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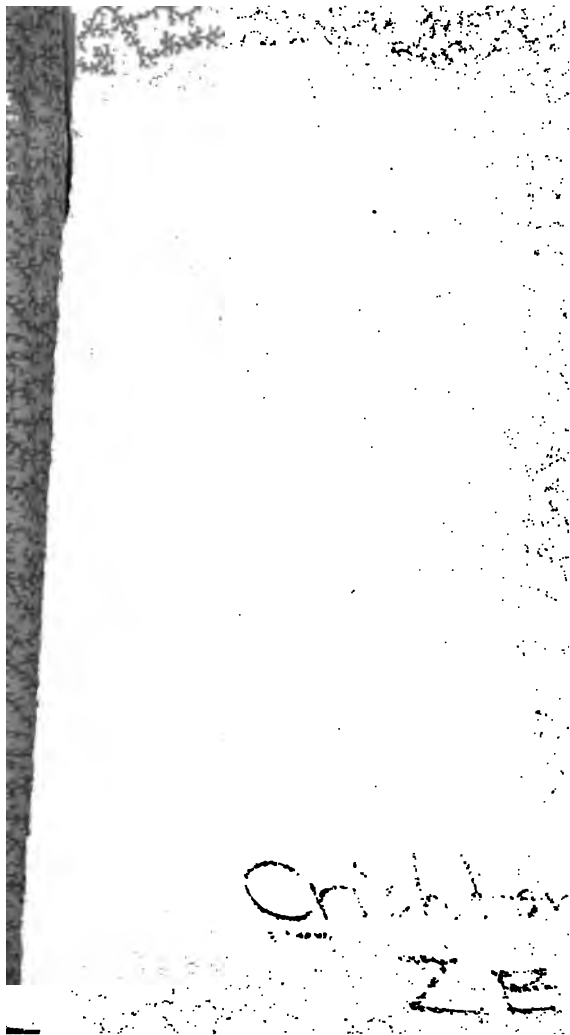
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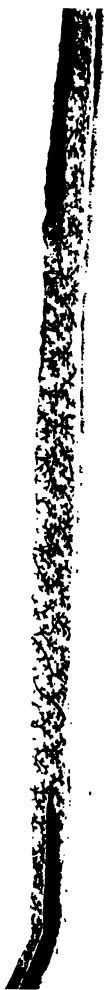












CONVERTS

FROM

INFIDELITY.

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INFIDELITY.

CONSTABLE'S MISCELLANY
OF
Original and Selected Publications
IN THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS
OF -
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, & THE ARTS.

VOL. VI.

CONVERTS FROM INFIDELITY.

A. Crichton



ROCHESTER

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE & CO
1827.

NOY WAB
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TO
His Majesty
KING GEORGE IV.

The Most generous Patron
even of the most humble attempts
towards the advantage of his Subjects:

This Miscellany

designed to extend useful Knowledge
and elegant Literature;

By placing Works of Standard Merit,
within the attainment of every Class of

Readers:

As most humbly Inscribed

BY HIS MAJESTY'S

Dutiful and Devoted Subject,

Archibald Constable



NOV 20
1964



PREFACE.

THE change that has gradually taken place during the last thirty or forty years in the numbers and circumstances of the reading public, and the unlimited desire of knowledge that now pervades every class of society, have suggested the present undertaking. Previously to the commencement of the late war, the buyers of books consisted principally of the richer classes—of those who were brought up to some of the learned professions, or who had received a liberal education. The saving of a few shillings on the price of a volume was not an object of much importance to such persons, many of whom prized it chiefly for the fineness of its paper, the beauty of its typography, and the amplitude of its mar-

gins—qualities which add to the expense of a work, without rendering it in any degree more useful. But now when the more general diffusion of education and of wealth, has occasioned a vast increase in the number of readers, and in the works which daily issue from the Press, a change in the mode of publishing seems to be called for. The strong desire entertained by most of those who are engaged in the various details of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, for the acquisition of useful knowledge and the culture of their minds, is strikingly evinced by the establishment of subscription libraries and scientific institutions, even in the most inconsiderable towns and villages throughout the empire; and by the extensive sale which several very expensive, though by no means valuable works, published in numbers, have met with. Under these circumstances, it occurred to the projector of this Miscellany, that if **STANDARD WORKS** not hitherto accessible to the great mass of the Public, intermingled with **ORIGINAL TREATISES** on subjects of great general importance, and executed by writers of acknowledged talent, were published in a

cheap, convenient, and not inelegant form, they would obtain a most extensive circulation and be productive alike of benefit to the Public and of profit to those concerned in them.

In the selection of Treatises, and in the mode of circulation, the Publishers have adopted that plan which they supposed would be most likely to meet the wishes of the great mass of readers, or of the middle classes. And they are resolved to spare neither trouble nor expense to give effect to their purpose, of making this Miscellany the depository of a selection of Works on all the most interesting branches of human knowledge, written by the most approved authors, and of rendering it as perfect, as a vehicle both of useful information and of rational entertainment, as it can possibly be made.

The EXALTED PATRONAGE under which this Miscellany is ushered into the world, is of itself a sufficient pledge, that nothing will be admitted into its pages tainted with party politics, or which can be construed as militating, in any way, against any of the principles of religion and morality. The object is

view is to render this Work a truly *National* Publication, and which shall be equally acceptable to readers of all parties and denominations.

In the following List, some of the various works proposed to be embodied in this *Miscellany*, are enumerated; and they will appear in such order and succession as may seem most likely to suit the taste of those encouraging the design. The works of each author, and each subject, will be kept separate, so as to enable purchasers to acquire all the numbers or volumes of any work, distinct from the others.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.

Those Articles marked thus * are original Works, prepared or written expressly for this Miscellany.

CAPTAIN BASIL HALL'S VOYAGES. 3 vols.

* * These contain,—I. VOYAGE TO LOO-CHOO, and other Places in the EASTERN SEAS, in the Year 1816. * Including an Account of Captain Maxwell's Attack on the Batteries at Canton; and Notes of an Interview with NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE at St Helena, in August 1817.—II. EXTRACTS FROM A JOURNAL written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru, and Mexico, in the Years 1820, 1821, and 1822; containing some Account of the recent Revolutions, together with Observations on the State of Society in those Countries.

LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS. By J. G. LOCKHART, LL. B. *

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EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY: THE PLEIAD, or a Series of Abridgements of Seven Distinguished Writers, in opposition to the Pernicious Doctrines of DEISM. By the Rev. FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M. A. F. R. S. Archdeacon of Cleveland. *

CONVERTS FROM INFIDELITY; or Lives of Eminent Individuals who have renounced Sceptical and Infidel Opinions, and embraced Christianity. By ANDREW CRICHTON. 2 vols. *

* * This Work contains Lives of the Earl of ROCHESTER, Hon. ROBERT BOYLE, LORD LYTTLETON, Count STRUENCKE, Count BRANDT, Sir JOHN PRINGLE, GILBERT WEST, SOAME JENYNS, JOHN BUNYAN, BARON HALLE, LA HARPE, CHARLES GILDON, Captain JAMES WILSON of the Ship Duff, Rev. JOHN NEWTON, Rev. RICHARD CECIL, Professor HALYBURTON, COLONEL GARDINER, Dr THOMAS BATEMAN, and Others.

HISTORY OF VOYAGES, from the earliest Times, showing the part which the various European Nations have had in Maritime Discovery; and illustrating the Progress of Geographical Science. 3 vols. *

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PREFACE.

MUCH has been written against scepticism and infidelity; and in so far as regards arguments and objections founded on the historical proofs, or the internal character of the Christian religion, the controversy may be considered as exhausted. The impious warfare which the enemies of Revelation waged so long, and with such implacable rancour, seems to have terminated in acknowledged defeat, or at least in silencing all speculative opposition; and they who still persist to discredit or reject its authority, must find some other excuse for their unbelief than the want of evidence.

During the last two centuries, the tolerant maxims of the government, and the unrestrained freedom of the press, gave ample scope for inquiry and discussion; and the

abettors of atheism and moral anarchy were not slow to avail themselves of the indulgence. All who had objections of their own to offer, or who might hope to serve their cause, by reviving the calumnies of others, were at perfect liberty to produce them. Accordingly, the authenticity of the Bible, more especially of Christianity, was assailed at all points, by a host of free-thinkers and sophistical reasoners, with a versatility of skill unknown to its ancient adversaries, and a zeal as indefatigable in its exertions, as it was bold and ingenious in its contrivances. History, philosophy, literature and romance, wit, satire, ridicule, reproach, and even falsehood were all leagued in this conspiracy; and furnished, in their turn, arms for prosecuting this unnatural rebellion against light and truth.

It might not be uninteresting, perhaps, to trace through the progressive stages of this Deistical contest, how often the assailants have been compelled to change their modes of attack,—the artful disguises they have assumed,—the various shifts and disingenuous stratagems they have had recourse to,—the several schemes they have formed

for achieving their purposes; but our limits necessarily restrict us at present from entering into the exposition. The result has proved how little Christianity has to fear from the malice or the subtlety of its bitterest opponents,—how futile their most plausible objections are,—and how trivial the amount of all that their learning and ingenuity have found to say against it, after the most rigorous examination, and with full liberty of declaring their sentiments without the terror of faggots or inquisitions.

Nothing has been done to detect fraud or imposture, or invalidate the solid evidences on which it rests. Its truth has acquired fresh lustre in the controversy, and burst through all those ingenious sophistries which, like so many cob-webs, a sceptical philosophy had endeavoured to spin around it. Instead of being detrimental to religion, its adversaries have done it an important, though unintentional service. They have shewn that it can never be subverted by the force of reason or argument; that it is in no danger from the most rigid scrutiny; but, like pure gold, will lie for centuries in the furnace without losing a single grain; whereas,

were all the tinsel and embroidery of Deism or Infidelity put into the same crucible, and burnt down, there would not be found at the bottom of the melting-pot an ounce of metal that was not dug from the mine of Revelation.

Besides exposing their own weakness, they have stimulated the friends of piety to greater zeal by their example; they have taught Christians of all denominations to unite in the same spirit of honourable rivalry; and, forgetting for a time the distinctions of party, to associate their labours in repelling the encroachments of error. They have roused men of talents and learning to investigate the subject, who have given, in their numerous writings, the most luminous and convincing statements of the Christian evidences, and established their veracity on the basis of demonstration. To this cause it is that we owe the masterly productions of Stillingfleet, Sherlock, Clarke, Butler, Bentley, Doddridge, Newton, Leland, Lardner, Campbell, and a catalogue of other respectable names, that have done honour to literature and science, as well as to religion.

Thus has the opposition of enemies and infidels contributed to advance and perpetuate the cause they intended to destroy. It has assisted, in no small degree, to sweep away the rubbish which had been accumulating for ages round the temple of Truth; and, by revealing the solid rock on which it is founded, has made the venerable structure only appear more majestic and impregnable. It has given birth to those ingenious and immortal defences of our faith, which serve at once for beauty and for strength, and which will continue to be read and admired while the language in which they are written exists.

An additional benefit which has accrued from these discussions is, that many sceptics and unbelievers, being induced to ponder and examine the matter in question, have been reclaimed to the truth, and confirmed in right principles. The contemners of the Christian religion, have been compelled to throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and led not only to entertain a more favourable opinion of its proofs and its doctrines, but to render it a public homage, by laying their confessions and retractions undis-

guisedly before the world. Numbers have even entered the lists of controversy, as advocates and champions of the cause they had reviled; and produced elaborate works in its defence, which have baffled the ablest of their antagonists to answer.

Some of the more generally known, and best accredited examples of these conversions, the reader of the following volumes will find, in the Lives of Eminent Individuals who have renounced libertine principles and sceptical opinions, and embraced Christianity. Such narratives may be regarded as interesting in themselves, but more especially important, as furnishing the most authentic testimonies to the truths of revealed religion; and setting forth the decided concessions in their favour, which have been extorted under circumstances so impressive, and from witnesses whose competency or credibility cannot be doubted.

Among the Converts here selected are to be found men of all ranks and professions in life, laymen and clergymen, statesmen, philosophers, historians, poets, and physicians; many of whom were not less distinguished for their extensive acquirements in

learning and science, than for the homage they paid to religion. They exhibit instances of various attainments in knowledge, and of all descriptions of intellectual vigour,—of men who cannot be charged with acting from hypocrisy, or under the influence of prejudice,—who have been deeply versed in the philosophy of nature, and accustomed to the most cautious forms of scientific experiment,—and who, had the evidences of Revelation been weak, or founded on error, were in every respect qualified, and from the character of their previous habits and opinions, would have been most eager to detect and expose the imposture.

Christianity, it is true, does not rest its claims on human authority,—it does not appeal to the aid or the attestation of names, however celebrated; nor does it require its disciples to count voices in order to determine their belief. It has other supports, and more irrefragable arguments, than the proofs to be adduced from the number or extent of its conversions. But the concurring testimonies of so many individuals, who from enemies and revilers became proselytes,—who were endowed with talents

to discern, had leisure to investigate truth, and candour enough to confess what may serve to confute the mistake,—a not a very uncommon one,—of those who think to shelter their own infidelity under the supposition, that men of genius and talents who have had any intercourse with the world,—any penetration of mind and freedom of character,—are all ranged on their side, and have been sceptics or unbelievers.

Though authorities, even of the highest names, are not arguments, and have no claim to be admitted as the standard of private opinions, yet the examples referred to in the following pages, may, with the greatest propriety, be employed to combat such prejudices as have no other support than the association of names. They suggest, moreover, useful reflections to various classes of readers. They may induce persons of inferior learning or discernment to repose some degree of confidence in opinions which have been submitted to the most rigorous processes of demonstration. They may teach bold and superficial *claimers* not rashly to condemn, as if

spring of ignorance and credulity, that belief which has been cherished by men of the greatest celebrity, and embraced on the ground of rational and deliberate preference. Those who doubt or disbelieve, may perhaps be induced to weigh with impartiality, or consider with a greater degree of attention, arguments which have produced conviction, under circumstances so unfavourable, and on minds so refractory; which have been found to accord with the profoundest researches into the works of nature, with the conclusions of historical inquiry, and the deductions that have been drawn from the most enlightened observations on human life.

To the curious in moral speculations, it may be gratifying to observe the progress and operation of libertine principles, to see the fountains of infidelity explored and laid open, not merely by the discoveries of those who have carried the probe of examination into the hearts of others, but by the confessions of penitents themselves, when brought to a proper knowledge of their own malady. They will perceive on what hollow and dangerous ground those fabrics of delusion

have been reared, when the mists that concealed them are dispersed; and how very frivolous the petulant cavils of many unbelievers are, who have owned that they had never read, even with the slightest attention, those Scriptures which they affected to deride; and knew nothing of their evidences, except the popular and common-place objections, which have been repeated at the twentieth hand, and as often confuted.

With regard to the execution of this Work, the Compiler arrogates little merit to himself, beyond that of selecting and arranging his materials. The student of biography will perhaps find little that is new; but he may not be displeased to see brought within his reach in so small a compass, what he had gathered from the wide field of general reading; or to have his attention recalled to subjects which he remembers to have perused, and may not be unwilling to reconsider.

EDINBURGH, }
April, 1827. }

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CONVERTS

FROM

INFIDELITY.

JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER.

No individual, perhaps, better merits the distinction of being placed at the head of Converted Infidels, than the witty and profligate Earl of Rochester. This pre-eminence he may justly challenge, in whatever aspect his character is viewed; whether we regard the accomplishments of his mind, or the licentiousness of his morals; the reckless hardihood of his impiety, or the sincerity of his penitence. No libertine of that dissolute age was more expert in the mysteries of iniquity, or had so completely studied every art that could supply him with excuses or encouragement in his pleasures. None understood better to handle the unhallowed weapons of raillery and ridicule, or could more skilfully ward off conviction, when assailed by an ingenious adversary; and none had resisted, with greater obstinacy, the

application of all external means to undeceive and reclaim him from his errors. Nature had bestowed upon him abilities of the highest order, which he had cultivated beyond most of his contemporaries in the same rank of life; and had these superior endowments been enlisted on the side of virtue and decency, his name must have descended to posterity, as one of the most extraordinary men of his time.

But these exalted qualities, which might have made him the delight of society, and an ornament to his country, were so corrupted and debased by vice, that his dissipations have become a proverb, and left a deeper stain on the voluptuous court in which he flourished; and had not his repentance interposed, his character must have remained, to all generations, the scandal of his age, and a reproach to human nature. Fortunately, however, he lived to see his folly, and to feel the consequences of his misconduct; to renounce the errors, and abandon the criminal courses into which he was unhappily seduced, both by inclination and example. His brief career is a lamentable demonstration of the mischievous effects of infidelity; and his dying convictions furnish a memorable instance, among the many triumphs which Christianity has achieved over all the arguments and sophistries of its enemies. A painful sickness, the result of habitual intemperance, roused him to a sense of his delusion and his danger; and in the fiery ordeal of affliction, his stubborn opposition was subdued, and melted down into humble acquiescence, and unfeigned acknowledgments of his guilt. The cloud that obscured his moral perceptions being dispersed, his hopes and sentiments

entirely changed their nature. A light from heaven seemed to pour its effulgence around him, like that which struck the apostle to the ground, who, "though before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, yet obtained mercy, that in him Christ Jesus might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life."

The family from which Lord Rochester was descended, had made no inconsiderable figure in the history of their country,—his ancestors being eminent, on both sides, for their devoted loyalty and military services. His father, Henry, acted a conspicuous part in the civil wars, and was created, by Charles I. Baron of Adderbury, in Oxfordshire,—and afterwards made Earl of Rochester by Charles II. then in exile, whom he had accompanied to the continent. He is better known, however, by the title of Lord Wilmet, so often mentioned by Clarendon; and contributed not a little, by his courage and able conduct, towards the success which at first attended the royal arms. In most of the actions he was personally concerned, and in some he had the chief command. At the very commencement of hostilities, he was taken prisoner by the Scots, in the rout at Newburn, being then Commissary-General of the horse, but he was soon after released by the treaty of Rippon. At the battle of Edge-hill he commanded the left wing, and shared, with Prince Rupert, the reputation of that victory. He took by stratagem the town of Marlborough, which the Parliament had garrisoned; being at that time advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-General. At the siege of Reading, having marched suddenly from Oxford,

he succeeded, without much opposition, in re-inforcing the garrison with a regiment of 500 men, and a supply of ammunition. The defeat of Sir William Waller, at Roundway-down, was achieved under his sole command,—and he led the van in the action at Cropredy Bridge.

But jealousy or rivalry having fastened upon him suspicions of mutiny, and of favouring the parliamentary interest, he was removed from his post in the army, and retired for a short time to France. He was naturally of an aspiring and imperious disposition, precipitate in his resolutions, and impatient of contradiction; but he had great influence and authority in the army. He had a most pleasant and lively wit,—drank freely,—and excelled in all the companionable qualities of the camp, which made him popular with his fellow-officers. After the battle of Worcester, he was particularly active in managing the concealment and escape of the unfortunate Prince. Disguised with his hawk, he attended him from place to place, assisted in procuring a vessel, and embarked with him for France. He continued, during all his peregrinations, attached to his court, and had considerable influence in his councils. He was sent as ambassador to the Diet at Ratisbon, for the purpose of soliciting the Emperor of Germany to undertake his restoration; and with the hope of obtaining some fit asylum within the imperial dominions, where he might sojourn with his small retinue, in expectation of his better destiny. It was on this occasion that Lord Wilmot was created Earl of Rochester. His success in these negotiations was very partial; all he could procure being a trifling subsidy of a few thousand pounds. With the

consent of the Prince he came over to England in 1655, with the intent of exciting an insurrection in favour of the royal cause; in this, however, he failed, having been too free in communicating his designs, and only escaped by being so dexterous in assuming disguises. He returned to Cologne, where Charles then was, but did not live to witness the unexpected event that replaced the exiled monarch on the throne of his ancestors; having expired on the 19th of February, 1657. He was buried privately, and by special leave of the Parliament, in the Church of Spilsby, in the sepulchre of the family of Lee. He married Anne, daughter of Sir John St Johns, of Lyddiard, bart. and widow of Sir Francis Henry Lee, of Ditchley, in Oxfordshire; and this lady was the mother of the noble convert, to whose history we now return.

