopes we entertain in the place we shall have in his mercy, who is the authour of all things.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT since we have hitherto treated this subject in examples only, (by a view of some eminent heathen, by a distant admiration of the life of our blessed Saviour, and a near examination of that of his apostle, Saint Paul, (and since the indulgence of men's passions and interests, calls all things that contradict their practice, mere notion and theory: we must from this place descend from the bright incentives of their actions to consider lower life, and talk of motives which are common to all men, and which are the impulses of the ordinary world, as well as of captains, heroes, worthies, lawgivers, and saints. Which when we have performed, if it shall appear, that those motives are best used and improved, when joined with religion; we may rest assured, that it is a stable, sober, and practical as well as generous, exalted and heroic position—that true greatness of mind

is to be maintained only by Christian principles.

We will venture, then, to assert, that the two great springs of human actions are fame and conscience; for though we usually say such a one does not value his reputation, and such a one is a man of no conscience, it will, perhaps, be very easy to prove, that there seldom lives a person so profligate and abandoned, as not to prefer either the one or the other, even to life itself; and by the way, methinks, the quick pleasure men taste in the one, and as lively smart in the other, are strong arguments of their immortal nature: for such abstracted sufferings and enjoyments argue our souls too large for their present mansions; and raise us (even while we are in these bodies) to a being which does not at all affect them, but which is wholly spiritual and immaterial.

So strong (as we were going to proceed) is the passion for fame, that it never seems utterly extinct: for not to look among the men of the sword, whose whole play it is, and who suffer infinite hazards, toils, and miseries to enjoy it; not, I say, to dwell upon them, whose more professed

pursuit is glory, we shall find it intrudes also as restlessly upon those of the quill; nay, the very authours who conceal their names, are yet vainer than they who publish theirs. They both, indeed, aim at your applause, but the mock disguise of themselves in the former, is but a more subtle arrogance, at once to enjoy your esteem, and the reputation of contemning it: nay, not only such who would recommend themselves by great actions, and liberal arts, but even the lowest of mankind, and they who have gone out of the road, not only of honour, but also common honesty, have still a remaining relish for praise and applause. For you may frequently observe malefactors at an execution, even in that weight of shame and terrour, preserve, as it were, a corner of their souls for the reception of pity, and die with the sturdy satisfaction of not appearing to bend at the calamity, or perhaps desert their accomplices, by the sacrifice and betraying of whose lives we frequently see they might have saved their own.

By which last instance (that the basest men have still something punctilious to them) we may observe that the sense of

fame and conscience is never quite killed, but that when we are come to the worst, we have only carried them into another interest, and turned our gratifications that way only to different objects; nor can it be imagined that the love histories we daily hear young fellows relate of the favours and fondness of debauched women to them, can be all that time designed for a self-accusation: no, their idle minds have only shifted their sense of things, and though they glory in their shame, yet still they glory.

What then must men do to make themselves easy in this invincible passion, or how shall they possess a thing that is of so inconsistent a nature, that if they will be masters of it, they must shun it: for if they speak to their own advantage, or suffer another to do it to them, they are equally contemptible: thus they spend their lives in pursuit of *an ever absent good*; and yet though applause must never come quite home to them, they are, it seems, miserable, except they are conscious that they have it.

Nor if every heart lies open to it, that heart that is most passionate to it, must be

In eternal anxiety to attain it, though that very love frequently leads to the loss of it: for when our utmost bliss is placed in this charming possession of praise, and the world's opinion of our accomplishments, a flatterer needs no more in attempts upon men's honesty and women's chastity, but their being convinced their crimes may be a secret: so easily, alas! are both sexes led by admiration into contempt.