JOHN WILMOT, Earl of Rochester, Viscount Athlone in Ireland, and Baron of Adderbury, in Oxfordshire, was born at Ditchley, near Woodstock, April 10th, 1647. Being early deprived of his father, he was left with little other inheritance than the honours and titles to which he succeeded; with such claims to the royal favour as the eminent services of his family might naturally be supposed to establish. This scanty fortune was, however, carefully managed, by the great prudence and discretion of his mother, so that he received an education every way suitable to his rank. He was entered to the free-school at Burford, where he made extraordinary proficiency both in Greek and Latin, especially the latter, which he acquired to such perfection, that he re-

tained, through life, a peculiar relish for the authors in that language, particularly those who flourished during the Augustan era of Roman literature. Here, also, those shining talents began to develop themselves, which afterwards blazed out with such wild and irregular, though short-lived, brilliancy.

In his twelfth year he was entered a nobleman at Wadham College, Oxford, under the care of Mr Phineas Berry, and Dr Blandford, afterwards Bishop of Worcester; and in 1661, he was, with some others of high rank and literary celebrity, made Master of Arts in convocation; "at which time (says Wood) he, and none else, was admitted very affectionately into the fraternity, by a kiss on the left cheek from Lord Clarendon, the Chancellor of the University, who then sat in the supreme chair to honour that assembly." Besides his classical attainments, he acquired a reputation for wit, eloquence, and poetry, which he had studied to great perfection.* His learned and affectionate tutor had imbued his mind with excellent principles, and founded the elements of a virtuous

* Nature had formed him for a scholar and a poet; and the astrologers of the time, (whose predictions, like those of phrenology, are most to be depended upon when calculated backwards) accounted for his extraordinary genius by planetary influences. "He was endued, (says Gadbury) with a noble and fertile muse. The Sun governed the horoscope, and the moon ruled the birth hour. The conjunction of Venus and Mercury in M. Coeli in sextile of Luna, aptly denotes his inclination to poetry. The great reception of Sol with Mars, and Jupiter posited so near the latter, bestowed a large stock of generous and active spirits, which constantly attended on this excellent native's mind, insomuch that no subject came amiss to him."—*Gadbury's Ephemeris*, 1698.

character on the solid basis of a liberal education. But the good seed had fallen on a perverse soil, and was unhappily blighted by early intemperance. The king's restoration happening while he was at the University, he gave way to the general current of riotous and extravagant joy which then overran the nation, and debauched the public morals. The natural consequences of these excesses were, a total neglect of his studies, to which all the remonstrances of his tutor could never recal him; and the acquirement of irregular habits, which afterwards grew to such a height of profligacy, when fostered amidst the temptations and enticements of a court, that had banished all regard for decency and moral restraint.

Having finished his academical studies, he travelled into France and Italy. His companion and governor, on this occasion, was Dr Balfour, a learned Scotsman, who afterwards acquired great celebrity as a physician in his native country. The judicious management, and salutary advices of this worthy person, not only brought him back to the love of learning, but weaned him almost entirely from the indulgence of those criminal propensities which he had contracted at College. He often expressed his great obligations to love and honour this most excellent and valuable instructor, to whose fidelity and care he thought he owed more than to all the world; and he was particularly affected by the many ingenious and amiable artifices by which he contrived to engage his attention, and draw him to delight in books and study. The taste which he then acquired for reading, remained with him till his death, and was often indulged at intervals amidst all the

sensualities and criminal pursuits that filled up the short course of his abandoned life. The choice of his subjects was not always good ; but the habitual desire of knowledge, and his occasional fits of study, improved his understanding, and prepared him the better to weigh and estimate the evidences for revelation, when his mind was in a capacity for deliberate inquiry and sober reflection.

Such was the happy reformation that tuition and example had effected, when he returned from his travels in 1665, being then in his eighteenth year. He was immediately introduced at court, with every advantage in his favour,—both from the remembrance of his father's loyalty, and the prepossessing attractions of his own person and accomplishments.

His appearance had much of elegance and gracefulness, his person being tall, slender, and handsomely formed. His countenance was extremely regular, and of a fine complexion. His manners were polished according to the exact rules of good breeding. There was a becoming modesty in his deportment, and a civility almost natural to him, which rendered his presence agreeable and gave an easy and obliging turn to his conversation. Few possessed in a higher degree the qualities both of mind and body that go to constitute in perfection the man of rank and fashion. His abilities were excellent, and he had greatly improved them by learning and industry. His colloquial powers were unrivalled, which gave an irresistible charm to his conversation, rendering him the delight of gay society, and making his company universally courted. He had a singular vivacity of thought and vigour of expression ; and

there was an inimitable pleasantry in his humour, that made licentiousness and impiety almost appear a jest. Few men had a bolder flight of fancy, or an imagination more fruitful in its invention, and at the same time, so well regulated by a sound judgment and a delicate sense of propriety. His wit was both subtle and sublime, and when excited by wine, made him so extravagantly pleasant, that many, for the purpose of such unhallowed diversions, studied to engage him deeper and deeper in intemperance. He had made wit his study, and was familiar with the French and Italian as well as the English writers on the subject, both ancient and modern. His greatest favourite among the French wits was Boileau, and Cowley among the English.

These superior endowments, however, which, had they been properly directed, might have turned out both honourable to himself and beneficial to his country, unfortunately proved the dangerous rocks on which he made shipwreck of his health and his reputation. They were the fatal instruments that ministered fuel to his own corrupt inclinations, and made his example so pernicious in seducing and destroying others. But they threw no obstacles in his way by impairing his interest at court; on the contrary, they made him the more acceptable, and gained him the greater favour, as he excelled in all those qualities which could either furnish amusement for the gay, or attract the fellowship of the dissolute.

Soon after his return from his travels he seized the first opportunity that offered, of shewing his readiness to follow the footsteps of his loyal ancestors, by hazarding his life in the defence and service

of his country. In the autumn of 1665, he went to sea with the Earl of Sandwich, who was sent to lie in wait for the Dutch fleet, which was then returning home from the East Indies richly laden. As the two nations were then at war, the Dutch had availed themselves of the protection of the king of Denmark, who had invited them to elude the attempts of their enemies by taking shelter in his ports. Lord Sandwich, immediately on this intelligence, made sail for the port of Bergen in Norway, where the Dutch fleet were lying at anchor. The attack, though but partially successful, was reckoned one of the most desperate and daring enterprises ever made. The young Earl of Rochester served in the *Revenge*, commanded by Sir Thomas Tiddiman, and during the whole action he shewed as brave and resolute a courage, as the most experienced seaman. Lord Clifford, who was in the same ship, often spoke of his intrepidity on this occasion, in terms of the highest commendation.

As he was not to be deterred, either by the hardness of the service, or the dangers he had encountered, he was ready to embrace the first opportunity that offered, of embarking on the same perilous element; and accordingly, the following summer he went to sea again, without communicating his design, even to his nearest relations. He entered, only the day previous to the engagement, as a volunteer on board the ship commanded by Sir Edward Spragge, one of the bravest officers that the English navy ever produced. Numbers of the young nobility served in the same expedition, more, perhaps, in compliance with the gallantry of the times, or out of compliment to the

Duke of York, who was at the head of the navy, than from any motives of patriotism or disinterested love for the service. This battle was perhaps the most obstinate and bloody that was fought during the whole war: and it was not till after a struggle of four days, that victory declared in favour of the English.

During this protracted engagement, a circumstance occurred that afforded Lord Rochester an opportunity of signalizing his courage in a very particular manner. In the heat of the action, Sir Edward Spragge having lost most of his volunteers, and not being satisfied with the behaviour of one of his captains, found some difficulty in getting a person that would cheerfully venture through so much danger, to carry his commands to the officer in fault. In this emergency, the young nobleman in question readily offered his services, and pushing off in an open boat, he delivered his message, and returned through the thickest of the fire back to his ship, amidst the cheers and plaudits of all who witnessed this gallant feat of deliberate heroism.

He had thus at the very outset of life sufficiently established his character as a brave man, by giving such undoubted demonstrations of courage in an element and way of fighting, which is acknowledged to be the greatest trial of cool and undaunted valour. And it is matter of regret, that these noble energies which were capable of such distinguished exertions, should have been so perverted and debased by the irregularities of his life, as to sink him in degradation to the level of the meanest and most wretched of the species. The reputation for bravery which he had so justly gained, he afterwards forfeited by some other less

honourable adventures. His companions would sometimes reproach him for deserting them in brawls and street quarrels ; and Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, has recorded a story of his declining to fight him,—although the whole charge may perhaps be resolved into his love for trick and buffoonery, rather than want of courage ; as it was a paradox or maxim of his, that every man would be a coward if he durst.

On quitting the sea-service, he repaired to court, where it appears his merits were not left unrewarded, as he was made one of the gentlemen of the King's bed-chamber, and comptroller of Woodstock Park. Here his former habits of intemperance, which he had subdued and entirely relinquished on his travels, were again resumed. The lessons of moderation and restraint which he had learned from his excellent tutor, were gradually forgotten ; and he began by progressive steps, though not without some reluctance, to yield himself up to all the sensual gratifications and extravagant pleasures of a depraved and unprincipled court. He became unhappily addicted to riotous and profane company, by which all sense of religion or morality was completely effaced from his mind. The licentiousness of his habits, with the sprightliness of his wit, disposed him to love the society and the conversation of those who made lewdness and impiety the chief amusement of their social hours. As he excelled in that boisterous and irregular merriment which wine excites, his companions, as well as his own natural temper, encouraged him in these excesses ; in which he was at length so entirely immersed, that, as he confessed, for five years together he was continually drunk, or at least

so inflamed by repeated inebriety, that during all that time, he was not cool enough to be perfectly master of himself. In this state, he said and did the most extraordinary things that the wildest imagination could conceive, and was led to play many frolics, which it is not for his honour that posterity should remember, and which are not now distinctly known. Many jeux d' esprit, and humorous stories have been preserved in jest-books, and are still circulated in conversation, which, perhaps, are falsely ascribed to him; and which, even had they been true, could not with propriety be admitted into the graver pages of biography.

The recital of these extravagances often furnished the merry Monarch with curious narratives, to entertain his idle courtiers; and writers of modern romance, have drawn from this store-house a rich supply of traditionary anecdote to embellish their columns. The King made him a frequent associate in his recreations and convivial parties, not so much out of love to his person, as for the diversion his company afforded him.* He dreaded

* "The King dining at the Dutch Ambassador's, after dinner they drink and turn pretty merry; and among the rest of the King's company, there was that witty fellow, my Lord of Rochester, and Tom Killigrew, whose mirth and raillery offended the former so much that he did give him a box on the ear in the King's presence; which do give much offence to people, to see how cheap the King makes himself; and the more for that the King hath not only passed by the thing, and pardoned it to Rochester already, but the very next morning the King did publicly walk up and down and Rochester with him, as free as ever, to the King's everlasting shame, to have so idle a rogue his companion."—*Pepys's Diary*, II. 306.

his talent for ridicule, and sometimes retorted with severity. But there was no love lost between them, for Rochester never failed to take his revenge in some pasquil or satire, an instance of which is recorded in the mock epitaph, so well known and so often quoted :

Here lies our sovereign lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on ;
Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one.

There were two principles in his nature which were especially liable to these excitements,—a violent love of pleasure,—and a disposition to extravagant mirth ; the latter being the same irregular appetite in his mind, that the other was in his body. The one involved him in great sensuality ; the other engaged him in those odd and whimsical adventures, which he often pursued at the hazard of discovery, and even of falling a martyr to his own folly. The whole course of his subsequent life, until his sickness and conversion, was spent with little interruption, in the same gross and criminal indulgences, in which he manifested an utter disregard for any thing like public decency or sobriety of conduct. His vices, like his talents, were of a kind singular and extraordinary. He seemed to affect something in them strange and paradoxical, above the reach and fancy of other men ; for he could think nothing diverting or worthy of being attempted, that was not extravagant. Sometimes he would walk the streets, dressed like a porter or a common beggar, soliciting the alms of the charitable ; or stroll about, merely for diversion, disguised in the most fantastic shapes. He often pursued low amorous in-

trigues under mean appearances, and always acted with great correctness and dexterity the various characters which he assumed. On one occasion, being obliged, by an unlucky accident, to keep out of the way, he disguised himself as an Italian quack or mountebank so effectually, that his nearest friends could not have known him. Having erected a stage on Tower-Hill, he harangued the populace on the mysteries of the healing art; and as he had read medical books for the sake of his health, which was suffering from the consequences of his irregularities, he continued under this character, to practise physic, for some weeks, with considerable success. So exact and true to nature were many of these odd exhibitions, that even those who were in the secret, and saw him in his various disguises, found it impossible to recognise him, or detect any thing that might lead to a discovery.

He had many strange contrivances to obtain information or anecdotes of scandal among the nobility; and Burnet relates, that having found out a foot-man who knew all the court, and having furnished him with a red coat and a musket as a centinel, he kept him the whole winter, every night, at the doors of such ladies as he suspected to have intrigues. In the court a centinel was taken no notice of, being generally supposed to be posted by a captain of the guards, to prevent quarrels, or disputes; so this military spy saw all who walked about, and visited at forbidden hours. By this means he often made unexpected discoveries; and when he was well furnished with materials, he retired to the country for a month or two to write libels and lampoons.

This course of life, however, broke his constitution, which was originally strong, and ruined his reputation almost beyond the hope of recovery. During the intervals of dissipation, he would spend months together in study, either reading the works of comic authors, or expending his wit in composing ludicrous satires on the vices and adventures of his companions,—an art in which he had the peculiar talent of saying the most malicious things in such a way as to please, rather than give offence. In these occasional sallies, he did not pretend to confine himself to the truth, but mixed facts with falsehoods, sparing nothing that might gratify his revenge, or make the subjects of his verse ridiculous. These expedients he even defended as necessary; alleging that no man could express himself with life, unless heated by revenge;—and that to write a satire without resentment, upon the cool principles of philosophy, was, as if a man would, in cold blood, cut another's throat, who had never offended him; and he was of opinion, that lies in these libels came often in as ornaments, that could not be spared, without spoiling the beauty of the poem.

By indulging for a series of years in these perverse opinions, he had contracted principles which almost quite extinguished the inherent propensities in his nature to justice and virtue. Having surrendered himself, without reserve, to every licentious habit,—and finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws, which he was resolved not to obey, he had recourse to infidelity, the usual expedient of those, who, having yielded to the solicitations of passion or prejudice, generally endeavour to shelter their wickedness under the pri-

cipling, or rather the pretext of disbelief. For it may be laid down as an observation confirmed by universal experience, that a dislike to the precepts and duties of Christianity, lays the foundation of all the doubts and objections that have been urged against the evidences of its truth, or the mysterious nature of its doctrines. Men in general are profligates before they turn sceptical. They become apostates, and abandon the paths of virtue, only when they find them no longer to be ways of pleasantness and peace. Incredulity springs more from the corruption of the heart, and a rooted disinclination of the will, than from any want of conviction, any weakness of comprehension, or error of the understanding. Few become infidels who sit down to investigate the sacred records of Scripture, with earnest desires and honest intentions. The candid inquirer is uniformly rewarded with conviction. If any doubt or deny, it is not that they have found Christianity to be false, but because they have reasons or inclinations for wishing it to be so; and were it possible to remove the apprehensions of future punishment,—to level the distinctions between virtue and vice, and reconcile conscience to criminal indulgences, we should soon find neither atheists, infidels, nor sceptics in the world.

It was by steps such as these that Lord Rochester advanced in his career; from profligacy to impiety,—from a reckless debauchee, to a confirmed disbeliever. Like most other apostates, his guilt had this aggravating circumstance, that he not only gloried in wickedness himself, and gratified every appetite to the utmost extent, but he laboured most industriously to instil the moral

poison into the minds of others,—to undo their virtues, and strengthen their evil principles, as if he wished to root out from the nature of man every resemblance to his Maker. Those checks and fears which occasionally visited him, especially in times of sickness, he endeavoured by every means to extirpate—to dispossess himself, not only of the belief, but if possible, of the very thoughts and apprehensions of religion. To this diabolical purpose he bent all the efforts of his wit,—all the energies of his genius; and it was even the object to which he often directed his literary amusements, when he found leisure, amidst the paroxysms of intemperance, to prosecute his solitary studies. “He took as much pains,” says the writer of his funeral sermon, “to draw others in, and pervert the right ways of virtue, as the apostles and primitive saints did to save their own souls, and them that heard them. He was diligent to recommend and propagate his sentiments; framing arguments for sin,—making proselytes to it,—and writing panegyrics on vice.” He frequently, in debate, took the side of atheism, and argued with great vigour against virtue and piety, “being resolved,” as he said, “to run them down with all the arguments and spite in the world.”

One very remarkable instance of this extreme blasphemy happened at an atheistical meeting in the house of a person of quality, where he undertook to manage the cause of infidelity, and was the principal disputant against God and religion. He maintained the contest with such ingenuity and success, that his performance received the applause of the whole company. But this awful exhibition of irreverence and impiety he could not

contemplate without some feeling of remorse. The strange inconsistency of his conduct struck his mind so forcibly, that he immediately expressed to himself, " Good God ! that a man who walks upright, and sees the wonderful works of God, and has the use of his senses and his reason, should use them to the defying of his Creator !"

Many such occasions of reprehension and remorse occurred during his career of unbridled licentiousness. He had often moments full of terrors, and sad intervals of melancholy reflections, in which he felt, in all its bitterness, the deep anguish that springs from a wounded spirit. For though he had gone the guilty round of every profane and sensual gratification,—though there was no pleasure which he had left untasted,—no form of wickedness in which he had not engaged, " withholding his heart from no joy, and whatever his eyes desired he kept not from them ;" yet even these incessant and unrestrained indulgences were insufficient to prevent the intrusion of disagreeable thoughts, or render life a scene of perpetual gaiety, and unmingled delight. Need we a stronger evidence than this, that it is not the uncontrolled gratification of appetites and passions, nor the riches and enjoyments of the world, that can confer the boon of happiness, or quiet the reproaches of an accusing conscience ?

Often have the superior advantages of such pursuits been held out by the votaries of pleasure, who array their hopes in bright and attractive colours, and would persuade the unwary to enter the smooth and flowery path, that will conduct them to the summit of felicity. But their arguments are as deceitful as their joys are fleeting and pernicious,

which only dazzle the imagination when viewed in the pomp and glitter of criminal or fashionable amusements. But when the mirth and tumult of company subside, the splendid enchantment soon dissolves, and leaves them the wretched dupes of their own mistaken choice,—the victims of that misery, and remorse, and infamy, which always follow in the train of licentiousness. The outward symbols of gaiety, are often but the disguise of turbulent and gloomy thoughts,—the mask of affected levity, which falls off in solitude and retirement, and exposes the real misery of their condition, which they had vainly hoped to conceal under temporary and artificial cheerfulness. It is seldom that even the most bold and reckless infidelity can succeed in altogether banishing sober reflection from the mind, or charm to slumber, by all its specious contrivances, the reproaches of conscience, the vigilant tormentor of the guilty breast.

To evade these terrors and apprehensions, men of pleasure have had recourse to a strange multiplicity of expedients. They will mingle in idle and fashionable dissipations, or engage deeply in the cares and speculations of life ; or, peradventure, as a last refuge, fly in their despair, like a dying man to an extreme medicine, to the forms and ministrations of religion,—the ordinary resort of the timid and superstitious. Others adopt a more common, and perhaps a more effectual expedient, and stupify their senses in continued dissipation,—filling up their giddy moments with a succession of licentious indulgences. In this way they may contrive to exclude every intruder on their unhallowed repose, and for a time to escape the remonstrances, and even the observation of their own minds.

But this artificial tranquillity is but momentary in its duration, and can never confer that happy composure which results from a regular and virtuous life,—and can only be the offspring and the companion of innocence. There is a time when wit and beauty cannot charm,—when pleasures become tasteless—and the exhausted faculties lose the power to relish, or even to receive their accustomed gratifications. There are seasons of languor, when the mind, as well as the body, becomes weary of the follies of the world. Vacancies and pauses must intervene; and these will generally be filled up with dismal and disquieting anticipations. It is then that conscience, long suppressed, begins to remonstrate in severer terms, with those who had sealed their ears to its reproof, and imposed a reluctant silence on its admonitions. To whatever asylum they may repair, it will follow; even in the haunts of dissipation it will find its unhappy victim; for this faithful witness, unless it can be restrained by violent means, or imposed upon by false pretences, will not remain an indifferent spectator of human actions, nor sit a willing member in the councils of the ungodly. It cannot, after all the efforts of impiety, be utterly expunged from the soul,—and is rarely found, even after a prolonged course of intemperance, seared into remorseless insensibility.

Hardened and fortified as this dissolute nobleman was in his wicked practices, he found it impossible to shake off all the restraints of fear and reverence for a Supreme Being, or silence by all his arguments the still small voice of his own conscience, which often spoke out with a terrible au-

thority, and reproached him for his crimes. In the very height of his mirth, and amidst the riotous forbidden delights, there were moments when his thoughts condemned him, when he looked on his conduct as madness and folly, and when he would willingly have exchanged his condition for the humble beggar on the streets, whom he wantonly personated in his sallies of extravagant diversion. It was in these gloomy intervals, usually occasioned by some fit of indisposition or the effects of his debaucheries, that he felt those inward checks and compunctious visitings. Their impression, however, was by no means deep or permanent; and when his sickness left him, his delusions vanished like the morning cloud. His momentary regrets were not awakened by the principle of religion, or by any proper sense of the enormity of his guilt; they rose more from vague fears and apprehensions of an ill-regulated mind; and were rather feelings excited by a sense of natural horror, than by any determined purpose of amendment.

He had great remorse for his past life, sorry he had degraded his character by many unjustifiable and unbecoming actions,—and he had reduced his constitution to such a state of premature weakness and decay: but he felt no sincere conviction of sinning against God,—no sorrow for having violated the laws, or offended the Majesty of heaven. And though, at such times, he complied with the wishes of his friends, so far as to admit the visits of clergymen, it was without any intention of expecting consolation, or profiting by their instructions. If he desired them to do so, it was merely as a piece of civility or

breeding; for he regarded the whole as a formal and useless ceremony. Sometimes his sicknesses had the effect of strengthening his bad principles, and prepossessing him more strongly against religion; while his wicked companions taking advantage of his infirmity, endeavoured to confirm him in his infidelity, by effacing from his mind, as far as possible, all belief and apprehension of futurity.

One occurrence in the early part of his life he mentions, which greatly staggered his faith in the reality of a state of existence hereafter, and tended much to encourage him in his profligate courses. When he went first to sea in 1665, there happened to be in the same ship with him two particular friends, a Mr Montague, and another gentleman of quality. These two, especially the former, seemed persuaded that they should never return to England. The Earl of Rochester entered into a formal engagement with the latter of these gentlemen, not without ceremonies of religion, that if either of them died, he should appear, and give the other notice of the future state, if there was any. When the day came that they were to attack the Dutch fleet in the Bay of Bergen, Mr Montague, though he had such a strong presentiment in his mind of his approaching death, yet gallantly exposed himself all the while in places of the greatest danger. The other gentleman signalized his courage in a most undaunted manner, till the end of the action, when he fell on a sudden into such a fit of trembling, that he could scarcely stand, and Mr Montague going to him to hold him up, as they were in each other's arms, a cannon-ball killed them both on the spot. This singular coincidence between the fate and the presages of these indivi-

duals, made some impression on the mind of Lord Rochester, and persuaded him that the soul was a separate and distinct being, and had secret notices communicated to it, either by a natural sagacity, or a sort of divination. But his friends never returning to give him the stipulated intelligence, was, as he confessed, a stumbling-block to his faith during the rest of his life.

Although the possibility of such a revelation or intercourse between material and incorporeal beings were admitted, yet the expectation, and the evidence required, were quite unreasonable; and one who had so far corrupted the natural principles of truth as he had done, could scarcely imagine that a special miracle would be wrought for his conviction. The reproof applied on a similar occasion to the incredulous Jews who were continually demanding signs and wonders, might have occurred to check the folly of all such appeals to supernatural events: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Another singular example of a prophetic apprehension with regard to death, which persuaded him the more of the spirituality, or at least the separate existence of the soul, is mentioned as having occurred in his presence, in the house of his mother-in-law, the Lady Warre. The chaplain had dreamed that on a certain day he should die, but being set upon by the whole family, he was rallied or argued out of this belief, and had almost forgot the circumstance, till the evening before at supper; there being thirteen at table, one of the young ladies, according to a fond conceit that one of them must soon die, *pointed to him as the person.* Immediately re-

membering his dream, his apprehensions returned, and he fell into some disorder; and upon Lady Ware's reproving him for his superstition, he said he was confident he was to die before morning; but being in perfect health, his prediction was not much regarded. It was Saturday night, and he was to preach next day. He went to his chamber, and sat up late, as appeared by the burning of his candle; and he had been preparing his notes for his sermon, but was found dead in his bed the next morning. This occurrence had a considerable effect in biassing his persuasion that death was not the final dissolution of the soul; but only the separation of it from its earthly companion; and this belief was farther strengthened by what he felt in himself when labouring under sickness, which, though it reduced his body and his animal spirits to the lowest degree of exhaustion, left his reason and his judgment clear and strong. But these convictions had no effect in changing his moral principles, or reclaiming him from his habits of intemperance. Engaged in a succession of drunken frolics and sensual indulgences, with intervals of study perhaps still more criminal; with a reckless disregard of every moral restraint, and an obstinate denial of every religious obligation, he lived worse than useless, and blazed out his youth and his health in extravagant pleasures.

In the winter of 1679, he was seized with a violent sickness;—a dispensation frequently employed with effect, to arrest and reclaim the wanderer, and melt the stubborn temper of the impenitent heart. This occasion led him to an acquaintance with Dr Burnet, whose *History of the Reformation*, then newly published, his Lordship

had perused, and found much entertainment in it. Neither the visits of this eminent divine, nor the subjects upon which they conversed, proved distasteful or unacceptable to him. Their intimacy soon grew into a particular friendship, and a most unreserved familiarity. With all the freedom and candour imaginable, he laid open to him the course of his past life, and the tenour of his opinions both on religion and morality. "I was not long in his company," says Dr Burnet, "when he told me he should treat me with more freedom than he ever used to men of my profession; he would conceal none of his principles from me, but lay his thoughts open without any disguise; nor would he do it to maintain debate, or shew his wit, but plainly tell me what stuck with him; and he protested to me, that he was not so engaged to his old maxims as to resolve not to change, but that if he could be convinced, he would choose rather to be of another mind. He said he would impartially weigh what I should lay before him, and tell me freely when it did convince, and when it did not. He expressed this disposition of mind to me in a manner so frank, that I could not but believe him, and be much taken with his way of discourse; so we entered into almost all the parts of natural and revealed religion, as well as of morality. He seemed pleased, and in a great measure satisfied, especially when I visited him in his last sickness, with what I said upon many of these heads; and though our freest conversation was when we were alone, yet upon several occasions other persons were witnesses to it. I followed him with such arguments as I saw were most likely to prevail with him; and my not urging other reasons, pro-

ceeded not from any distrust I had in their force, but from the necessity of using such as were most proper for him. He was then in a low state of health, but under no such decay as either darkened or weakened his understanding; nor was he any way troubled with the spleen or vapours, or under the power of melancholy. This I mention more particularly, that it may not be thought that melancholy or the want of spirits made him more inclined to receive any impressions; for indeed I never discovered any such thing in him."

At the commencement of their intercourse, October 1679, his Lordship was resident in London, where he continued till April following, when he removed to his own house, the lodge at Woodstock Park, which proved the memorable scene of his conviction, his penitence, and death. The substance of these salutary conversations, as well as the various points so freely canvassed between the noble convert and his distinguished visitor, are recorded by Dr Burnet at considerable length, in his account of the life and death of the Earl,—a book which, to use Dr Johnson's beautiful and expressive eulogium, the critic ought to read for its elegance,—the philosopher for its argument,—and the saint for its piety. As the main object of this and the succeeding narratives is to detail the several steps which led from profligacy and impiety, to a total change of manners and opinions, and a firm belief in the truth and reasonableness of Christianity, we shall not think it any injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement of this excellent treatise.

The three chief things that came under discussion, were *Morality, Natural Religion, and the*

Scripture revelation, especially Christianity. The system of morality he had adopted, was very lax and superficial. He admitted it to be necessary, both for the government of the world, and for the preservation of health, life, and friendship; and though he talked of it as a fine thing, yet this was only in compliance with the currency of public opinion; and because the established order of society and of human affairs, made the reputation of it essential to his credit and his intercourse with mankind. He regarded it merely as an external covering which men wore from custom or fashion, in the same way as decency requires the use of clothes and good breeding; and if they could conceal their vices from the eye of the world, behind this moral drapery, he thought they might indulge their appetites and their evil passions with impunity. This view, he believed to be the general opinion on the subject; and that many who spoke loudly in its praise, shewed by their conduct they cared not for it.

In support of his theory, he adduced the practice of men professing and swearing friendship, when they hated mortally; their oaths and imprecations in their addresses to women, which they never intended to make good; the pleasure they took in defaming eminent persons, and spreading false reports of some, perhaps in revenge, because they could not engage them to comply with their wicked designs; the delight they had in making people quarrel; their unjust usage of their creditors, and putting them off by any deceitful promise they could invent, that might free them from present importunity.—These crimes, all of which *he had himself* been guilty of, he by no means jus-

tified or commended ; on the contrary, he looked upon them with shame and some degree of remorse ; but this was rather that they had brought infamy on his character, and pain and disease upon his body, than from any deep sense of having offended a Supreme Being. He had no concern for the actions of his past life as transgressions against the laws of God, but only as they had injured his health and reputation, and been prejudicial to others. Some of his notions concerning his own folly and infatuation, were pertinent and correct, and even carried him so far that he had resolved firmly to change his dissolute and extravagant habits ; but his idea was that he could effect this solely by the rules and maxims of philosophy.

Upon this subject, his venerable friend endeavoured to undeceive him, with regard to the efficacy of philosophy as an instrument of moral reformation. He shewed its weaknesses and defects ; that it was a matter of speculation which few had either the leisure or the capacity to inquire into ; but the principle that was fitted to reform the world, must be obvious to every man's understanding : That as a rule of morality, it was very vague and general, containing no certain standard, and merely delineating the great outlines of our duty and obligation,—leaving much to be determined by the fancies of men, and the customs of nations : That it wanted sufficient authority to give sanction and effect to its precepts, however excellent they might be in themselves ; and consequently was too feeble to contend with the propensities of corrupt nature, or restrain the violence of our appetites and passions : That many of the systems of ethical philosophy went to ridiculous

and impracticable extremes; some enjoining the entire extirpation of all our feelings and cares, and reducing their frigid disciples to an absolute apathy and unconcern for any thing,—a condition, which could it be realized, would render life easy and tranquil, by fortifying it against the influence of all outward accidents, and all inward perturbation; but which, it was evident, would dissolve the bonds of society, extinguish all the sympathies of humanity and in exempting men from troubles, would deprive them of their noblest pleasures, and their purest enjoyments: Others, on the contrary stretched their privileges and accommodations to a criminal extent, letting loose their votaries from every salutary restraint, prescribing no rigorous act of abstinence or self-denial, nor calling upon them to fight against passions, or root out affection which nature has herself implanted; but making inclination the only rule and measure of their actions, and extending the limits of indulgence to the utmost boundary of their wishes. This latter system seemed exactly to coincide with the moral creed of the licentious nobleman. The two grand maxims of his morality were, that he should do nothing to injure others, or prejudice his own health, and within these limits he was of opinion that all pleasures of a sensual kind were lawful provided they were indulged without hurting the individual, or being injurious to society; and it appeared to him quite unreasonable to imagine that these propensities were implanted in man only to be resisted and subdued by such painful efforts or restricted within such rigid and narrow concessions as robbed life of its chief enjoyments.

To this it was objected, that if appetites were

to be indulged, merely because they were natural, then the revengeful man might as well urge this as an argument for murder, or the covetous for stealing, since they feel inclinations no less keen for theft and bloodshed ; yet no one will plead the force of appetite in their defence, or deny that such propensities ought to be curbed. If it be alleged that the injury inflicted in these cases makes a difference, and a venial distinction in favour of libertinism ; the injury is as great if a man's wife or his daughter is dishonoured, as if his property or his own person were violated ; and it is impossible for a man not to transgress in these particulars, if he follows the unrestrained impulse of vagrant and irregular passions : and there is no other remedy for these disorders, than to check such inordinate desires. It does not appear mere unnatural, that God should intend our brutish and carnal appetites to be governed by our reason, than that the fierceness of beasts should be tamed by the strength or wisdom of men, and converted into a useful engine for his service and his happiness. Nor can it be deemed absurd to suppose, that the appetites of men were designed on purpose to exercise their reason in restraining and governing them ; which, if subdued, minister a higher and more lasting pleasure, than if they were left to the full scope of lawless gratifications.

To avoid such objects as excite the passions, is a maxim of philosophy as well as of morality ; and nothing tends more to stimulate these, than habits of intemperance ; nothing darkens the understanding and depresses the mind more ; nor does any thing give more frequent occasion of other immoralities, such as oaths and imprecations, which are

only intended to compass what is desired. were there no other inducements to dish the expense that is necessary to maintain a these irregularities, would make him false other dealings. If it was reasonable then, man should restrain his appetites in things he knew were hurtful to him, it was equ that God should prescribe bounds and regt to check the mischievous effects that nec result from them when carried to excess. rule of doing to others, what we would have do unto us, be just, which cannot be di then they who feel themselves sensibly affe any dishonour offered to their wives or da must condemn their own misconduct, for c another what they would resent with hone nation, even if virtue and morality were ou question. And if the peace of society, and tisfaction of our own minds ought to be on leading designs of our actions, then let world judge, whether the man who confi appetites, and lives contented at home, is ne happier than those who let their depraved af run after forbidden objects. Restraint difficult, and it is so in reality, when a man himself many liberties; but they who avei sions of temptation and impure exciteme keep themselves well employed, find the and dominion over these no such hard or sible conquest as they at first imagined.

Morality, to subdue the corruptions of must have a stronger sanction than the p or the dictates of philosophy. A man : determined by a law within himself; if : sure his actions only by the rules and :

decency, or the injunctions of human authority, these would merely teach him to use caution and dissimulation in his evil practices ; but they could never secure universal integrity, nor regulate the internal springs of virtue. The laws of morality have not fixed the land-marks of duty, or the last boundaries of obligation in a constrained obedience, nor in outward and formal compliances. There must be the obedience of the heart, a delight and satisfaction in the mind, otherwise their requirements are not fulfilled at all ; and this cannot be effected unless corrupt nature be regenerated and changed by some higher power. All the theories and speculations of philosophy, beautiful and ingenious as they were, would avail nothing towards such a renovation of heart and life,—a change which could be accomplished only through the influence and assistance of the divine Spirit ; and whoever, on such occasions, applied to God by earnest prayer, would feel themselves disengaged from the bondage of their vices, and endued with power to resist them.

To all this, his Lordship replied, that it sounded to him like enthusiasm or canting ; he had no notion of it, and so could not understand it. He comprehended the dictates of reason and philosophy, in which, as the mind became more conversant, there would soon follow, as he believed, a greater easiness in obeying its precepts : but that inward impressions should conquer the natural appetites, or expel inclinations, deeply rooted in the constitution, must be ascribed to the force of an over-heated fancy ; it was only the strong diversion of the thoughts that gave this seeming victory ; and he did not doubt but if one could turn

to a problem in Euclid, or to write a copy of verses, it would have the same effect.

If such studies, he was answered, did only divert the thoughts, there might be some truth in what he said; but if they not only suppressed and extirpated such desires, but created others directly contrary, and brought men into a new habit and disposition of mind; then it must be confessed there was something more than a mere diversion from one subject to another, in those changes that spring from religious principles. It could not be supposed unreasonable, that the Supreme Power, which directed the whole frame of nature, might, if he pleased, communicate thoughts and impressions to our minds; and as he is a Being of infinite goodness, it may be presumed that he would give his assistance to such as desired it. And though on some occasions he might operate on the mind in an extraordinary manner, yet since he had endowed men with the faculty of reason, it was fit that they should employ that as far as they could,—and where it was weak or imperfect, beg the assistance of His Spirit, which they could certainly do. All this was consistent with reason and probability; and good men, who felt, upon their frequent application to God in prayer, a freedom and deliverance from those sinful impressions that formerly prevailed against them,—an inward love to virtue and goodness,—an easiness and delight in all parts of their duty, which was fed and cherished in them by seriousness in prayer, had languished as that decreased or disappeared, and as real a perception of an inward strength in their minds, that rose and fell with devotion, as they perceived the strength of their bodies in-

crossed or impaired, according as they had or wanted proper nourishment. After many conferences on this subject, his Lordship still continued to think all was the effect of fancy. But though he was not convinced, he was so far subdued as to acknowledge, that he thought they were happy whose fancies were under the power of such impressions, since they had some foundation on which their minds might rest: he came, however, in a very short time, to alter his sentiments concerning prayer and spiritual assistance.

From this subject they were led to converse on the nature of the Deity, and on the general notion of religion.

As to a Supreme Being, he had always some impression of one, and often declared that he had never known an entire atheist, who fully believed there was no God. He could not think the world was made by chance; and the regular course of nature seemed to demonstrate the eternal power of its Author. Yet when he came to explain his notion of this Being, it amounted to no more than a vast power, which wrought every thing by the necessity of its nature, and had none of the attributes of justice or goodness which we ascribe to the Deity,—none of those affections of love or hatred that give rise to human passions and perturbations,—and consequently, he could not see that there was to be either rewards or punishments. To attribute such qualities to God, he thought was only to lower our conceptions of him,—to bring down his incomprehensible perfections to the level and the similitude of human weakness; and to talk of loving him, appeared to be the greatest presumption, the heat of a fanciful

or enthusiastic temper. A general celebration of him in some short hymn, was the only religious address or homage he thought proper to be paid; all the other parts of worship he regarded as the invention of priests; to make the world believe they possessed the secret of incensing or appeasing the Deity as they pleased. In short, he was persuaded that there neither was a special providence about human affairs, nor that prayers were of much use,—since that was to suppose God a weak being like ourselves, who could be overcome with intreaties and importunities. And for the state after death, though he believed the soul did not die with the body, yet he doubted whether there could be any such thing as an eternal retribution of happiness or misery;—the one he thought too high for us to attain by our slight services, and the other was too severe an extreme to be inflicted for sin.

These speculations, he was told, were very unsuitable and contradictory to a proper view of the divine character. His notions of God were so low, that the Supreme Being seemed to be nothing but nature,—the appearances and operations of which were directly opposed to his system; for if the order of the universe persuaded him to think there was a God, he must, at the same time, conceive him to be both wise and good, as well as powerful, since these all appeared equally in the creation; though his wisdom and goodness were often exerted in ways far beyond our knowledge or comprehension. And since he possessed the attributes of wisdom and goodness, it was natural that he should love and be pleased with those that resembled *him* in those perfections, and dislike those of an

opposite character. That his mercy, or love, or anger, should raise passions or uneasiness in him, it were quite unreasonable to suppose; these being weaknesses we feel in ourselves, and which are occasioned solely because we want the power or the skill to accomplish our wishes and desires,—defects which are not attributable to the Deity. Neither can we imagine that they who imitate and resemble him, should not enjoy his special favour; and consequently, that he will assist their endeavours after good, by such helps or rewards as are suitable to their nature. But as this does not appear in the present order of things, it is most reasonable to presume that it will take place in another state, where there will be a more perfect conformity to God, and an abundant recompense in the felicity that accompanies it; while the contrary of this, viz. the want of such resemblance and enjoyment, must incur his displeasure, and be attended with all the pains and penalties implied in a total exclusion from his presence.