To rectify, therefore, and adjust our desires in this kind, we have the other concomitant motive of a living conscience, or the knowledge and judgment of what we are doing, which in the voyage of life is our ballast, as the other is our sail: but though fame and conscience, like judge and criminal, are thus placed together in us, they will have an understanding, and go into each other's interest, except there is a superiour court in which both may be examined. Here was the unhappy block on which the noble heathen stumbled and lost his way; for the bare conscience of a thing's being ill, was not of consideration enough of itself to support men in the anguish of disgrace, poverty, and imprisonment. But success, applause, renown,

honour, and command, had attractions too forcible to mere men, to be relinquished but with life itself; to which truth, the braver and higher part of the heathen world have died martyrs.

The different sects and sortings of themselves into distinct classes of opinion, seem to be no other than the prosecution of this natural impulse to reputation, which class was Stoical or Epicurean, or the like, according to the force and bent of their complexions, which they misunderstood for their conscience; and Sallust begins his fine story of Cataline's conspiracy, with an acknowledgment to this purpose, for he takes it to be the peculiar duty and superiority of the human race above other animals (which he calls prone and obedient to their bellies) *ne vitam silentio transeant*, not to let life pass away in a lazy silence; and further, *is mihi demum vivere et frui anima videtur, qui, negotio aliquo intentus artis bonæ, famam quærit*: he only, in his opinion, might be truly said to *live*, who, being employed in some useful affair, obtained a reputation in an honest or liberal art. Thus this authour of sober and excellent sense, makes it the end and happy

consummation of a well-spent life, to arrive at a good fame; which makes our assertion in the beginning of this discourse very natural, *viz.* That the heathen virtues, which were little else but disguised or artificial passions, (since their good was in fame) must rise or fall with disappointment or success.

Now our good God, who claims not an utter extirpation, but the direction only of our passions, has provided also for this great desire, in giving it a scope as boundless as itself; and since it is never to be satisfied, has allowed it an aim which may supply it with eternal employment. “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*”

In this command is the whole business of reputation (about which we are so miserably anxious) wholly rectified: and fame no longer a turbulent, wayward, uneasy pursuit, but (when thus made a subordinate and secondary cause of action) a calm, easy, indifferent and untroubled possession.

And what more glorious ambition can the mind of man have, than to consider itself actually employed in the service of, and in

a manner in conjunction with, the mind of the universe, which is forever busy without toil, and working without weariness?

Thus the spirit of man, by new acquisitions, will daily receive earnestness of a nobler state, and by its own enlargement better apprehend that spirit, after whose image it was made, which knows no confinement of place.

This adjusted passion will make men truly agreeable, substantially famous; for when the first intention pursues the service of the Almighty, distinction will naturally come, the only way it ever does come, without being apparently courted; nor will men be lost through a fondness of it, by affectation in the familiar life, or knavery in the busy: it is not a Stoical rant, but a reasonable confidence in a man thus armed, to be unmoved at misfortunes; let the sea, or the people rage; let the billows beat, the world be confused, the earth be shook; it is not to him a terrour, but a daily request of his to hasten the very last day of human nature, that he may finish this various being, and enjoy the presence of his Maker in an endless tranquillity.

Thus, by taking in fame, the Christian religion (and no other motive) has fortified our minds on all sides, and made them impregnable by any happiness or misery with which this world can attack it: and now, if it is impartially apparent to us, that the Christian scheme is not only the way to ease and composure of mind in unhappy circumstances, but also the noblest spur to honest and great actions, what hinders but that we be baptised, and resolve all our perplexed notions of justice, generosity, patience, and bravery, into that one easy and portable virtue, piety? which could arm our ancestors in this faith with so restless and victorious a constancy, that by their sufferings, their religion, from the outcast and scorn of the earth, has ascended sovereign thrones; and *Defender of the Faith*, and *most Christian King*, are appellations of the greatest monarchs of the most refined nations; nor can we enough thank the Almighty, who has disposed us into the world, when the Christian name bears pomp and authority, and not in its offensive, low, and despised beginnings: but, alas! its state is as much militant as ever, for there are earthly and narrow