These conclusions seemed to be the natural results of a good or a bad life, and to establish the necessity of rewards and punishments as the effects of divine justice; and since he admitted the soul to have a separate and distinct existence from the body, there could be no grounds for thinking, that after dissolution it passed into a state of utter oblivion or insensibility; but that since the reflections on the good or evil it had done, must be a source of joy or misery, so departed souls, retaining these dispositions, must either rise to a higher perfection, or sink to a condition of greater depravity and wretchedness; and their sensibilities being then more exquisite, will either exalt the

happiness of the good, or increase the horrors of the wicked,—as they will not find, as in this life, a variety of objects and affairs to occupy and divert their attention. This final discrimination between the righteous and the wicked, appeared therefore to be a necessary sequel or corollary to the belief of a Supreme Being; since the distinction is manifestly not clearly made in this world, but rather seems to confound and contradict our notions of the wisdom, goodness, and justice of the Deity.

As to the government of the world by a superintending power or providence, there could be no rational argument urged against it. All that can with any plausibility be objected is, the distraction which that infinite variety of second causes, that immensity of cares and concerns, is presumed to give to the Being who inspects, arranges, and directs them. But, as among men, those of weaker capacities are wholly taken up with some one thing; whereas others of more enlarged powers, can, without embarrassment, have many things within their care,—as the eye can at one view receive a great variety of objects without confusion, in the narrow compass of its lucid chamber; so if we conceive the Divine understanding to be as far above ours, as his power in creating and supporting the whole universe, is above our limited activity, we shall no more think the government of the world an incumbrance or distraction to him; and when once this prejudice is overcome, we shall be ready to acknowledge a providence directing and conducting all affairs,—a care well becoming the great Creator.

In the next place, as to the kind of worship or

adoration which it was proper to address to the Deity ; we had certainly very erroneous conceptions of it, if we imagined that our worship was something which added to his happiness, or gave him such a fond pleasure as weak people have to hear themselves commended ; or that our repeated prayers could overcome him through mere importunity. The object of all religious intercourse, whether public or private, with God, is intended to affect the mind of the worshipper, to strengthen good impressions, and nourish a devout temper, which is the chief root of all true holiness and virtue. A man is never entirely reformed till a new principle govern his thoughts ; and nothing makes that principle so strong, as solemn and frequent meditations of God, whose nature, though it be far above our comprehension, yet his goodness and wisdom are intelligible ; and he that thinks often of God, and considers him as governing the world, and as ever observing all his actions, will feel the effect of such communion and reflections very sensibly by the influence they have on his life and conduct.

The frequent returns of these are necessary, lest if we allow them to be neglected or discontinued too long, these impressions will grow feebler, or be supplanted by others of a contrary and injurious tendency. The answers to our prayers are not to be considered as favours extorted by importunity, but as rewards conferred on men so well-disposed and prepared for them. It is a mistake to suppose God can be operated upon, or moved by our requests, as a fellow-creature is. The alteration is not in the Giver, but in the petitioner, who by asking in sincerity, fulfils the con-

dition on which the divine bounty is invariably and unchangeably administered. It is true we cannot inform him of any thing he does not know, nor add ought to his essential happiness and perfections, by any services of ours ; but this is not the end or the effect of prayer ; it is our own comfort and amendment that is intended ; and by this expedient our peace and felicity are increased, as we are thereby admitted to nearer fellowship with God, and have our natures more and more assimilated to his Divine image.

What the essence of the Deity is, we can form no adequate conceptions, as indeed we have no just idea of any essence whatsoever ; for we generally consider all objects by their outward figure, or by their effects, and from thence draw inferences what their nature must be. Pure incorporeal spirit has no resemblance to any thing material, and therefore cannot be compared or expressed by sensible images ; but though no man hath at any time seen his shape, or can comprehend the nature of the Divinity, yet from the discoveries he has made of himself, we may form such notions of his character as may possess our minds with great reverence for him, and beget in us such a love for those perfections, as to engage us to imitate them. For when we say we love God, the meaning is, we love that Being who is holy, just, good, wise, and infinitely perfect ; and loving these attributes in him will certainly carry us to desire them in ourselves ; for whatever we admire in another, we naturally endeavour to copy and transcribe into our own practice ; and it is not until we become enamoured of the object, that we pursue it with alacrity, or wish *in earnest* to get possession of it.

If could be no proof that the reverence and celebration of the Divine Being enjoined by religion, was an imposture or a cunning invention of priest-craft to cheat the world, that superstition had sometimes made use of them as an engine of tyranny over the conscience and reason of mankind. Such criminal and delusive artifices were nothing but what occurred in every sort of employment or profession to which men betake themselves. Mountebanks and empirics corrupt physic; pettifoggers have entangled questions of property, and defeated the ends of justice. Every occupation has been vitiated and perverted by the knaveries of practitioners; yet no man can take occasion from this to deny that there are such sciences in existence as law and medicine. So neither is it fair or reasonable to infer that all religious worship is a parcel of impious or ridiculous ceremonies, because it has been disfigured and corrupted by the fanciful additions of human art.

These arguments, though many of them could not be answered, were not all equally satisfactory. His Lordship seemed to be convinced that to cherish constant impressions of God in the mind, would be the most powerful means to reform the world, and did not appear altogether incredulous on the government of the world by a Divine providence. But as for a future state, he thought it more likely that the soul began a new course; and that her sense of what was done in the body, consisting merely in impressions made on the brain, as soon as the material part was dissolved, all traces or recollection of what was past would perish, and the soul enter into a sort of new existence in some other state.

This opinion, he was told, was at best but fancy and conjecture, as he could give no reason to prove it true; neither was it correct that all the remembrance the soul had of past things was seated in the material organs, and must be totally lost when these organs were destroyed. The principle of thought and perception consisted not in figures or images in the brain; it was a thing distinct from the body, and not the result of corporeal organization. Some of our ideas were abstract and independent of material impressions; and some vices, such as falsehood, malice, and anger, were seated in the mind, as the appetites of hunger and thirst were in the body. It was neither irrational nor unphilosophical to suppose that the soul would still retain its consciousness, and continue the uninterrupted exercise of its native faculties; that in another state it should remember as well as think, although dislodged from the body, which served only as a medium of action,—a mirror in which its inherent qualities were expressed. But it is vain to raise objections where we have no better foundation than hypothesis and conjecture; or abandon one theory as untenable, because some difficulties may occur; since it is as hard to understand how we remember things now, as how we shall do it in another state of existence.

The result of all these discourses went to extort an acknowledgment from him, that he had been directed at least to an eligible source of peace and consolation; and he often confessed, that whether religion was true or not, he thought those who were persuaded of its truth, and lived so that they had quiet in their conscience, and believed God *governed the world*, and acquiesced in his provi-

dence, and had the hope of an endless blessedness in another state, were the happiest men in the world ; and said he would give all he was master of to be under those persuasions, and to have the comfort and support which necessarily flow from them.

The whole system of religion, if believed, he admitted, was a more secure foundation of happiness than any other ; for his greatest hope and consolation, was to think that so good a Being would not make him miserable. He did not deny, but that after committing some sins, he felt his conscience challenge and reprove him ; but owned that he had no remorse or was less sensibly affected after others, which, perhaps, might be reckoned greater crimes. These results, he was answered, might flow from the disorderly state of his life, which had corrupted his judgment, and depraved his views of things, and that certain immoral habits, by being long continued and frequently repeated, might be rendered so familiar as to become a kind of second nature : in which case it was no wonder if his discrimination between good and evil was not very exact, as a feverish man cannot judge correctly of tastes. The main root of all corruption in principle was a dissolute life, which, as it darkened men's minds, and incapacitated them from discovering better things, so it made it necessary for them to seek out such opinions as might quiet their alarms, and shelter them from the accusations of their own hearts. And if any by these irregularities have brought anguish or disease upon themselves, they cannot blame God for it, or expect that he should by miracles deliver them from bodily pain or the horrors of a guilty conscience. This, he confessed, was

not to be expected, and it was unreasonable to charge God with what was the effect of choice, or his own folly.

On the subject of religion as revealed in the Scriptures, he had many objections to offer. He said, he could not comprehend the natural inspiration; nor how God should reveal his will to mankind. The sacred penmen, he said, were honest, but credulous writers; and in communicating his mind to one man, was in his power to cheat and impose on others. There should be pretenders to prophecy, and the revelation was not wonderful, since the world has been always full of strange stories; for the credulity and cunning of deceivers, meeting with credulity and credulity among the people, makes the absurdity be believed and adopted with ease. The fall of Adam, and the corruption of human nature; the incoherent style in the Scriptures; the odd transitions and inconsistencies, chiefly about the order of the cruelties enjoined the Israelites in the law, the Canaanites; circumcision, and many other rites of the Jewish worship,—all seem incredible and unsuitable to the Divine Revelation. The Mosaic account of the creation, he said, must be a parable or allegory, otherwise it could not be true. This was the substance of his objections to revealed religion in general, and the Old Testament in particular.

As a general remark on these vague and gratuitous exceptions, the learned prelate said, that the bare possibility of artifice and collusion was no proof that the Bible is a fable, or that those who believe it are deceived. To credit

upon the testimony of another in secular matters, where there exists no cause to suspect the veracity of that evidence, and more especially if it is confirmed by other circumstances, is not only reasonable, but forms the criterion by which all the acts of justice and government in the world are regulated. It follows, therefore, if the credibility of the thing, the integrity and disinterestedness of the witnesses, the number of them, and the most public confirmation that could be given, do all concur to persuade us of any matter of fact, it is in vain to say, because it is possible for so many men to agree in a lie, that therefore they have done it. In all other things, a man gives his assent where the credibility is strong on the one side, and there appears nothing on the other to counterbalance it. Such an overwhelming weight of evidence goes, for instance, to establish many of the Christian miracles which were attested both by the Jewish and Roman writers that lived at the time. These were believed, on the testimony of the apostles, by the proselytes and followers of the gospel, many of whom went about to persuade the world of these facts, though they gained nothing by their zeal but reproach and sufferings. Now to avoid all this, by alleging the possibility of fraud and contrivance, without advancing a single presumption to make such a charge appear probable, is, in other words, to reject all evidence, and wilfully to resist conviction.

To this reasoning, his Lordship objected, that he was not master of his own belief; and if a man says he cannot believe, what help is there? He thought *faith, even when strongest, was but a probable opinion; and was possessed with a general ne-*

assertion to allege that he could not exalt a these capacities in some men's minds, in and degree beyond what they are found. In this supposition there is nothing absurd. And as for these inspired messengers the means put into their hands, by such extraordinary gifts, of deceiving it must be allowed that, besides their integrity and sincerity, God might so far restrain them in delivering his oracles should be out of their power to make communication, otherwise than within the in the express terms of their commission these persons had the confirmation of divine credentials, to warrant us in believing they wrote; and no man can imagine would affix his seal and signature to this were to make Him who is of more than to look upon sin, attest what even candour and honesty would refuse to as

That there were difficulties hard to stood, such as the fall of man, and the evil, could not be concealed; but that arise perhaps more from our want of comprehension, than from any thing extraordinary countable in the facts themselves. At we who cannot fathom the secret counsels Almighty, act very presumptuously in on us to reject an excellent system of holy rules, merely because some parts are not been explained to our satisfaction. ought to take into account, that the originalities of our nature, which might have been to comprehend many things that appear as contradictions, are now greatly enlarged

punctually predicted, some ages before their completion ; not in dark and doubtful language, like oracles, which might bend to every accident, but in plain terms. Such was the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus, who is expressly mentioned by name,—the history of the Syrian and Egyptian kings,—the destruction of Jerusalem, foretold by Christ ; and various others, where not only the events themselves, but the periods at which they should happen, are stated with all the accuracy of chronological computation. These considerations, though they amounted to no more than a general persuasion in the mind, made it at least as reasonable to believe in the Scripture writings, as in any other production of antiquity. But when to these are joined the general design, and the many excellent moral rules contained in revelation ; and the effects which result from following these directions, in liberating us from the slavery of appetites and passions, exalting us above the accidents of life, and diffusing a universal joy and purity of heart ; these certainly were additional assurances that the promises of Scripture are true, and that they are accompanied with an internal power and demonstration, which leaves no room to insinuate that good men are abused by their fancies, or labouring under enthusiastical deceptions ; here we have historical proofs confirmed by the deductions of reason, and the results of individual experience.

With regard to the possibility of revelation, it could not be denied that God might communicate his will to his creatures, and that by one method in preference to another. For as he has given us eyes to see material objects, and a power of apprehending abstract truths, so it was a weak as-

a proceeding which, as being enjoined by divine command, has often excited the ridicule or the disgust of the infidel, and even perplexed the minds of sincere Christians. But even from what we know, when circumstances are considered, a little reflection might serve to abate our indignation and surprise. If it be granted that God, who at first called them into existence, had a right to take away their lives, he might have done it by sending famine or pestilence among them, as well as by employing the instrumentality of others; and had he adopted the former method, we should never have heard the proceeding impeached or found fault with; though there is not more cruelty or injustice in it than in the latter: the edge of the sword is even perhaps a more gentle and merciful visitation, than the horrors of an earthquake, or the lingering and loathsome contagion of the plague. And for the children who might suffer innocently for their fathers faults, God could in another state, or in some other way, recompense them for this temporary but unavoidable calamity.

The only mystery is, why the Israelites were commanded to perform an act that appeared so barbarous: And this will not be so difficult to solve, if we consider that this severity was not intended to be a precedent for future times, but merely as a signal and terrible example of divine punishment inflicted on a wicked and idolatrous people: That the Israelites had special warrant and direction from heaven, as was manifest to all the world by such mighty miracles as plainly shewed that they were singled out and commissioned of God, to be the executioners of his justice: And that God, by employing them in this service, intended to possess them

with a salutary abhorrence of their own besetting sin of idolatry ; and to give them a visible demonstration of his extreme displeasure at those practices which had called down this awful and summary infliction of his vengeance. All this may not perhaps amount to a clear solution or vindication of such transactions, or satisfy a man's curiosity in every particular ; but this, considering the long interval of time, our ignorance of facts, and other accidents, will not appear matter of surprise.

The same remark is applicable to the history of the creation, as related by Moses, though it has been disputed how far some things in it may be literal and others allegorical ; yet all must admit, that there is nothing recorded which may not be historically true ; for if angelic or spiritual beings can assume visible shapes, or form voices in the air, (which are attested by as good evidence as any other historical facts,) then the speaking serpent may have only been the organ of communication for the evil spirit that deceived Eve ; and she, being so lately created, might as reasonably believe that a reptile, as well as an angel, possessed the faculty of speech.

But to examine and decide on religion, merely from some of the dark and mysterious parts of Scripture, is at best but a very uncandid and unjust mode of proceeding. Christianity ought to be considered as a whole ; it should be judged by the rules it prescribes ; the tendency of its spirit ; and the effects it is calculated to produce. Nothing could be more conducive to the peace, order, and happiness of the world, and nothing more friendly to the interest of every man in particular,

than the precepts it enjoins. Its rules of sobriety, temperance and moderation, were the preservers of life, and what was perhaps more of health and comfort. Nothing was so generous and noble as to forgive injuries, to assist the friendless and supply the needy. Nothing raised and sustained a man's reputation so much, as to be liberal and merciful, kind, charitable, and compassionate. No state of mind was more desirable than a calm temper, a serene conscience, a soul unclouded by passion and appetite : and nothing could so improve societies, families, and neighbourhoods so long as when the benign spirit of the gospel was allowed to exert and diffuse its native influence. Its motives to obey its rules, and to cultivate its virtues were strong. It set before us the best example, and engaged us by the most persuasive arguments to imitate them.

If the tendency of Christianity was so obvious, its worship was not less plain and simple ; its ceremonies were few and significant ; required no toilsome journeys, no costly sacrifices, no penalties to be inflicted on the body, no troublesome distinctions of meats and days, and no abstruse doctrines which priests or philosophers only can comprehend. The honesty which characterized its founders and its first apostles, shewed there could be no duplicity ; there were no secrets kept only among the priesthood, but every thing was open to its professors ; its rewards were, indeed, deferred to another state, but its influence was felt even in this life, for good men are blest with peace in their conscience, great joy in the confidence they have of God's favour, and of enjoying his presence every day ; and if calamities should happen, the

so mitigated by patience, and the inward assistances with which they are furnished, that even their crosses and adversities are converted into blessings.

All these things considered, rendered it highly improbable that Christianity was a cunningly devised fable, or the contrivance of interested impostors, however ingenious. The conduct of its Author who submitted to poverty and reproach, avoided honours and distinctions from men, and laid down his life in attestation of his doctrine,—the character of its apostles, who had no pretensions either to power or wealth, who delivered their commissions without reserve, though they knew the consequences were to be persecution, or even torture and death; and who gave such public confirmation to the truth of what they taught by the many wonderful works they performed, so that vast multitudes were converted, and embraced doctrines which were opposed to their interests and their passions,—the rapidity and extent of its propagation in the world, notwithstanding the power and malignity of its enemies, and the cruelties which for three hundred years were employed to suppress and bear it down; all these being laid in the one scale, and the few objections that have been urged against it, put into the other, it will not be difficult to pronounce on which side the balance will incline.

To cavil at exceptions and peculiarities, is not the fair way to judge of the truth or the tendency of any system. The proper plan is not to begin with quibbling about obscure passages, or the possibilities of imposture; but to survey the harmony and contexture of the whole, and from this general

view descend to more particular inquiries, without suffering the mind to be warped aside by prejudices, and forestalled with trivial or imaginary difficulties.

To the reasonableness of all these statements, his Lordship seemed in general to assent; only he excepted to the belief of mysteries in the Christian religion, which he thought an impossibility,—since a man could not believe what he does not comprehend, and can form no idea of. This, he was convinced, had made way for all the juggling of priests, who imposed on the ignorant and vulgar what they pleased; and giving their absurdities a hard name, calling them mysteries, credulous people were easily tricked into belief and acquiescence. The morality of the gospel appeared to him not less exceptionable, and unworthy the wisdom of a divine legislator. The restraining a man to one wife, and denying the remedy of divorce, and prohibiting the free use of sexual pleasures, he thought were unreasonable impositions on the natural liberties of mankind. He objected also to the maintenance and jurisdiction of the clerical order, as a piece of official contrivance; and asked, why he must obey a set of men, who tell him he cannot be saved without believing things against his reason, and then pay them liberally for telling him? These formed his main objections, and the substance of what he had to advance against Christianity.

On the subject of mysteries, he was reminded, in answer, that in every production or operation of nature, we had to encounter similar difficulties, and meet with appearances that we could not explain or account for. The formation of men and

animals,—the growth of plants,—the union of soul and body,—the faculties of the mind, how they communicate motion and activity to matter ; these, and a multitude of other wonders, if we were to push curiosity into all the intricacies of research, would be found as dark and incomprehensible as any of the mysterious doctrines of religion. The same holds true with the different degrees of knowledge and capacity among men,—the learning of a philosopher is a mystery to a child or a clown ; and the inventions of modern times would appear a mystery to those who lived in the infancy of society. We cannot comprehend, or even conceive, how soul and body should so unite together, and be mutually affected with each other's concerns ; or how two principles, so widely different, both in their nature and operations, should yet combine in one and the same person.

As many plausible exceptions, and speculative arguments might be brought against these things, which yet every one knows to be true, as against the Trinity of the Godhead,—the incarnation of Christ,—the agency of the Holy Spirit,—the resurrection of the body, or any of the other mysteries contained in Scripture. All that can be said against them is, that they agree not with our common notions ; though they are not more unreasonable or inexplicable than many peculiarities in other things, which we really believe to be, and yet we are not able to comprehend their mode and manner of existence ; so that this ought to be no just cause, provided we have other solid grounds of belief, why our reason should not submit to what we cannot well conceive. It cannot

be concealed, and is rather to be regretted, that these doctrines have had defenders of more zeal than judgment, who have darkened counsel by words without knowledge. They have been supported by weak arguments, illustrated by inept and impertinent similies, and perplexed by an overstrained and injudicious nicety of interpretation. The opposition of ancient heretics gave rise to much curious and unprofitable speculation among the Fathers, who, in pursuing the arguments of their antagonists, were often lost in the mazes of their own fanciful commentaries. Critics and schoolmen, in later times, have refined upon their subtleties; and the aid of superstition has been called in to enforce, as articles of belief, expositions of these mysteries, which not only do violence to our reason, but contradict the testimony of our senses.