souls, as deeply scandaled at the prosperity the professors and teachers of this sacred faith enjoy, and object to them the miseries and necessities of the primitive believers! Light and superficial men! not seeing that riches is a much more dangerous dispensation than that of poverty; this we oppose as a foe, that we run to meet as a friend, and an enemy does his work more successfully in an embrace than a blow; but since the necessaries, conveniencies, and honours of life, which the clergy enjoy, are so great an offence to their despisers, they are the more engaged to hold them dear; for they who envy a man for what he has, would certainly scorn him without it; when, therefore, they are both in good and bad fortune irreconcilable to them, may they always offend with their happiness; for it is not to be doubted, but that there are bishops and governours in the church of England, whose decent hospitality, meekness, and charity to their brethren, will place them in the same mansions with the most heroick poor; and convince the mistake of their enemies, that the Eternal Pastor has given his worldly blessings into hands by which he approves

their distribution; and still bestows upon us great and exemplary spirits, that can conquer the difficulties and enchantments of wealth itself.

To follow such excellent leaders, it will be necessary we now consider also what may be our best rule in that state we call our good fortune, and inquire whether Christianity can as well become its professors in the enjoyments of prosperity, as we have seen it has in the hardships of adversity; this also we shall best know, by contemplating our natural frame and tendency, which religion either assists or corrects in these circumstances.

The eternal God, in whom we live and move, and have our being, has impressed upon us all one nature, which as an emanation from him, who is universal life, presses us, by natural society, to a close union with each other; which is, methinks, a sort of enlargement of our very selves when we run into the ideas, sensations, and concerns of our brethren: by this force of our make, men are insensibly hurried into each other, and by a secret charm we lament with the unfortunate, and rejoice with the glad; for it is not possible

for a human heart to be averse to any thing that is human: but by the very mien and gesture of the joyful and distressed, we rise and fall into their condition; and since joy is communicative, it is reasonable that grief should be contagious, both which are seen and felt at a look, for one man's eyes are spectacles to another to read his heart: those useful and honest instruments do not only discover objects to us, but make ourselves also transparent; for they, in spite of dissimulation, when the heart is full, will brighten into gladness, and gush into tears: from this foundation in nature is kindled that noble spark of celestial fire we call charity or compassion, which opens our bosoms, and extends our arms to embrace all mankind, and by this it is that the amorous man is not more suddenly melted with beauty, than the compassionate with misery.

Thus are we framed for mutual kindness, good-will, and service, and, therefore, our blessed Saviour has been pleased to give us (as a reiterated abridgment of all his law) the command of loving one another; and the man that imbibes that noble principle is in no danger of inso-

lently transgressing against his fellow-creatures, but will certainly use all the advantages which he has from nature and fortune to the good and welfare of others, for whose benefit, (next to the adoration of his Maker) he knows he was created. This temper of mind, when neither polluted nor misled, tends to this purpose, and the improvement of it by religion raises on it an exalted superstructure, which inclines him in his words and actions, to be above the little crafts and doubles with which the world beneath him is perplexed: he is intrinsically possessed of what mere morality must own to be a fantastical chimaera, the being wholly disinterested in the affairs of the person he affects or befriends; for, indeed, when the regard of our Maker is not our first impulse and desire in our hopes and purposes, it is impossible but that the fondness of ourselves and our own interest must recur upon us, and leaven the whole course of our actions: when the fountain is muddy it must stain the rivulet, and the predominant passion gives a tincture to all our cares and pleasures; so that men ordinarily love others out of a tenderness to themselves, and do good

offices to receive them with increase and usury: nay, if we follow the best friendship we meet with to its source, and allow it to be what it sometimes really is, a passionate inclination to serve another, without hopes or visible possibility of receiving a return, yet we must also allow, that there is a deep interest to ourselves (though indeed a beautiful one) in satisfying that inclination; but that good intention is subject to be changed and interrupted (as, perhaps it was taken up) by accident, mistake, or turn of humour; but he that loves others for the love of God must be unchangeable, for the cause of his benevolence to us is so; and though, indeed, he is not without self-regard in the hopes of receiving, one day, an immense reward of all his labour, yet, since that is separate from this world, it is, to all intents of life, as far from interfering with our purposes, as if he had no such expectation; that very prospect in him is not of a selfish, incommunicable nature, but is augmented and furthered by our participation, while his joys are quickened and redoubled by the joint wishes of others: this is that blessed state of mind which is so excellently cal-

led singleness of heart; which inseparable peace and happiness, it is not in the power of all the tinsel in the world to discompose; for to a Christian and knowing mind, earth is but earth, though the refined dirt shine into gems and glister into gold.

He that thus justly values the wealth which Heaven has bestowed upon him, cannot grow giddy in the possession of it, for it serves only to express a noble and Christian nature, which dispenses liberally, and enjoys abstinently, the goods which he knows he may lose and must leave: but this extensive magnanimity, according to the rules of our faith, is not to be bestowed on those only who are our friends, but must reach also to our very enemies; though good sense as well as religion is so utterly banished the world, that men glory in their very passions, and pursue trifles with the utmost vengeance: so little do they know that to forgive is the most arduous pitch human nature can arrive at; a coward has often fought, a coward has often conquered, but *a coward never forgave*. The power of doing that flows from a strength of soul conscious of its own

force, whence it draws a certain safety which its enemy is not of consideration enough to interrupt; for it is peculiar in the make of a brave man to have his friends seem much above him, his enemies much below him.

Yet though the neglect of our enemies may so intense a forgiveness, as the love of them is not to be in the least accounted for by the force of constitution, but is a more spiritual and refined moral introduced by him, who died for those that persecuted him, yet very justly delivered to us, when we consider ourselves as offenders, and to be forgiven on the reasonable terms of forgiving; for who can ask what he will not bestow? especially when that gift is attended with a redemption from the cruelest slavery to the most acceptable freedom: for when the mind is in the contemplation of revenge, all its thoughts must surely be tortured with the alternate pangs of rancour, envy, hatred, and indignation: and they who profess a sweet in the enjoyment of it, certainly never felt the consummate bliss of reconciliation: at such an instant the false ideas we received unravel, and the shyness, the

distrust, the secret scorns, and all the base satisfactions men had in each other's faults and misfortunes, are dispelled, and their souls appear in their native whiteness, without the least strake of that malice or distaste which sullied them: and perhaps those very actions, which (when we looked at them in the oblique glance with which hatred doth always see things) were horrid and odious, when observed with honest and open eyes, are beauteous and ornamental.

But if men are averse to us in the most violent degree, and we can never bring them to an amicable temper, then, indeed, we are to exert an obstinate opposition to them, and never let the malice of our enemies have so effectual an advantage over us, as to escape our good will: for the neglected and despised tenets of religion are so generous, and in so transcendent and heroick a manner disposed for publick good, that it is not in a man's power to avoid their influence; for the Christian is as much inclined to your service when your enemy, as the moral man when your friend.

Now since the dictates of Christianity are thus excellently suited to an enlarged love and ambition to serve the world, the most immediate method of seeing to what height they would accomplish that noble work, is taking the liberty of observing how they would naturally influence the actions and passions of such persons, as have power to exert all the dictates and impulses which are inspired, either by their inclinations or opinions; for whatever is acted in the narrow path of a private life, passes away in the same obscurity that it was performed in; while the purposes and conduct of princes attract all eyes, and employ all tongues; in which difficult station and character it is not possible, but that a man without religion must be more exquisitely unhappy, than the meanest of his vassals; for the repeated pomp and pageantry of greatness must needs become, in time, either languid in the satisfactions they give, or turn the heads of the powerful, so that it is absolutely necessary that he should have something of more inward and deep regard, to keep his condition from being an oppression, either to himself or others.