In this manner the simplicity of Scripture has been corrupted, while its acknowledged difficulties have been rendered more complicated and incredible. Even from the plainest language, the most absurd inferences have been drawn,—that a morsel of bread, or a drop of wine are actually, by the magic of words, converted into flesh and blood; and this every Christian has been bound to believe under pain of damnation, however much his eyes or his understanding may revolt against the credibility of what his senses tell him, must either be a daily miracle or a daily imposition. These things are certainly to be lamented; but such perversions can be no argument for not receiving mysteries which are expressly and distinctly recorded in Scripture; and it is no just ground for *rejecting them totally*, that we cannot form an ex-

PLICIT notion of them, or satisfy our minds in every particular. Many such things we believe in human affairs, which are more within our reach ; and it must be very unreasonable to refuse our assent in divine things, which are much more above our comprehension.

As to the restraints and limitations imposed on the sexual appetite, these can never be alleged as accusations of severity or injustice. They might be defended even on the common right which all legislators claim of prescribing laws for the government of their subjects ; and it would be hard to deny to the Supreme Lawgiver a privilege which kings and inferior rulers daily exercise ; who, when they find the liberties their people take, prove dangerous or hurtful, set such bounds, and make such regulations, as they judge necessary and expedient. Unrestrained passion, it cannot be denied, is one of those mischiefs that prove injurious to society, and must be checked. No one will dispute the propriety of defending men's lives and properties against the aggressions of lawless violence,—or that adequate means must be employed to fortify and secure them ; and if it be acknowledged that men have a property in their wives and daughters, to seduce the one, or corrupt the other, must be reprobated and condemned as unjust and injurious. And it is certain that these consequences will ensue, that the ties and distinctions of nature will be broken, unless men carefully govern and controul their vagrant appetites. Hence the extreme wisdom and benevolent policy of those restrictions, which the Founder of Christianity has imposed on the unrestrained indulgence of carnal desires,—as he well knew that nothing could be

effectually deliver the world from their mischievous effects, as the salutary injunctions and limitations which he has prescribed. To interfere with a man's personal liberty, or curb him in the gratification of his desires, may seem, in the abstract, an unwarrantable violation of equity and nature; but if we balance the advantages of such a freedom, with the injuries and inconveniences which result from it,—the limits prescribed by human, as well as divine laws, will not appear unjust or unnatural restrictions.

But besides, the due confinement of these libertine propensities is not less beneficial to the individual, than advantageous to the peace of families, and the welfare of society. Mirth, frolic, or pleasure, and those often but of a precarious and momentary kind, are all that the disciples of licentiousness can promise themselves. And at how great an expense, both to themselves and others, are these generally purchased! How many waste their strength and their constitution by the indulgence of inordinate pleasures; they bring on premature old age, and loathsome diseases on their bodies, which are often disfigured by their intemperance and debaucheries; and what is still worse, they often entail infection and debility on their innocent but unhappy offspring, who suffer for their excesses. They impair their fortunes and estates, which are squandered away in prodigal expenses, or ruined by neglect; they forfeit their credit and reputation by the base expedients,—the criminal resources,—the many false and impious promises they are forced to employ in compassing their lawless desires.

· Nor do they suffer less in the noble powers and faculties of their minds, which sink and degenerate by their vices, into a state of stupid incapacity that wholly unfits them for business, and even indisposes them to think. Or if they are capable of reflection, it is only to endure horror and anguish, which they can find no means of mitigating or avoiding, except by plunging deeper in dissipation, or taking sanctuary in atheistical principles. If to all these be added, the peace and harmony of families destroyed,—the ties of nature and affection broken,—the laws of honour and virtue transgressed,—and the brutal confusion introduced into society, it will not appear that the restraints, which on the one hand protect and secure so many valuable blessings, and on the other, deliver the world from so many miseries, can be deemed severe or unnecessary prohibitions.

As for polygamy, many reasons opposed it; it occasioned perpetual quarrelings and jealousies among the wives of the same individual; it debases and degrades them from their original station, as helpful companions, into mere instruments of sensual pleasure; it distracts, or rather annihilates the affections of the husband; it leads to neglect, or partial treatment of children; and it appears to violate the arrangements of nature, and the design of the Deity, who created only one pair at first, and by preserving so near an equality between the two sexes, seems to intimate that the same practice was intended to continue. This plurality, therefore, is contrary to the original institution of marriage, as well as the example of the earliest patriarchs. It was introduced when men degenerated from the primitive state of manners;

and though practised by the Jews, both before and under the law of Moses, it may be doubted how far it had the sanction of divine approbation, as the passages where it is mentioned are of equivocal import; or if there was such a permission, it might, like that of divorce, be granted because "of the hardness of their hearts;" or for some temporary purpose, rather than from any rectitude or propriety in the thing itself. Consequently the marriages of the patriarchs, recorded in Scripture, like their vices and imperfections, are no evidence that the custom was lawful, or intended to be general and permanent. In the times of the New Testament, the Jewish manners had undergone a reformation in this respect, as we meet with no trace or mention there of any such practice being tolerated. Upon the whole matter then, it was very apparent that those indulgences, for which libertines plead, are directly opposed to the best interests of mankind, both social and individual; and the author of the Christian law, who knew the nature of man, has wisely set bounds to those extravagant liberties, as the only safeguard, and most effectual means of promoting both public and private happiness. The conditions and requirements annexed to this law, were not in themselves agreeable to our perverse inclinations; but if followed, they brought an abundant recompense both here and hereafter; and it was but fair, that he who bestowed high rewards, should have the right to exact difficult performances.

Here his Lordship interposed some doubts, whether the premises warranted the conclusion. *He admitted that the terms were difficult, but*

seemed sceptical as to the certainty of the rewards. Upon this he was told that we had the same assurance of future rewards that we have of any other parts of Christianity. We have the promises of God made to us in Christ, and confirmed by miracles; and we have an earnest of them in the peace and satisfaction which follow a good conscience. The reward is abundantly sure, and there is no reason it should be given us before the conditions are performed on which it is promised. The difficulties were not greater than those we daily encounter in the most ordinary concerns of life, such as learning a common trade or profession, which sometimes requires years of study and expense. Besides, the pains and uneasiness we felt were rather the effect of our corrupt nature, than any excessive severity in the injunctions of Christianity, which gradually became more tolerable, as our vicious habits were subdued and relinquished.

Another argument or apology which his Lordship urged in defence of his irregularities, was the misconduct of Christians themselves, which he said had given him and many others great encouragement to continue in their iniquities. Even the clergy, who undertook to be the guides and instructors of others, often acted so as to make it difficult to think their belief was any thing else than a solemn pretence. Their ambition in aspiring after court favour, and the servile ends they took to attain it, as well as the divisions and animosities among themselves about trifles, made him suspect that religion was a mere trick, and the things could not be true, which, in their sermons and discourses, they so earnestly recommended. Others who pro-

tended to believe, lived so inconsistently with their profession, that no man could persuade himself they were serious, or had any principle of religion about them.

In answer to these excuses of himself, he was reminded that even the best men, through infirmity or temptation, may be overcome and betrayed into sins, which prove a source of grief to them all their life after ; but it was not a just inference, from the failings of a few, to conclude that all Christians are hypocrites, or that all religion is a cheat. Many of the charges brought against believers were mistakes and calumnies, though it could not be denied that some of them were too true. But at all events it was unreasonable to make the faults of others a plea or vindication for himself. Among the clergy, it was to be lamented, that some did not live suitably to their holy functions, or to the sacred obligations imposed on them by their profession ; yet as a body, there were many of them who gave visible demonstrations of the power which religion had over them, in their contempt of the world, the strictness of their lives, their readiness to forgive injuries, to relieve the poor, and to do good on all occasions. As for their authority, if they stretched that too far, the gospel did plainly reprove them for it. They were only an order of men dedicated to God, to attend to his ordinances, and preserve the knowledge and remembrance of him among men. It was necessary therefore that they should be respected, and have a fit maintenance appointed for them, so that they might be preserved from the contempt that follows poverty, and the distractions which the providing against it might otherwise involve them in. And if some of them, either

through ambition or covetousness, used indirect or criminal means for attaining dignities and preferments ; and when possessed of them, did either accumulate fortunes, or apply their wealth to luxury and vain pomp, these were personal failings in which the gospel was not concerned, and which could reflect no reproach or discredit on it, as it expressly censured and condemned them.

Such is a summary view of the chief arguments and objections which formed the topic of discourse on both sides. Every doubt and difficulty which his Lordship had to urge against religion, pointed with all the force and effect his wit could give ; and every sophistical evasion that could defend or embolden him in his vices, were faithfully recorded by his candid and venerable visitor. The substance, and in general the words of these memorable conversations, are here presented to the reader. The answers and refutations might perhaps in some cases have been extended or illustrated at greater length ; but this has been avoided, as it seemed an unjustifiable liberty, both with the subject and the author, to give his arguments any additions, or clothe them in other language than he himself chose to express them. The result of the whole was such as might have been anticipated, and made a most salutary impression on the noble penitent. Driven by degrees and with reluctance from every strong-hold, he saw those sophistries within which he had entrenched and fortified himself, to be but a refuge of lies. His most rooted prejudices yielded and gave way before the irresistible energy of truth. Conviction won upon him at every stage of the discussion, and reached his conscience in spite of all his reasonings, and contrary to his strongest in-

inclinations. When the scales of error were removed, moral objects assumed a new character, and appeared even to change their nature. He was convinced, he said, that vice and irreligion were as contrary and injurious to human society, as wild beasts let loose would be ; and that therefore he was firmly resolved to alter the whole course of his life, to become strictly just and true, to be chaste and temperate, to forbear swearing and profane discourse, to worship and pray to his Maker ; and that though he was not arrived at a full persuasion of Christianity, he would never employ his wit more to run it down, or to corrupt others. In these good resolutions he was encouraged by his worthy friend, who assured him that a virtuous life would no longer appear a struggle and a constraint, when vicious inclinations were removed ; and that if his mind was once cleared of its erroneous principles, and freed from the dominion of those habits that obscured and distempered it, he would soon see through all the sophistries of wit and atheism, which had only the false glittering of argument, and could mislead none but men of weak understanding, who have not capacity or discernment to penetrate deeper than the mere surface of things.

The preceding conversations took place in London, before his Lordship quitted it for his residence at Woodstock Park, nearly four months prior to his death. The hand of God had now visibly touched him. For some weeks he suffered extreme pain in his body, the violent motion of travelling having increased his disorder, so that he concluded his recovery to be almost hopeless. But the sense of his bodily tortures was not so keen and excru-

ciating as the agonies of his mind, which was not merely clouded and depressed as formerly in his intervals of melancholy, but wounded with the most acute and poignant sorrow ; for though he was not yet illuminated with clear or comprehensive views of religion, he looked back on his past life with bitter remembrance, and confessed that all the pleasures of sin he had ever known, were not worthy to be named in comparison with the anguish of spirit he felt on their account. He considered that he had not only neglected and dishonoured, but openly defied his Creator ; and drawn many others by his conversation and example into similar impieties ; and he now set himself wholly to turn to God with unfeigned repentance, and to do all in his power, during the little remainder of his existence on earth, to redeem those years which he had so ill employed in folly and profanity.

Several clergymen visited him every week of his sickness, among whom were the Bishop of Oxford, Mr Parsons, his mother's chaplain, and Dr Marshall, the learned Rector of Lincoln College. From the excellent advices of these pious attendants, he received that direction and support which his present circumstances rendered necessary. The storm and perturbation of his mind gradually subsided ; the labouring spirit broke from under its cloud of apprehension ; and the animating hope of the gospel, like the clear shining after rain, diffused over every dark spot of his anticipations, the brightness of a pure and calm serenity. He became fully persuaded both of the truth of Christianity and of the power of inward grace, and cast himself entirely on the merits of the Redeemer, for obtaining mercy and forgiveness.

One immediate cause to which he ascribed his conviction, was the fifty third chapter of Isaiah, which Mr Parsons read to him. By comparing that with the history of Christ's advent and crucifixion, the coincidence appeared so strange, the facts accorded so exactly with the prophecy, though written many ages before, that he felt the truth forced upon him with a power of demonstration that he could not resist. The meanness of the Saviour's appearance, the disparagement and rejection he was to suffer, the manner of his death, and the opposition to his gospel, were delineated with such minuteness and fidelity as if the inspired prophet had been an eyewitness of the scene, and recorded what he saw in a narrative, rather than uttered a prediction concerning it at the distance of 400 years.

He had caused the chapter to be read to him so often, both by his lady and his mother, who attended him in his illness with all possible tenderness, that he had got it completely by heart, and was in the habit of repeating and making reflections upon it, in a sort of transport of heavenly delight. The words, he remarked, carried an authority with them, which shot like rays of light into his mind, so that his understanding was not only satisfied and convinced, but by an inward power, so effectually constrained, that he ever after as firmly believed in the Saviour, as if he had seen him in the clouds. He had strong persuasions of being admitted to happiness in heaven, of which he sometimes spoke with extraordinary emotion. He received the sacrament with great satisfaction, a pleasure which was not a little increased, by partaking of it with his affectionate lady, who had been for some years *misled*, partly through the instrumentality of her

husband, into the communion of the Romish Church.

About a month before his death, he wrote to Dr Burnet, wishing a renewal of those visits which had already proved so beneficial to him. The letter is expressed with all the humility of true penitence, and may be regarded as no unequivocal evidence of the salutary change that had taken place since their late interview.

“ Woodstock Park, Oxfordshire.

“ My most honoured Dr Burnet,

“ My spirits and body decay so equally together, that I shall write you a letter, as weak as I am in person. I begin to value churchmen above all men in the world, &c. If God be yet pleased to spare me longer in this world, I hope in your conversation to be exalted to that degree of piety, that the world may see how much I abhor what I so long loved, and how much I glory in repentance and in God's service. Bestow your prayers upon me, that God would spare me, (if it be his good will,) to shew a true repentance and amendment of life for the time to come: or else, if the Lord pleaseth to put an end to my worldly being now, that he would mercifully accept of my death-bed repentance, and perform that promise that he hath been pleased to make, that, at what time soever a sinner doth repent, he would receive him. Put up these prayers, most dear doctor, to Almighty God, for

“ Yours, &c.

“ ROCHESTER.

“ *June 25, 1680.*”

The intercourse renewed in consequence of this letter, was mutually acceptable. His Lordship received his friend with transport, and uttered many tender expressions concerning his kindness in coming so far to see him. He told him all that had occurred, of his fears, his convictions, and his hopes ; spoke of his conversion to God in terms of joy and confidence, and said, he now found his mind possessed of far other views and thoughts than it had formerly been. He said he had overcome all feelings of resentment against others, and bore no ill-will, and no personal hatred to any man : He had given a true account of his debts, and ordered them all to be paid : He professed he was contented either to die or live as should please God, and though it was a foolish thing for a man to pretend to choose, yet he wished rather to die, as he was confident he should be happy, but feared if he lived he might relapse : He was resolved, however, through Divine grace, to avoid those temptations, and that course of life and company which might again ensnare him ; and he desired to live on no other account, but that he might, by the change of his manners, remove, as far as possible, the scandal his former behaviour had given. He would sometimes form schemes, in the probability of his recovery, by which he meant to regulate himself in future, and was pleased to think how retired and studious and exemplary a life he would lead ; but these speculations were soon dissipated, when the paroxysms of his distemper returned.

He manifested some anxiety to have the opinion of his friend as to the efficacy and acceptance of a death-bed repentance. Upon which he was informed, that all depended on the reality and sincerity of

the change; that this was the indispensable condition upon which the promises of the gospel were made; that though it was difficult to ascertain the genuineness of our penitence, unless it appeared in our lives, and there was reason to fear that the repentance of most dying men, like the howlings of condemned prisoners, flowed more from a dread of their approaching fate, than from any remorse or sorrow for their crimes; yet certainly if the mind of a sinner, even on his death-bed, be truly renewed and turned to God, so abundant are his compassion and his tender mercy, that even in that extremity he is willing to receive him. But that this could be no warrant or encouragement to confirm any in their iniquities, or in the unreasonable resolution of deferring their repentance till they can sin no longer, from the hope of at last obtaining mercy.

Such an inference would be as injurious as it was unjust; for whatever mercy God may shew to those who have never felt compunction till they are overtaken with sickness unto death; this was no reason to presume that those who have dealt so disingenuously with God and their own souls, as to delay their repentance with such a design, should then be accepted of him. They may die suddenly, or by a disease that may impair or destroy all capacity for reflection or amendment. No man's conversion is so far in his own power, that it can be effected without the assistance of Divine grace; and they who have all their lives neglected or resisted such aid, can hardly expect it in so extraordinary a manner at their death. Such conduct is not only presumptuous in itself, but it is to risk the highest and greatest concerns we have, upon

the most dangerous and desperate issue possible; and though it became not human weakness to limit the grace of God, yet there was every cause to doubt of a repentance begun and kept up under such delusion. Signal instances had occurred of late conversions brought about by very remarkable means; but it is a pernicious confidence in any to proceed in their evil ways, in the expectation that God will in the same way work a miracle for their restoration. These rare and singular examples were beyond the ordinary methods of divine mercy; and though they do sometimes happen, that they may give an effectual alarm for awakening others; yet it would destroy the whole design of religion, if men should reckon and depend to the last, on such an extraordinary and forcible operation of God's grace.

These views appeared to his Lordship correct and satisfactory, and encouraged him to hope that though his life had been too much devoted to the service of sin,—though he had too long resisted all the means of conviction, and abused the patience and long-suffering of God, yet he now looked back upon his former ways with abhorrence and detestation. He was certain, he said, that his mind was entirely changed; and though terror had at first awakened him to a sense of his danger, yet his repentance was now settled on the sure basis of faith and conviction. And though he did not live to put his resolutions of amendment to the test, or give to the world evidence of his sincerity, by the practice of virtue and holiness, yet his repentance was accompanied with such symptoms as could leave no room for doubts or suspicions as to its reality. Every word and ac-

tion bore testimony to his unfeigned penitence. In none of his other sicknesses had he ever experienced the same happy effects, or formed the same determinations. He had sometimes vague thoughts and transient desires to reform, but this was solely to escape the troubles and inconveniences which his vices occasioned him. But he now saw them in a different light; and often expressed a hope that if he were yet spared a longer time, he should bring glory to the name of God, by a new course of life, and particularly by his endeavours to convince others,—to assure them of the danger of their condition, if they continued impenitent,—and to reclaim them from their errors. “I would not commit the least sin to gain a kingdom,” was the solema declaration he frequently made to his attendants; and he would exhort them earnestly to fear God,—to be reconciled to him in Christ,—and break off their sins while there was space for pardon.

To a gentleman of his acquaintance, Mr Fanshaw, who paid him a visit, he addressed himself in the following strain of pious expostulation: “O remember that you contemn God no more; he is an avenging God, and will visit you for your sins. He will, in mercy I hope, touch your conscience, sooner or later, as he has done mine. You and I have been friends and sinners together a great while, therefore I am the more free with you. We have all been mistaken in our conceits and opinions; our persuasions have been false and groundless; therefore God grant you repentance. Perhaps you may be disobliged by my plainness, but I speak the words of truth and soberness, and I hope God will touch your heart.”

To his servants, and to all about him, he shewed a remarkable tenderness and concern; pitying their troubles in watching and attending him, and treating them with kindness and civility, as if they had been his equals. They heard none of that cursing, railing, or reproaching, which on other occasions had been their usual entertainment. If he had even, in the extremity of pain, evinced the least fretfulness or impatience, or spoken a hasty word to the meanest of them, he would immediately beg pardon. The habit of swearing, a vice from which, on the slightest provocation, he could scarcely have refrained for three minutes, he completely conquered by a constant and resolute watchfulness.

Being offended, on some occasion, at the delay or negligence of one of his attendants, he said with some warmth, "that damned fellow," but instantly checking himself, he exclaimed, "Oh, that language of friends, which was so familiar to me, hangs yet about me; sure none have deserved more to be damned than I have done." And after having humbly asked pardon of God for it, he desired the servant to be called back, that he might ask his forgiveness. He professed his readiness to forgive all the injuries ever any had done him, and to make restitution to the utmost of his power, to those whom he had wronged or offended. He would often call his children into his presence, and speak to them with inexpressible tenderness, blessing them in the name of God,—praying for them,—and recommending them to his protection. "Look on them all," he once said to Dr Burnet, "and see how good God has been to me, in giving me so many blessings, and I have carried my-

self to him, like an ungracious and unthankful dog." He gave earnest charges for their pious education,—wishing that his son might never be a wit; one of those wretched creatures, (as he himself explained it,) who pride themselves in abusing God and religion,—denying his existence or his providence; but that he might become an honest and religious man, which would be the best support of his family, and preferable to all fortune and honours.

Of his own manner of life he discoursed frequently, and without reserve; accusing himself publicly for his vices and impieties, and speaking of them in terms of the most unqualified abhorrence. He regarded himself as the vilest wretch that ever the sun shone upon; wished rather that he had been a reptile crawling in a ditch, or a beggar, or confined for his whole life to a dungeon, than have so dishonoured and offended his Maker. "O blessed God," he would cry, "can such a horrid creature as I am be accepted of thee, who has denied thy being, and contemned thy power? Can there be mercy and pardon for me? Shall the unspeakable joys of heaven be conferred on such a wretch? O mighty Saviour, never but through thine infinite love and satisfaction! O never, but by the purchase of thy blood!" The mercy and free grace of God, offered through Jesus Christ to returning sinners, was now the only hope and anchor of his soul, on which he cast himself implicitly with all the confidence of faith, and all the fervour of devotion. He had abandoned that absurd and foolish philosophy which the world so much admired; and embraced, after the most

calm and irresistible conviction, the articles and mysteries of the Christian religion.

The more he read and meditated on the Holy Scriptures, the more their beauty and excellency appeared, and the greater his admiration and esteem grew for them. Having once received the truth in the love of it, all the seeming absurdities and contradictions in them, he found to be but the malignant fancies of men of corrupt and reprobate judgments, which vanished when approached by the light of reason and investigation. He was not only a believer, but a bold advocate for piety and virtue; and argued as strongly in their favour, as he had ever before done against them. And to obliterate, as far as possible, every memorial of his guilt, to remove every object that might serve as temptations and incitements to others, he gave strict injunctions to those persons in whose custody his papers were, to burn all his profane and lewd writings, all his obscene and scandalous pictures, as fit only to promote vice and immorality. He likewise commanded his friends, who were the witnesses of his penitence and confessions, to publish them freely and undisguisedly to the world. He wished every thing concerning him to be made known; the worst as well as the best and last parts of his life to be laid open, if it could be of use to the living, or contribute to the reformation of a loose and dissolute age. He was not unwilling to take shame to himself, by allowing his faults to be exposed for the benefit of others, if such an example might be a means of reclaiming them; and he often prayed to God, that as his life had done much hurt, so his death might do some good.

The time which the preceding transactions occu-

pied, was exactly nine weeks. During the whole course of his sickness, the temper of his mind was uniformly steady, so that no difference or appearances of decay were perceptible, except in the weakness of his body. He could not converse long without fatigue; though occasionally he talked with extraordinary vivacity, and discoursed of common affairs at considerable length, with as much clearness of thought and expression as he had ever done. These facts, taken in conjunction with the details narrated above, furnish evidence quite satisfactory as to the nature and authenticity of his repentance; that it could not possibly be the effect of disease, nor the result of melancholy, or lowness of spirits, nor of an impaired and disordered state of the faculties. None of these causes will in the most remote degree account for the remarkable change which he manifested both in his sentiments and conversation.

“All the time of his illness,” says Mr Parsons, “he was so much master of his reason, and had so clear an understanding, (save thirty hours about the middle of it, in which he was delirious), that he never dictated or spoke more composed in his life; and therefore if any shall continue to say his piety was the effect of madness or vapours, let me tell them it is highly disingenuous, and that the assertion is as silly as it is wicked. And, moreover, that the force of what I have delivered may not be evaded by wicked men, who are resolved to harden their hearts in spite of all convictions, and say this was done in a corner, I appeal for the truth thereof to all sorts of persons, who in considerable numbers visited and attended him; and more particularly to those eminent physicians who

were near him, and conversant with him in the whole course of his tedious sickness, and who, if any, are competent judges of a frenzy or delirium."

Dr Burnet's words are to the same effect; and he mentions also in his history his firm belief that he had become so entirely changed, that if he had recovered, he would have made good all his resolutions. "That this noble Lord," he observes, "was either mad or stupid, is a thing so notoriously untrue, that it is the highest impudence for any to report it, and a very unreasonable credulity in others to believe it. All the while I was with him he was not only without ravings, but had a clearness in his thoughts, in his memory, and in his reflections, beyond what I ever saw in a person so low in strength. Such reports are raised by those who are unwilling that the last thoughts or words of a person every way so extraordinary, should have any effect either on themselves or others; and it is to be feared that some have so far seared their consciences, and exceeded the common measures of sin and infidelity, that neither this testimony, nor one rising from the dead, would signify much towards their conviction."

To the testimony of these two divines, various others might be subjoined from private letters and documents of unquestionable authority. The following is a copy of a letter from his Lordship to Dr J. Pierce, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and afterwards Dean of Sarum; and though it may contain some expressions more poetical, perhaps, than evangelical, if strictly criticised, yet it presents a lively image of a sincere penitent, touched with conscious guilt, and resolved to turn from the error of his ways.

“ My indisposition renders my intellectuals almost as feeble as my person ; but considering the candour and extreme charity your natural mildness has always shewn me, I am assured at once both of a favourable construction of my present lines, which can but faintly express the sorrowful character of a humble and afflicted mind, and all those great comforts your inexhaustible goodness, learning, and piety, plenteously afford to the drooping spirits of poor sinners ; so that I may truly say, Holy man ! to you I owe what consolation I enjoy, in urging God’s mercies against despair, and holding me up under the weight of those high and mountainous sins, my wicked and ungovernable life hath heaped upon me. If God shall be pleased to spare me a little longer here, I have unalterably resolved to become a new man ; and to wash out the stain of my lewd courses with my tears, and to weep over the profane and unhallowed abomination of my former doings ; that the world may see how I loathe sin, and abhor the very remembrance of those tainted and unclean joys I once delighted in ; these being, as the apostle tells us, the things ‘ whereof I am now ashamed. Or if it be his great pleasure now to put a period to my days, that he will accept of my last gasp, that the smoke of my death-bed offering, may not be unsavoury to his nostrils, and he drive me like Cain from before his presence. Pray for me, dear Doctor ; and all you that forget not God, pray for me fervently ; take heaven by force, and let me enter with you in disguise ; for I dare not appear before the dread Majesty of that Holy One I have so often offended. Warn all my friends and companions to a true and sincere

repentance while it is called to-day, before the evil day come, and they be no more. Let them know that sin is like the angel's book in the Revelation; it is sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly: Let them know that God will not be mocked; that he is an holy God, and will be served in holiness and purity; that he requires the whole man, and the early man. Bid them make haste, for the night cometh when no man can work. O that they were wise, that they would consider this; and not with me, with wretched me, delay it until their latter end! Pray, Dear Sir, continually pray for your poor friend,

ROCHESTER.

*Ranger's Lodge in Woodstock Park, }
July 1680. }*

There is another letter, published from the Manuscripts in the Harleian Library, giving an account of his interview with Mr Fanshaw, which goes to corroborate the preceding testimonies, and of which the following is an extract:—

“ When Wilmot Lord Rochester lay on his death-bed, Mr. Fanshaw came to visit him, with an intention to stay about a week with him. Mr Fanshaw, sitting by the bedside, perceived his lordship praying to God through JESUS CHRIST; and acquainted Dr Radcliffe (who attended my Lord Rochester in this illness, and was then in the house) with what he had heard; and told him that my lord was certainly delirious, for to his knowledge (he said) he believed neither in God nor *Jesus Christ*. The doctor (who had often heard him

pray in the same manner) proposed to Mr Fanshaw to go up to his lordship, to be further satisfied touching this affair. When they came to his room the doctor told my lord what Mr Fanshaw said; upon which his lordship addressed himself to Mr Fanshaw to this effect:—‘ Sir, it is true you and I have been very lewd and profane together, and then I was of the opinion you mention; but now I am quite of another mind, and happy am I that I am so. I am very sensible how miserable I was whilst of another opinion. Sir, you may assure yourself that there is a Judge and a future state.’ And so he entered into a very handsome discourse concerning the last judgment, future state, &c., and concluded with a serious and pathetic exhortation to Mr Fanshaw to enter into another course of life; adding, that he (Mr Fanshaw) knew him to be his friend; that he never was more so than at this time: ‘ And, Sir, (said he,) to use a Scripture expression, I am not mad, but speak the words of truth and soberness.’”

His own dying remonstrance, which he drew up only a few days before he expired, may be here transcribed as a further confirmation of the point in question. It was signed by his own hand, and attested by sufficient witnesses.

“ For the benefit of all those whom I may have drawn into sin by my example and encouragement, I leave to the world this my last declaration, which I deliver in the presence of the great God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, and before whom I am now appearing to be judged.

“ That, from the bottom of my soul, I detest

and abhor the whole course of my former wicked life; that I think I can never sufficiently admire the goodness of God, who has given me a true sense of my pernicious opinions and vile practices, by which I have hitherto lived without hope and without God in the world; have been an open enemy to Jesus Christ, doing the utmost despite to the Holy Spirit of Grace. And that the greatest testimony of my charity to such is, to warn them, in the name of God, and as they regard the welfare of their immortal souls, no more to deny his being, or his providence, or despise his goodness; no more to make a mock of sin, or contemn the pure and excellent religion of my ever-blessed Redeemer, through whose merits alone I, one of the greatest sinners, do yet hope for mercy and forgiveness. Amen.

“ J. ROCHESTER.”

Declared and signed in the presence of

ANNE ROCHESTER, }
ROBERT PARSONS, } *June 19, 1680.*

The concurrence of so many plain and unimpeachable testimonies, must satisfy the scruples and prejudices of the most sceptical, that Lord Rochester was sincere in his repentance, and gave all possible symptoms of a lasting perseverance in it, had it pleased God to restore him to life. No one can for a moment entertain a serious belief that such a change could proceed from weakness of body, or perturbation of mind, or from any superstitious terrors, arising from a misinformed conscience, or a dread of future punishment. *Love to God, and faith in Jesus Christ, are the*

only foundation on which such resolutions and persuasions could be built. So complete a victory over corrupt principles and inclinations,—so firm, and at the same time so humble a trust in the divine favour, can be ascribed to nothing else than the effectual operation of religion.

Towards the end of June his health had so much declined, that no hopes were entertained of his recovery; but he sustained his infirmities without repining, and with perfect resignation to the will of heaven. The suppuration of a virulent ulcer had emaciated his body, and reduced him to mere skin and bone; and by lying almost constantly on his back, the parts had begun to be affected with mortification. In this state he continued until the 26th of July, 1680, when he expired, at the early age of thirty-three, being so worn away by his long illness, that life went out without a struggle or a groan. He was buried in the vault under the aisle in Spilsbury Church, by the body of his father.

“Nature,” as Dr Burnet observes, “had fitted him for great things; and his knowledge and observation qualified him to have been one of the most extraordinary men, not only of his nation, but of the age he lived in; and I do verily believe, that if God had thought fit to have continued him longer in the world, he had been the wonder and delight of all that knew him; but the infinitely wise God knew better what was fit for him, and what the age deserved; for men who have so cast off all sense of God and religion, deserve not so signal a blessing as the example and conviction which the rest of his life might have given them. Here is a public instance of one

who lived of their side, but could not die in it: And though none of all our libertines understood better than he, the secret mysteries of sin,—had more studied every thing that could support a man in it, and had more resisted all external means of conviction; yet when the hand of God inwardly touched him, he could no longer fight against the arrows of the Almighty, but humbled himself under that mighty hand; and as he used often to say in his prayers, he who had so openly denied him, found then no other shelter but in his mercy and compassion. Though he lived to the scandal of many, he died as much to the edification of all who saw him; and because they were but a small number, he desired that he might, even when dead, yet speak. He was willing for nothing to be concealed, that might cast reproach on himself and on sin, and offer up glory to God and religion; so that though he lived a heinous sinner, he died a most exemplary penitent."

Lord Rochester married, in 1666, Elizabeth, daughter of John Mallet, Esq. of Enmere, Somersetsshire; a lady celebrated for her beauty and fortune, being possessed of an income of £2500 a year. By her he left a family of four children,—a son named Charles, who died in little more than a year after himself, and three daughters, Anne, Elizabeth, and Mallet. The male line thus becoming extinct, the title was bestowed on Lawrence Hyde, second son to the Earl of Clarendon,

Of his character and works, as a poet, it scarcely falls within our design, or our limits, to speak. "He was a man, (says Walpole,) whom the muses were fond to inspire, but ashamed to avow; and *who practised, without reserve, the secret which*

can make verses more read for their defects than for their merits; an art neither commendable nor difficult." As he had an active and inquisitive mind, and was never wholly negligent of study, he had made very great progress in what may be considered the polite learning of the times; so much so, that he is ranked by Wood as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. All the leisure he found for writing was merely intervals snatched from the routine of dissipation; his poems, therefore, are commonly short, such as one fit of resolution might produce. "They have much more obscenity than wit,—more wit than poetry,—and more poetry than politeness." His amorous and lyrical pieces, though models of their kind, are full of impurity and profaneness; more fit to be read by bacchanals or bedlamites, than pretenders to virtue and modesty; and some of them are on subjects so indecent, that their very title would stain the page of biography. Such as are not so, are libellous and satirical.

Much, it is said, was attributed to him, which he did not write, and certainly the air of mystery and concealment under which the original edition of his works was published, after his death, was favourable for the admission of surreptitious productions. He had ordered, like the Roman poet, but from very different motives, all his immoral papers to be burnt; "but the age was not without its Curls to preserve such treasures," for some person who had made a collection of his poems, in manuscript, published them clandestinely, from no other motives, it was conjectured, than that of gain. His poems have been often printed, and may be found in various collections, along with those of

the Earls of Roscommon and Dorset, the Marquis of Normanby, Lord Halifax and others. Besides the catalogue of his works given by Walpole, Wood mentions that there were some pieces of his, and a Dr Robert Wild, in a collection entitled, "Rome Rhymed to Death," though their authenticity was questionable. This Dr Wild, he tells us, was a fat, jolly, and boon Presbyterian, and died at Oundle in Northamptonshire, 1679.

"His songs," says Dr Johnson, "have no particular character. They tell, like other songs, in smooth and easy language of scorn and kindness, dismissal and desertion, absence and inconstancy, with the common-places of artificial courtship.—The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings; the compositions of a man whose name was heard so often, were certain of attention; and from many readers, certain of applause. The blaze of his reputation is not yet quite extinguished; and his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed.—In all his works, there is sprightliness and vigour; and every where may be found tokens of a mind which study might have carried to excellence. What more could be expected from a life spent in ostentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men begin to be displayed?"

COUNT STRUENSEE.

THE history of Count Struensee, who had the honour and the misfortune to be prime Minister of Denmark, under Christian VII. and whose downfall produced the tragical revolution in the Danish cabinet of 1772, furnishes a most striking and pertinent example, not only of the instability of power and prosperity, but also of the dangerous tendency of libertine principles and infidel opinions, both to the happiness of the individual, and to the general interests of society. From an obscure adventurer, and a foreigner, he rose at once, without patronage or recommendation, and even without undergoing the intermediate drudgeries of office, to the very pinnacle of court preferment, and political authority. His career was as brief and extraordinary as his promotion, and terminated in a fate both melancholy and disgraceful. But his catastrophe, however much it is to be lamented in itself, or in its consequences to his guilty accomplices, many of whom were involved in the same ruin,—being doomed to perpetual exile, or to lingering imprisonment in the dungeons and fortresses of their native country,—to himself was productive of the happiest effects, in leading him to a knowledge, and a cordial reception of Christianity. It is seldom that a conquest so complete and unequivocal

is achieved over talents and inclinations so grossly perverted; and the conversion of a libertine, so confirmed both in principle and in practice, must be considered as no mean victory over the delusions and artifices of infidelity.

JOHN FREDERICK STRUENSEE was the son of a German divine, who was first a deacon of Rendsburg, a small town in the duchy of Sleswick,— afterwards advanced to the professorship of theology in the University of Halle, and to a bishoprick in Holstein. His mother was descended from a respectable, though not a wealthy family. His parents, though obscure, compared with his own extraordinary but unfortunate elevation, were nevertheless persons of sincere and exemplary piety; and according to the confessions he made when he came to alter his sentiments on religion, they were at all due pains to season his youth with the principles of virtue and goodness, to initiate him in the early knowledge, and confirm him in the belief of the Christian revelation. He was born August 5th, 1737, and received the rudiments of his education in the celebrated Orphan House of Dr Franke, at Halle, a seminary then attended by vast numbers, though the system of religious instruction taught there, appears to have been of a kind rather ascetic and severe; and he frequently expressed his conviction, that the good advices, and pious example of his parents, were much better calculated to produce a salutary effect on his future life, than the superficial and fruitless knowledge that is often acquired at public schools.

About his fourteenth year he was removed to *the University of Halle*, where he devoted his

attention exclusively to the study of physic. Here the restraints of youthful piety began gradually to lose their hold; and his mind being wholly engrossed with the acquisition of those sciences by means of which he hoped to make his fortune, little leisure or inclination was left for reflection on moral or religious subjects. The books and companions he had recourse to for diversion, in the hours of relaxation, were such as tended to corrupt and mislead him; and their pernicious sophistries gained an easier victory, by having the bias and concurrence of his own natural propensities on their side.

When he had finished his medical studies, he went with his father to Altona, where he settled, and for some time was employed as the editor of a newspaper in that city; though afterwards he appears to have resumed his profession, and practised with reputation and success. He entertained no mean opinion of his own abilities,—had an insatiable desire to attain distinction in his art, and was besides inordinately addicted to the indulgence of voluptuous pleasures. For these reasons, together with an infirm state of health, he had resolved to quit his station at Altona, intending to go to Malaga, and settle there as a physician; or to make a voyage to the East Indies, of which his imagination had become enamoured, from the many fine descriptions he had read of that country, in books of voyages and travels. Here he supposed a wider field would be opened for his ambition, and the chances of his making a fortune greatly increased,—while the luxury of a warmer climate, and more effeminate manners, would add a new delight to those licentious grati-

fications, which, next to fame and fortune, were the object of his criminal research.

At this juncture, however, a favourable prospect opened itself to him in Denmark, through an acquaintance procured by a love intrigue. This opportunity he determined to seize, and accordingly removed to Copenhagen; following that blind and brutal passion, which involved him at last in disgrace and ruin. By what means he was first introduced to the notice of Christian VII. then King of Denmark, is not mentioned; but in 1768 he was raised to the rank of physician to his majesty, and in this quality appointed to attend him during his tour in visiting several of the courts of Europe. From his first entering the country, he had resolved to act a distinguished part, though he could never have imagined that his name was to become so conspicuous as it did in the political annals of the North. Being then in the flower of life, possessing an agreeable person, and attractive manners, together with considerable talents both for business and amusement, he soon contrived to insinuate himself into the good graces of his royal master, and secured that uncommon degree of court favour which paved the way to all his subsequent preferments. He accompanied him to England, where, in compliment to the official character he held, the University of Oxford conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine. While at Paris, he formed an acquaintance and an intimate friendship with Count Brandt, a Dane of good family, who afterwards became the associate of his crimes and his public delinquencies, and a fellow-sufferer with him *the same block.*

Brandt had held a distinguished place among the favourites of Christian VII. and was a gentleman of the king's bed-chamber; but having incurred the royal displeasure, he was obliged to fly his country, and retiring to Paris, he led there for some time a life of obscurity and comparative indigence. Struensee pledged himself to use, on his return, all his credit at court to have him recalled, and reinstated in his office; an engagement which he found no great difficulty in fulfilling, from the surpassing esteem in which he was held by both their majesties.