There were not ever, before the entrance of the Christian name into the world, men who have maintained a more renowned carriage than the two great rivals who possess the full fame of the present age, and will be the theme and examination of the future: they are exactly formed by nature for those ends, to which Heaven seems to have sent them among us: both animated with a restless desire of glory, but pursue it by different means, and with different motives: to one it consists in an extensive undisputed empire over his subjects, to the other in their rational and voluntary obedience: one's happiness is founded in their want of power, the other's in their want of desire, to oppose him: the one enjoys a summer of fortune with the luxury of a Persian, the other with the moderation of a Spartan; one is made to oppress, the other to relieve the oppressed: the one is satisfied with the pomp and ostentation of power to prefer and debase his inferiours, the other delighted only with the cause and foundation of it, to cherish and protect them: to one, therefore, religion is but a convenient disguise, to the other, a vigorous motive of action.

For without such ties of real and solid honour, there is no way of forming a monarch, but after the Machiavilian scheme, by which a prince must ever seem to have all virtues, but really to be master of none, but is to be liberal, merciful and just, only as they serve his interests; while with the noble art of hypocrisy, empire would be to be extended, and new conquests be made by new devices, by which prompt address his creatures might insensibly give law in the business of life, by leading men in the entertainment of it, and making their great monarch the fountain of all that is delicate and refined, and his court the model for opinions in pleasure, as well as the pattern in dress; which might prevail so far upon an undiscerning world as (to accomplish it for its approaching slavery) to make it receive a superfluous babble for a universal language.

Thus when words and show are apt to pass for the substantial things we are only to express, there would need no more to enslave a country but to adorn a court; for while every man's vanity makes him believe himself capable of becoming luxury, enjoyments are a ready bait for suffe-

rings, and the hopes of preferment invitations to servitude, which slavery would be coloured with all the agreements, as they call it, imaginable: the noblest arts and artists, the finest pens and the most elegant minds, jointly employed to set it off, with the various embellishments of sumptuous entertainments, charming assemblies, and polished discourses: and those apostate abilities of men, the adored monarch might profusedly and skilfully encourage, while they flatter his virtue, and gild his vice at so high a rate, that he, without scorn of the one, or love of the other, would alternately and occasionally use both, so that his bounty should support him in his rapines, his mercy in his cruelties.

Nor is it to give things a more severe look than is natural, to suppose such must be the consequences of a Prince's having no other pursuit than that of his own glory; for if we consider an infant born into the world, and beholding itself the mightiest thing in it, itself the present admiration and future prospect of a fawning people, who profess themselves great or mean according to the figure he is to make among

them, what fancy would not be debauched to believe they were but what they professed themselves, his mere creatures, and use them as such, by purchasing with their lives a boundless renown, which he, for want of a more just prospect, would place in the number of slaves, and the extent of his territories; such undoubtedly would be the tragical effects of a Prince's living with no religion, which are not to be surpassed but by his having a false one.

If ambition were spirited with zeal, what would follow, but that his people should be converted into an army, whose swords can make right in power, and sole controversy in belief; and if men should be stiff-necked to the doctrine of that visible church, let them be contented with an oar and a chain in the midst of stripes and anguish, to contemplate on him, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.

With a tyranny begun on his own subjects, and indignation that others draw their breath independent of his frown or smile, why should he not proceed to the seizure of the world? and if nothing but the thirst of sway were the motive of his actions, why should treaties be other than mere

words, or solemn national compacts be any thing but a halt in the march of that army, who are never to lay down their arms, until all men are reduced to the necessity of hanging their lives on his wayward will? who might supinely, and at leisure, expiate his own sins by other men's sufferings; while he daily meditates new slaughter, and new conquest?

For mere man, when giddy with unbri-dled power, is an insatiate idol, not to be appeased with myriads offered to his pride, which may be puffed up by the adulation of a base and prostrate world, into an opinion that he is something more than human, by being something less: and alas, what is there that mortal man will not believe of himself when complimented with the attributes of God? he cannot then conceive thoughts of a power as *omnipresent* as his: but should there be such a foe of mankind now upon earth, have our sins so far provoked Heaven, that we are left utterly naked to his fury? is there no power, no leader, no genius that can conduct and animate us to our death, or our defence? yes, our great God never gave one to

reign by his permission, but he gave to another also to reign by his grace.