On his arrival in the Danish capital, the king, with his own hand, presented Struensee to his royal Consort, recommending him to her, at the same time, as a man of talents, and as peculiarly skilled in the profession of physic. His progress in the favour and partiality of the Queen, was as sudden and extraordinary as it had been in the good opinion of her husband. Every day he received from them new marks of consideration and regard. He was immediately made a Privy Councillor, and together with his friend Brandt, now recalled, through his interest, from exile, and restored to his former office, raised to the rank of Count. He now stood forth publicly the declared and confidential favourite of the king, and within a very short space was constituted first minister, with almost unlimited political power.

This rapid and altogether unmerited elevation of a man of obscure birth, and a foreigner, created, as was to be supposed, feelings of envy and disgust among the courtiers and nobility, who were indignant at the marked preference shewn to a stranger and an upstart. *Such distinctions and promotions, indeed,*

were by no means rare in the history of this country. The highest offices in the state had been often bestowed on adventurers who were either foreigners or natives of the lowest sort. The kingdom was governed for a hundred years by strangers, who were unacquainted with its policy, and disdained even to acquire its language. Bernstorff a Hanoverian, Lynar a Saxon, and St Germain a Frenchman, were among the ablest of the Danish ministers. On the present occasion, however, the admission of this aspiring physician into the cabinet, was resented as an intrusion by a very powerful and insidious faction. Reports and surmises were speedily circulated, disgraceful to the new minister, and injurious to the honour of the Queen, whose attachment to Struensee, exceeded, in appearance at least, the bounds of moderation and public decorum.

This young Queen of Denmark, as is well known, was the Princess Caroline Matilda of England, and sister to George III. She is described by Danish writers as the handsomest woman of her Court, of a gentle but reserved character, and possessed of qualities which, under a more fortunate connection might have insured no small share of general esteem and popularity. But unhappily her marriage was one of those which, too often in royal life, is not contracted from preference or choice, but from motives of political interest, or the contrivance of party; and is consequently destitute of every requisite essential to conjugal felicity. Her husband was weak and dissolute, and had either a natural imbecillity of understanding, or had impaired his mental faculties by early debauchery. *To the caprice of this feeble and dissipated prince.*

she was sacrificed at the age of seventeen. Their union, which, from the beginning, was any thing but an alliance of hearts and affections, was rendered doubly unhappy by the intrigues of factious ministers, who fomented and kept up a constant animosity between them. The attachment of the king, if it may deserve the name, thus alienated, partly in consequence of his own excesses, and partly from the rival jealousies of court parasites, had subsided from cold formality into cruel disrespect. He did not treat her even with common civility; and allowed her to be publicly insulted in her own palace, by the Russian Minister at Copenhagen. His resentment fell on all who were guilty of taking her part, and his favourite cousin the Prince of Hesse, was disgraced for no other crime.

Such was the condition of this neglected and ill-fated Queen, when Struensee entered on his administration. By his insinuating address he soon gained her confidence, and from pity or gallantry took an interest in her sufferings. His influence over the listless monarch was the means of restoring her to his good graces; although this desirable reconciliation proved the harbinger of his own ruin, by furnishing his enemies with plausible reasons of attack.

Whether these imputations were founded on truth, or were merely the offspring of detraction and disappointed malignity, has never been clearly ascertained, as much credit cannot be attached either to the integrity of her prosecutors, or to the justice of the legal measures adopted to substantiate the charges against her. In the suit of divorce which was commenced soon after her arrest-

ment, many criminative circumstances were sworn to ; but the witnesses were generally those who had been employed as spies on her conduct, and most of their evidence was capable of an innocent explanation. If her own confessions are true, declared in her last moments to a respectable clergyman, the accusations of her enemies were utterly groundless ; and as to her signing with her own hand a declaration of her guilt, the deed appears to have been altogether the contrivance of cruel and malicious artifice, extorted from her in an agony of despair, and with the hope of saving the life of the unfortunate Count. The avowal of an illicit intercourse made by Struensee himself to the commissioners, is said to have been obtained by threats of torture, or some faint hopes of preservation ; although the statements he made in his penitential conferences with the learned divine who attended him during his imprisonment, do not admit of so favourable an interpretation. As nothing criminal, however, was ever legally proved, sympathy for the misfortunes, and even the faults of an injured Queen, will incline us to put the most charitable construction on levities that cannot be defended ; and to conclude that nothing criminal occurred. At the same time, the greatest share of virtuous abhorrence will fall on the conspirators themselves, who made her imprudence or her infirmities a cloak for their own base purposes of ambition or revenge. It cannot, however, be concealed or denied, that her imprudence was great and inexcusable, and considering the libertine character of Struensee, it would require the strongest counter-evidence to wipe off the suspicion. Not only in private, but at theatres, assemblies, and even in the public streets

of Copenhagen, she manifested a very injudicious preference for the Count. Neither remonstrances, nor motives of personal or prudential regard, could induce her to moderate the testimonies of her partiality towards him. Such was her want of propriety and discretion, that she frequently rode out with him, habited completely in the dress of a gentleman, without any part of female attire; and though this disguise was then far from being uncommon, or reckoned unbecoming in Northern manners, and implied no immodesty of deportment, yet it tended to increase the clamour and irritation which other indiscretions had raised.

The King, who was a mere pageant of state, remained a passive and indifferent spectator of these transactions, and never expressed nor seemed to feel the slightest resentment at the behaviour of either herself or her favourite. The powers of his mind, as well as his body, had sunk into a state of apathy or premature dotage, which rendered him not only callous to the scandals of his court, but incapable of taking any part in the management of public affairs. The administration of the State had devolved therefore entirely on the Queen, Struensee, and their adherents, who ruled with absolute and uncontrolled authority.

Of the acts or the policy of Struensee's ministry, it scarcely falls within our province or our intention to speak. It is with his character as a libertine and an infidel that we have to do, and not as a statesman or a politician. On this part of his history, therefore, our remarks shall be brief and general.

In the important office to which he was so unexpectedly raised, the Count showed himself to be a

man of unquestionable abilities, and far beyond what might have been augured from his habits and inexperience. His powers of application were great; he was rapid and decisive in his resolutions, as well as enlarged and patriotic in his views. Many of his public measures were calculated to improve and to aggrandize the state over which he presided; although others of them were unadvised, illiberal, and unpopular. Though well-meant, his policy was often ill-judged, and easily misled by insidious adversaries. His impetuosity sometimes impelled him to rash counsels, and reckless legislation; braving prejudices, that greater mildness or prudence would have disarmed, and offending interests that might have been easily reconciled. He irritated the military by dissolving the guards; and thus weakened his own authority, by throwing the discontented satellites of arbitrary power into the ranks of his enemies. He excited the just resentment of the nobility by the suppression of the Privy Council; and by repealing a very ancient law inflicting capital punishment on adultery, he raised against him the clamorous indignation of the people, who regarded this step, and perhaps not without reason, as a mark of his approbation of that vice, and an inlet to licentiousness. Some of his improvements, however, were laudable and excellent; and it ought not to be forgotten, that he was the first minister of an absolute monarch that abolished the torture. He interested himself to obtain freedom for the enslaved husbandmen; and granted to Calvinists, Moravians, and even to Catholics, the free exercise of their religious worship.

In his disposition he was generous, frank, and *without* hypocrisy; but he was deficient in that

profound judgment, that unwearied vigilance, and political sagacity, which were necessary for maintaining him in his precarious elevation. These deficiencies became more and more apparent, in proportion as the difficulties of his station increased. Towards the close of his ministry, when his enemies were become numerous, powerful, and implacable, his strength and presence of mind seemed to have forsaken him, and his conduct in many instances betrayed a strange absence of all foresight or address.

His moral character was, however, far more exceptionable than his political; and his private licentiousness seems to have been the secret spring of several legislative measures, which were not only disgraceful and odious in themselves, but which proved the forerunners of that indignation and infamy which at last overwhelmed him, and terminated his eventful and infatuated career. Profligacy and ambition were the rocks on which he split. His moral principles were corrupt, and he indulged without consideration or remorse, in every species of voluptuousness. In a Court immersed in dissipations and criminal pleasures of all kinds, he stood forth the avowed patron, and the guilty partaker of every fashionable vice. At masked balls, and other foreign amusements of that sort, then for the first time introduced into the Danish metropolis, he was the gay leader, and the indefatigable promoter of whatever tended to foster or encourage the dark artifices of gallantry and intrigue. This wretched policy was designed partly to win over to his own faction such of the Danish nobility, as the inglorious love of sensual indulgences might dispose to become his

associates, and partly to relax those wholesome restraints of ancient discipline, which had hitherto secured the national morality of the Danes against the contagion of foreign manners.

The profligacy of Struensee did not confine itself to the gratification of his personal desires; it was the object of his perverted ambition to corrupt the purity, and to undermine the principles, of the Court and the capital, to remove the marks of right and wrong, to hold out every incentive to iniquity, and to create every facility for its indulgence. He procured the banishment of Count Bernstorff, an old and favourite minister of the crown, a man of the most unimpeachable integrity, and whose stern and primitive character might have proved an obstacle to that general corruption of morals which he was labouring to consummate. It is highly probable the same bold and unprincipled contempt for the common decency of society, might weigh with him in repealing the severe and barbarous law against adultery,—a measure from which he secretly expected to gain a large accession of adherents, perhaps of general popularity; although its effect, like some of his other attempts to make proselytes to his licentious opinions, was rather to excite feelings of disgust and abhorrence, being considered as no less than holding out a reward for the commission of the crime; accordingly, this act, however meritorious in itself, and in regard to the interests of humanity, was everywhere received with strong marks of national indignation.

Being a disbeliever in Revelation, and a confessed scoffer, he shewed the same culpable anxiety to propagate a universal scepticism in religion, as well as in morals; and nothing but the high

of virtue and propriety that obtained in the country, could have baffled the insidious arts of the Minister, or checked the infectious example of the Court, from descending and communicating itself through the whole mass of the population. But fortunately his career of dissipation and misgovernment was destined to be but short, and his fate has left an instructive warning to those, who being either born with the opportunities of doing good, or having raised themselves by their talents to become the instruments of utility and happiness to the world, wilfully pervert these natural advantages from their original purpose, and turn them into occasions to mislead, to corrupt, and destroy mankind.

While occupied with a constant succession of courtly excesses, or gay amusements that seemed to leave nothing to apprehend; and while precaution was laid asleep in the indulgence of criminal pleasures, the enemies of Struensee were secretly concocting their plans and preparing for his destruction. The Queen dowager and her son, Prince Frederic, were at the head of the hostile party. They were joined by several of the nobility and men of rank, who were indignant at the conduct of the minister, and irritated to see themselves superseded by an obscure stranger, and excluded by this unnatural preference from places of hereditary trust and official authority. The principal actors in this revolutionary scene, were Count Rantzau, who had formerly been his colleague in the editorship of the Altona Journal, and afterwards intrusted by him with the charge of foreign affairs; and Colonel Koller Banner, whose influence among the soldiery, with whom Struensee

see was no favourite, was sufficient to draw a considerable number of them over to their party. Their plan was to apprehend the persons of the Queen and the Count, at the anniversary festival which was always kept on the 1st day of January; a ceremony at which the Court and the Royal Family usually assisted. The promiscuous multitudes that assembled on this occasion near the palace, seemed to offer an opportunity too favourable to be neglected; and the military accordingly had orders to break in among the crowd, arrest the unguarded victims, or even put them to death on the spot, should any resistance be attempted.

This scheme, however, which so many circumstances appeared to facilitate, was disconcerted at the very point of execution, by an anonymous warning sent to a nobleman in the Queen's household, enjoining him to be absent if he regarded his safety. This mysterious intimation he communicated to her Majesty, who, on pretence of indisposition, immediately announced her determination not to be present at the festivity. This resolution, of course, frustrated the design at the time; but the failure of the project neither inspired the persecuted party with sufficient caution against similar attempts, nor did it relax the activity of their opponents in renewing their machinations, and watching the advantage of some more favourable crisis. Such an opportunity soon presented itself in a masked-ball which was to be given in the Royal Palace, on the 15th of January 1772. The arrangements were settled with all the skill and secrecy that appeared requisite to insure success. Rantzau undertook the delicate task of

persuading the King to sign the order for their arrest ; and Colonel Banner, a man of intrepid and decisive character, and the animating spirit of the whole enterprise, had the important commission of seizing Struensee.

At the conclusion of the masquerade, and about four o'clock in the morning, when the King had retired to his bed-chamber, and the plot seemed ripe for action, Rantzau, whose treachery, arising either from a jealousy of some of his accomplices, or from compunctions of gratitude for Struensee's friendship and former services, had nearly overturned the whole scheme, repaired directly to his majesty, informed him that a conspiracy existed against his person and government, at the head of which were his wife, Struensee, and several of their associates ; and that if he valued his life or his security, a warrant must instantly be signed for their apprehension. This discovery, sudden and unexpected as it was, did not altogether persuade the King as to the reality of his danger, or the truth of Rantzau's representation, and he hesitated to affix his name to the paper ; but the Queen dowager and Prince Frederic being called in, by means of artifice and exaggeration, succeeded at length in procuring his reluctant assent, and the order was signed accordingly.

The Queen and Struensee, who had danced together the greater part of the night, and continued several hours after the King had withdrawn, were retired to their apartments, and no obstacle was left for the conspirators to encounter, that could in the least oppose or frustrate their purpose. Banner seizing the moment when all was dark and solitary, repaired immediately to Count Struensee's

chamber, forced open the door, and found him asleep in his bed. The Count submitted quietly, as, in fact, he was totally unprepared for resistance, having no weapons near him, and no other clothes than the masquerade dress he had worn at the ball. He was permitted to wrap himself up in his fur cloak, as the weather was extremely cold, and immediately conveyed in a coach to the Citadel, where he was imprisoned and loaded with irons.

Brandt, his companion in misfortune, was arrested at the same time. When the soldiers entered his room he started up, seized his sword, and put himself in an attitude of defence; but the soldiers levelling their pieces, and threatening to fire on him, he yielded up his sword, surrendered himself prisoner, and was conducted, under a guard, to the place where his friend was already in confinement. Various others of their associates shared a similar fate, or had centinels placed at the doors of their apartments.

Early next morning, the Queen was seized by Rantzau, who with three officers rushed with drawn swords into her chamber, and compelled her to rise from her bed. After making repeated and heroic attempts in vain to gain her liberty, she was hurried away, half-dressed, with her infant daughter in her arms, and a single attendant, to Cronenbourg, a fortress about twenty-four miles from Copenhagen, where she was committed to close prison. Her fate was for some time doubtful, and she probably owed to her near alliance with the British crown, that measures of extreme severity were not adopted against her by the new Danish ministry. It was proposed to immure her for life in some one of the state-prisons; and the solitary and sequester-

ed Castle of Aalborg, in the peninsula of Jutland, was destined for her reception. But the interposition of the British government procured her a reprieve from this dreary captivity, and the Castle of Zell was fixed on for her destination, an ancient and noble Gothic edifice, and every way fitted for the residence of the royal exile. Here she lived, if not in a state of splendour and magnificence, at least in a style of elegance and comfort, that mitigated to her in a great degree this dismal and unexpected reverse of fortune. The liberality of the King of England supplied her with pecuniary resources, and provided her a suitable household, composed chiefly of Hanoverian nobility of both sexes. After a residence at Zell of scarcely two years and a-half, she was snatched away at the age of twenty-four, in the prime of youth; rendered by her imprudence and her misfortunes, the object at once of censure and commiseration.

The conspirators exulted over the fallen fortunes of their prostrate victims with a barbarous and unmanly insolence. The very next day the King was paraded through the streets in a carriage drawn by eight milk-white horses. The city was illuminated, as if in honour of some glorious victory over a foreign enemy, which had saved their country from ruin. The clergy were accused of uttering from their pulpits severe and unchristian invectives; and the populace, inflamed by their declamations, pillaged from sixty to a hundred houses.

It is matter of surprise, that so numerous and powerful a faction, many of whom, if not taken separately, or by stratagem, would unquestionably have had sufficient influence to overthrow the whole conspiracy, should have been

at once and completely crushed without opposition, or much popular commotion. But it shows that the course of events is arranged and regulated by a policy superior to that of human wisdom; and that what appears a trifle or an accident, is in reality the grand hinge on which the mightiest consequences are destined to turn. A singular fatality seems indeed to have attended the Queen and all her adherents; for Rantzen was prepared not only to desert his own party, but had determined to reveal the whole secret to Struensee; and for this purpose had actually written only a few hours before the ball commenced, desiring to have an interview with him at his own apartments on business of the utmost importance. If therefore the unfortunate Count had gone home, as was his usual practice after business, he would have been put in possession of intelligence, that would not only have extricated him from his perilous situation, but enabled him to have avenged himself on his adversaries. But being detained rather late by a variety of affairs, he did not, as was his general custom, return to his own apartments, but went directly to the ball-room, and thus lost the opportunity of benefiting, by the treachery or friendship of a faithless conspirator.

A committee was appointed to inquire into his affairs, and discoveries were made, of a nature which left no doubt that his life would fall a sacrifice, if not to the public justice of his country, at least to the vengeance of a victorious faction. Many who pitied his misfortunes, when they saw him precipitated from the summit of power and favour, to which his talents had raised him, yet rejoiced at the termination of his ministry, and looked

upon his downfall as one of the happiest occurrences that had happened in their lives. They considered it as the restoration of public decency and moral order, which the acts and licentious examples of his government were rapidly driving into exile. It seemed to be a severe but necessary check for preventing the national manners from universal contamination,—the only safeguard that could protect the rights of piety and virtue against those dangerous encroachments that threatened to subvert and abolish them. Among all sober and reflecting men, there was but one opinion, that during his administration, religion had every thing to fear; and that the morals of the people, at least of the capital, could not long have withstood the contagious influence of the Court, which was gradually undermining their ancient purity, and opening the way for a general deluge of vice and profanity to overspread the kingdom. He had always, even before the time of his political greatness, shewn himself to be a libertine in principle, and a sceptic, or rather an avowed infidel in his religious sentiments. This was the opinion of his character among those who knew him most intimately; and that their estimate was by no means ill-founded, seems clearly enough proved by many of his public regulations, his patronizing and promoting a scandalous laxity of manners, and his abolishing such laws as tended to restrain intemperance and immorality.

Even those who entertained the most favourable impressions of him, regarded him as a man of gallantry, reckless of consequences, and entirely devoted to pleasure and ambition. His fate, therefore, appeared to them but the accomplishment of

a calamity that might easily have been foretold, a just punishment for those errors and crimes which he himself happily saw reason to condemn, and lamented with tears of penitential sorrow. The immediate perpetrators of his ruin, however, cannot be allowed the credit of motives so virtuous or so honourable. With them, his irreligion, his immoralities, or even his political delinquencies, were only the instruments or pretext by which they contrived to effect his destruction; and it must be admitted that he fell a victim, as much to the intrigues of a discontented and aspiring faction, as to his own imprudent or unprincipled conduct.

After he had been for nearly six weeks in close and cruel confinement, the new ministry, well knowing the fate that ultimately awaited him, manifested a laudable sympathy and concern for his spiritual welfare, by affording him an opportunity of changing his infidel opinions before he should be called out of the world. Dr Munter, minister of one of the German churches in Copenhagen, and an eminent theologian, was appointed, by the king's express orders, to attend him during his imprisonment, and to administer such religious advice and consolation as might be best adapted to the melancholy situation of the prisoner. Little is known of this foreign divine; but the account he has left us of his professional visits, on the present occasion, prove him to have been a man of great humanity, as well as a conscientious and considerate minister of religion.