All the circumstances of the illustrious life of our Prince seem to have conspired to make him the check and bridle of tyranny, for his mind has been strengthened and confirmed by one continued struggle, and Heaven has educated him by adversity to a quick sense of the distresses and miseries of mankind, which he was born to redress: in just scorn of the trivial glories and light ostentations of power, that glorious instrument of Providence, moves like that, in a steady, calm and silent course, independent either of applause or of calumny, which renders him, if not in a political, yet in a moral, a philosophick, an heroick, and a Christian sense, an absolute monarch: who, satisfied with this unchangeable, just, and ample glory, must needs turn all his regards from himself, to the service of others; for he begins his enterprizes with his own share in the success of them, for integrity bears in itself its reward, nor can that which depends not on event ever know disappointment.

With the undoubted character of a glorious captain, and (what he much more

values than the most splendid titles) that of a sincere and honest man, he is the hope and stay of Europe,* a universal good not to be engrossed by us only; for distant potentates implore his friendship, and injured empires court his assistance: he rules the world, not by an invasion of the people of the earth, but the address of its Princes; and if that world should be again roused from the repose which his prevailing arms have given it, why should we not hope that there is an Almighty, by whose influence the terrible enemy that thinks himself prepared for battle, may find he is but ripe for destruction, and that there may be in the womb of time great incidents which may make the catastrophe of a prosperous life as unfortunate, as the particular scenes of it were successful?

For there does not want a skilful eye, and resolute arm, to observe and grasp the occasion: a Prince, who, from a just notion of his duty to that Being, to whom he must be accountable, has in the service of his fellow-creatures, a noble contempt of pleasure and patience of labours, to

* George I.

whom it is hereditary to be the guardian and asserter of the native rights and liberties of mankind; and who, with a rational ambition, knows how much greater it is to give than to take away; whose every day is productive of some great action, in behalf of men's universal liberty, which great affection to them it is not in the power of their very ingratitude to alienate; he is constant and collected in himself, nor can their murmurs interrupt his toil, any more than their dreams his vigilance; a Prince, who never did or spoke any thing that could justly give grief to his people, but when he mentioned his *succession* to them: but what grateful mind can bear that insupportable reflection? no, we will with endless adoration implore Heaven to continue him to us, or expire in heaps before his pavilion, to guard his important life, and in the joint-cause of Heaven and earth, our religion and our liberty, destroy like ministering angels, or die an army of martyrs.

REFERENCES TO SCRIPTURE.

Page.	Line.		Scripture.
55..	19..	Led into a Wilderness.....	Matthew 4
55..	15..	Sermon upon the Mount.....	———— 5
57..	4..	When thou prayest enter thy...————	6, 6
57..	19..	Came to him a Captain.....	———— 8
58..	13..	In plain and apt Parable.....	———— 13, 55
59..	4..	Brought him the Dumb, Blind..————	15
60..	20..	Be it far from thee, Lord.....	———— 16, 22
61..	7..	Hosannah to the Son of David..————	21
62..	16..	Though all men were offended. ————	26, 33
70..	12..	Multitude prompted to assassinate..	Acts 14
71..	2..	They ran into the Multitude.....	— v. 15
72..	14..	Dispute about taking Mark.....	———— 15, 39
73..	11..	The Apostle warned in a Vision....	———— 16
75..	21..	The Apostle accepted his Enlargement	———— 16
76..	13..	All wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck.	———— 20, 38
77..	14..	Brought down to trial.....	———— 23
81..	4..	I would to God that not only thou...—	26, 29
81..	9..	In his Passage to Rome, the Tempest	———— 27
83..	24..	Be ye steadfast, unmoveable.....	1 Corin. 15, 58
84..	15..	Meats for the Belly.....	———— 6 v. 13
85..	6..	Your Bodies are the Members of Christ	6, v. 15
98..	15..	Let your Light so shine.....	Matthew 5, 16

Ed. R. A.