It was at this time, also, that the penitent nobleman drew up, and wrote with his own

hand, his famous Confession, which did honour, both to his ability as a writer, and his sincerity as a convert. In this paper, which still remains an authentic monument of his religion and piety, he intended partly to efface the bad impressions his example had made on the minds of others, but chiefly to inform the world that his views and sentiments were really altered, and to relate how this alteration was produced. It was meant to convince those into whose hands it might fall, whether Christians or not, that he had become a believer after mature deliberation,—and that he died such; that he had examined the subject of religion coolly, and reasoned upon it, and therefore obviated every suspicion which his enemies might insinuate, of his having turned Christian from fear, or weakness of understanding. From it, therefore, a tolerably clear idea may be formed as to the important alteration that took place in his views, as well as of the strange creed, both in morals and religion, by which he had contrived to silence his conscience, and palliate or justify the extravagances of his life. The declarations he makes there, and in his conferences, only add another confirmation to what usually happens with sceptics and infidels in general; that their unbelief is a disease of the heart, rather than of the understanding,—that they first quit the paths of virtue, before they attempt to shake off the restraints of Christianity, or deny the truth of revelation.

Voluptuousness, he acknowledged, had been his chief passion, and had contributed most to his moral depravity. His opinion had always been, that he lived for no other end but to procure himself

agreeable sensations. He had reduced every thing to this standard, and all his actions, even such as were performed for the attainment of laudable or charitable purposes, he regarded merely as means to promote his own pleasure. In youth he had blindly abandoned himself to all sorts of dissipation. "Being at the University," says he, "I lived now and then for whole months together in dissipation and extravagance; but then I returned to my studies for a time again. Improving and forming my heart I never thought of, till I was three and twenty years of age." When he found the bad consequences of this irregular life he endeavoured to restore his health by temperance and regularity. But this was only a preparation for a new course of guilty enjoyments; for sooner was his health recovered, than he plunged again into sensual indulgences, confining him perhaps more within the bounds of rational restraint. In these excesses he could not even plead the common excuse of vicious companions, or outward temptations. He confesses himself to have been his own seducer,—that he administered with his own hand the fatal poison which tainted the principle of his heart,—every action of his life, brought him at last to an untimely grave.

Much of this moral contamination he had contracted at an early period, from reading books which contained unsound or perverted notions with regard to virtue and religion. He was conversant with the writings of most of the French philosophers, and personally acquainted with several of them. He had studied Rousseau, whose here opinions in ethics are well known. Helvetius, whom he greatly admired, had made him a

liever in the absolute perfection of human reason, and the all-sufficiency of man's natural powers. Voltaire's innumerable, scurrilous, and sarcastic pieces against Christianity, in which the same attacks are repeated over and over again, under new names, and in a different disguise, he had read with avidity, and may be considered as one of the many unwary and misguided victims, who fell a sacrifice in the conspiracy of that arch-infidel against religion. Captivated by his wit and humour, he was blind to those numerous falsehoods, contradictions, and gratuitous assumptions, that, were there nothing else objectionable, must render his infamous productions altogether unworthy of credit or reputation.

From Boulanger, a writer miserably deficient as to accurate information in history and antiquity,—whose compositions are a mere tissue of falsehoods and absurdities, and as little worthy of credit or confidence as Voltaire's, he picked up some frivolous and hypothetical objections against Christianity: That fear was the origin of all religions among the ancients; that all calamities which could befall men, as earthquakes, fires, inundations, war, &c. they used to look upon as punishments from their gods, though they arose from natural causes; and to appease the wrath of their deities, they came to think of religion. These and similar unfounded conjectures, he embraced as undeniable facts, and believed that Boulanger had proved very clearly from history the random assertions made in his *Antiquité Devoilée*. This infidel author, as the reader perhaps knows, was a contemporary of Paine, and like him a zealous apostle of the French philosophy. Revealed religion he discarded as a

fable ; piety he ridiculed as enthusiasm, and with contempt the idea of future rewards and punishments. No system of morals could be more grateful to libertines than his, as it confined views wholly to this world, teaching that their whole duty consisted in their behaviour to the members of society ; that they could only be injured by injuring each other ; and that their conduct, however impious, could not offend the Deity. The doctrine of immortality he rejected entirely. His accommodation with the creed then presented to the National Convention of France, who solemnly enacted, That the soul perishes with the body ; although they afterwards thought proper to rescind this blasphemous edict, and declare the soul immortal.

Prejudiced in this manner against religion, by his passions, vanity, and perverted views, even the revelation became a stumbling-stone to his belief, and a source of offence. A revelation he looked upon as altogether unnecessary ; since he thought he could discover in the nature of man, sufficient motives and springs to make him virtuous. Its evidence appeared to him dubious ; and its relation to be very improbable. The effect of religion, within himself, he had never perceived, at least never attended to them. Its doctrine seemed to contradict all his pre-conceived notions. Its morals appeared to him too severe, and entirely superseded, since a system equally perfect, and useful, might be found in the writings of philosophers : human nature, he believed, contradicted its precepts, and was directly at variance with them. He urged, as a formidable objection, that Christianity was known but among

part of mankind—that it made very little impression where it was known—that few of those who did profess it, acted agreeably to its precepts—that its abuse had produced a great many fatal consequences; since it was chargeable with cruelty, persecution, and bloodshed, and had been made a cloak for the most diabolical crimes.

Amongst other reasons for his rejecting the arguments for Christianity, were, the improbability of miracles, and the mysterious nature of the atonement. The objections commonly urged against the credibility of supernatural events, appeared to him unanswerable; and when he reflected on the redemption of Christ, it seemed repugnant to his ideas of the divine love, and hardly reconcileable with mercy or justice. He imagined God might have forgiven sins, and made men happy without this. That there was a Supreme Being, he saw no reason to doubt; but he denied the existence of a future state, the moral responsibility of human actions, the immortality of the soul, and the retribution of rewards and punishments. These articles being discarded from his creed, he adopted another, as he conceived, more rational and agreeable,—one that would permit him to enjoy his irregular pleasures without impairing his satisfaction, by torturing him with consequences and reflections.

“I endeavoured,” says he, “to imprint on my mind such principles as I judged proper to govern my actions, and which I thought would answer the end I had in view. My memory was filled with moral rules, but at the same time, I had various excuses to reconcile a complying reason with the weaknesses and the infirmities of the human

heart. My understanding was prepossessed with doubts and difficulties against the infallibility of those means, by which we arrive at truth and certainty. My will was, if not fully determined, yet secretly much inclined to comply only with such duties as did not lay me under the necessity of sacrificing my favourite inclinations. I believed, from the consideration of God and the nature of man, that there were no particular obligations towards the Supreme Being, besides those which are derived from the admiration of his greatness, and a general gratitude on account of our existence.

“The actions of men, so far as they are determined by notions produced by natural sentiments, by agreeable or disagreeable impressions, from external objects, from education, custom, and the different circumstances he is in, appeared to me to be such as could, in particular instances, neither please nor displease God, any more than the different events in nature, which are founded in its external laws. I was satisfied in observing, that general as well as particular instances, tended to one point, namely, the preservation of the whole; and this alone was what I thought worthy the care of a Supreme Being. I thought that virtue consisted in nothing else but in actions which are useful to society, and in a desire of producing them.—Ambition, love of our native country, natural inclination to what is good, a well-regulated self-love, or even the knowledge of religion, when they are considered as motives of virtue, I looked upon as indifferent things, according as they happened, to make different impressions upon particular persons. Reason and reflection were, in my opinion, the only teachers and regulators of virtue: And

he is to be accounted the most virtuous, whose actions are the most useful, the most difficult to be practised, and of the most extensive influence; and no one could be blamed who observed the laws of his country, and the true principles of honour."

With such principles, and under such convictions, he found it not difficult to excuse his favourite passions. The indulgence of these appeared to him, at the most, to be only a weakness, if they were not attended by bad consequences to himself or to others; and these he thought could be prevented by prudence and circumspection. He alleged that many who pretended to honour and virtue, yet indulged them, and even excused them: That the manners of the times permitted, silently, liberties which were condemned only by the too rigid moralist, but were treated with more indulgence and tenderness by those who were acquainted with the human heart. Whenever he saw means to gain his ends, he fancied it very hard if he should not make use of them. "I cannot help it," said he, "that my natural temper and disposition is so much for voluptuousness; it therefore cannot be imputed to me for a crime, if I live according to this my disposition." Continnence was, in his eyes, a virtue produced by prejudice; and he had heard of whole nations that subsisted without knowing or practising it. He had dismissed all fears and expectations of futurity, as the best excuse he could devise for an irregular life, the only opiate that could quiet the reproaches of conscience, or support and tranquillize his mind under misfortune. The happiness and rewards promised hereafter, were in fact no spur or encouragement to him. His great

delight in sensual pleasures persuaded him, that as there was nothing of this kind among the joys of heaven, they could have no charms or relish for him.

Such is an outline of the false but firmly rooted system of religion and morals which Struensee had fabricated for himself, which he had substituted in preference to that of the gospel, and believed to be much better adapted to the present condition of human life. And when we reflect how flattering these opinions are to corrupt nature, and how ably defended they were in this case, by the resources of a vigorous and powerful understanding, we can well suppose that it required no small portion of professional skill and judicious management in his pious instructor, to make him discredit and abandon them. Dr Munter had obstacles of peculiar difficulty to encounter in contending with a man, who, by his own talents alone, had raised himself from a comparatively humble situation, to almost despotic power in a foreign Court; whose principles were so strongly fortified by arguments, and his moral feelings hardened and seared into a state of the most hopeless and callous insensibility.

In this delicate and difficult task he acquitted himself in the most satisfactory manner; and proved the happy instrument in the hand of Providence of effecting a complete conversion, and reclaiming this profligate nobleman from the paths of scepticism and immorality, to a firm conviction of the Christian revelation. He imparted his instructions in the form of conferences or conversations on the several topics that came under discussion in course of his attendance. He kept a register or journal of each separate visit, in which the

arguments and objections are stated exactly as they were propounded; and which exhibits the character of the distinguished penitent, as well as of his spiritual teacher, in a most interesting point of view. Never was a case of infidelity treated with greater judgment, or more tenderness, and his conduct is a model of imitation for any clergyman, should the duties of his profession place him in similar circumstances. It is impossible to touch the wounds of a sufferer more gently; to allay the agitations of his mind, by presenting religion as the consoler, not as the disturber of his dying moments; or to lead him to try his actions by a purer morality than nature or philosophy ever prescribed. As Dr Munter's journal of this conversation is less read than it deserves to be, and until lately re-printed, was scarcely known in this country to exist, we shall endeavour to comprise all of it that is most interesting or valuable within our limits. Nor shall we think it necessary to offer any apology for sometimes using the Author's words in preference to our own, as every reader will perceive how much of their dramatic effect many parts of these interviews would have lost, had the details been given in the form of narrative instead of conversation.

As soon as Dr Munter received the King's orders to visit the prisoner, he readily obeyed the mandate; hoping, if not to change his opinions, at least to alleviate his misfortunes, so far as his professional skill could avail. "I did not know the man," he observes, "nor did he know me; and as to our principles and sentiments, they were, to all appearance, very different. I had even to expect that my profession, and the intent I visited

him with, would make him distrust me; nor, on the other hand, had I much reason to put any great confidence in him. However, I entertained some hopes, that in his present situation he might find even a conversation with a clergyman not quite insupportable; and the compassion I had for him, would never permit me to prepossess him against me by severe and ill-timed expostulations. Besides, I was told by some of his former acquaintance, that he was open, and in some respects sincere; I thought it therefore not impossible to establish a friendship between us, that might promote my intention concerning him. With these hopes I began to visit him, and I praise God for the blessing he has granted to my labours."

His primary object was to lay some foundation for a mutual confidence, as without that, his instructions could have no beneficial result,—to ascertain, if possible, the real sentiments of his disciple regarding religion; and impress his mind with the importance of the services he had come to offer.

The first visit took place in the beginning of March, nearly two months after his imprisonment. Since his arrest, the Count had remained in close and solitary confinement in his dungeon, with irons on his hands and feet, and an iron collar fastened to the wall round his neck. But, humbled and fettered as he was in his personal condition, his mind was untouched with remorse, and nothing seemed farther from his thoughts, than the supports of religion or the visitations of a clergyman. This interview, therefore, was by no means flattering; and did not sugar much success. "When he was told I was there and wished to speak to him, he

inquired whether I came by command? Being answered in the affirmative, he complied. He received me with a sour and gloomy countenance, in the attitude of a man who was prepared to receive many severe reproaches, with a silence that shewed contempt. We were alone, and I was greatly moved, beholding the misery of a man who, but a few weeks ago, was the first and the most powerful of all the King's subjects. I could neither hide my feeling, nor would I. Good Count, said I, you see I come with a heart that is sensibly affected for you: I know and feel the regard that is due to an unhappy man, whom God, I am sure, never intended to be born for such a misfortune. I sincerely wish to make my visits, which I am ordered to pay you, agreeable and useful. Our conversation will now and then be disagreeable both to you and me; but I profess most solemnly, that I shall tell you, even these melancholy truths which I have to communicate, without severity to you, but not without pain to myself. I know I have no right to give you any unnecessary uneasiness, and you may depend upon my sincerity. Should it happen that accidentally in our conversation, a word should slip from me which perhaps may appear offensive, I declare beforehand, that it never was said with such a design; and I beg, that in such instances, you will overlook my precipitation." During these candid and tender professions, the Count quitted his severe and affected attitude, and smoothed his countenance into something like attentive serenity; but at the same time, with an air and look that seemed to bespeak coldness and indifference to the subject, he replied, "Oh! you may say what you please."

Dr Munter observed, he would say nothing that was not dictated by a concern for his future happiness; that he only wished to raise his attention to a consideration of his moral state, and how he stood in regard to God. "I had several reasons," says he, "to decline the King's order, which brings me to you; but the hope of comforting you in your misfortunes, and of advising you to avoid greater ones, was too important for me. Do not charge me with views of a meaner sort. I come not for my own sake, but only with an intent of being useful to you. If you are convinced of this, you will grant me that confidence, which you cannot refuse a man who is anxious for your welfare. I shall return it with the most thankful friendship, although you should in the beginning take me for a weak and prejudiced man."

The Count here expressed, with some emotion, his full persuasion that these visits were designed solely for his advantage; but he had no expectation of receiving any comfort from them in his dying moments,—imagining that he possessed sufficient courage within himself for encountering that trying occasion, without the aid of adventitious supports. "In all my adversities," said he, "I have shewn firmness of mind, and agreeably to this character I hope I shall die,—not like a hypocrite." "Hypocrisy," replied his friend, "in such moments, would be still worse than an affected firmness, though even this itself is a kind of hypocrisy. In case of death, do not trust to your former resolution; and do not compare your former adversities with that fate which is now ready to fall upon you. Do not cherish that unhappy thought of dying like a philosophical

hero, for I doubt whether you will be able to keep it up to the end. I am afraid your courage will then leave you, though you may force yourself to shew it outwardly. But perhaps you entertain some hopes of saving your life?" "No," said he, "I flatter myself with no hopes at all." "But you do not see death near you; you do not know the time when you shall leave the world; suppose I was ordered to tell you that you were to die to-day or to-morrow, would not your courage fail you?" "I do not know," said he.

His friend here endeavoured to impress him with the great importance of considering the subject with attention. "It is to prepare you for eternity," said he, "that I chiefly aim,—though I must expect that we are not of the same opinion in regard to the state of man after death. Yet I cannot help thinking that there never was a time when you were fully convinced that there is no life to come, and consequently neither rewards nor punishments, though you might have persuaded yourself that there is not. Your inward feelings have frequently contradicted you. The thought of eternity frightened you, though unfortunately you had art enough to stifle it in the birth." To this appeal he listened with attention, but would not own that he ever had any inward impressions of futurity, or had been afraid of it. He admitted that the thought of entirely ceasing to be, was disagreeable to him; for he wished to live, even if it were with less happiness than he now enjoyed in his prison. But, he added, he did not find the thought of total annihilation so terrible as it was to many who entertained the same sentiments.

His venerable instructor then proceeded to shew

the possibility of a future life,—that there was at least as much probability for it as there was against it,—that even from mere reason, it might be evinced that eternity is to the highest degree probable, nay almost certain; and that even supposing it only probable, it became a matter of importance for those who might have cause to fear an unhappy state hereafter, to prepare themselves against it, or endeavour at least to make it tolerable. To this he assented, but added, “ You will hardly make me believe that there is a future life: and though you may perhaps convince my understanding by reasons which I cannot overthrow, my heart, however, will not yield to the conviction. My opinion is so strongly woven into my sentiments,—I have so many arguments in favour of it,—I have made so many observations from anatomy and physic, which confirm it, that I think it will be impossible for me to renounce my principles. This, however, I promise, that I will not wilfully oppose your endeavours to enlighten me, but rather wish, as far as lies in my power, to concur with you. I will not dissemble, but honestly tell you of what I am convinced, and what not.”

Upon these professions of fairness and honesty, Dr Munter expressed his wish to be made acquainted with his system of religion, that he might be able to judge wherein their opinions differed. “ I am inclined,” he added, “ to think you are not a Christian, and you may easily guess how much I wish you to be one. It is not my intention to force Christianity upon you, but I hope to represent it to you as so important and amiable, that you yourself will think you stand greatly in need

of it." To this the Count replied: That it was true he was very far from being a Christian, though he acknowledged and adored a Supreme Being, and believed that the world and mankind had their origin from God. He could never persuade himself that man consisted of two substances; but looked upon him as a mere machine: And though it was God that first animated this human machine; yet as soon as its motion ceased, that is, when man died, there was no more for him either to hope or to fear. He did not deny that man was endowed with some power of liberty, but his free actions were determined only by his sensations: Therefore man's actions could be accounted moral only so far as they related to society. Every thing that man could do, he believed, was in itself indifferent: That God did not concern himself about our actions; and if their consequences were in man's own power, and he could prevent their being hurtful to society, nobody had a right to reproach him about them. He could not see why future punishments were necessary to satisfy the justice of God, even though it be allowed that God regarded our actions; and thought that man was punished enough already in this world for his transgressions.

It seemed necessary, therefore, to expose and refute the fallacy of that system which considered man as a mere machine; as upon this theory rested his conclusion, that there could be no future life; a doctrine which at once subverts all religion. Dr Munter was accordingly at considerable pains to unsettle and refute these erroneous notions; but when he had exhausted all his arguments and reasonings he found they had produced but little

effect upon his convert; and had only extorted from him, a concession that the hypothesis for existence of the soul was better founded than contrary; but that many good reasons remained for his adhering to his former sentiments. It was evident, in fact, that this discussion was introduced at too early a stage of their progress. It was to be expected that dry metaphysical argument could have much force on the mind of Struensee in his present situation. He was not competent enough for cool and dispassionate reflection, prepared to examine and weigh the subject of deliberation. His spiritual director, therefore very judiciously abandoned this method of procedure, and adopted another and a more successful scheme, by working upon his good feelings and trying to affect his heart, instead of labouring in vain to convince his understanding.

He had observed that the ruinous effects of his actions on others, had occasioned him more regret than his own misery, or the offence he committed against God; and having discovered this uneasiness,—this tender point, where wounds of his conscience smarted most, he seized hold of the sensation, and made it the object of attack; hoping that this salutary regret might in degrees become more universal, and extend itself towards his other crimes; and that by bringing into action those feelings of sympathy and affection for his friends, a way might ultimately be opened up for the admission of religion. He represented to him how cruelly he had afflicted his parents,—how dreadful the suspense they must be in about his present condition, and how humiliating to them the circumstances of his death.

reminded him how much it was his duty to remove their anxiety about his future state, this being the greatest, and now in his fallen condition, the only comfort on earth he could procure them,—that filial obedience, which as a son it became him to pay them, was a lesson which he might have learnt from the heathen philosophers, and from Confucius himself, whose moral system he had preferred to that of Christ.

He intreated him to reflect how many his voluptuousness had ruined ! That his example, and the propagation of his principles had seduced young men into profligacy ; many of whom had lost their characters, ruined their constitutions, and even met their death in the pursuit of illicit pleasures : That perhaps destitute widows and orphans, whose husbands and fathers had fallen victims to the profligate habits he had taught them, were then crying to the all-knowing God, against the author of their misfortunes : That youthful innocence had often been sacrificed to his lawless passions ; the ties of matrimony violated, which, according to the unanimous opinion of all nations, should be held sacred ; and children, the offspring of his irregularities, were left for want of education or parental care, to become a burden and a disgrace to society. He represented to him what confusions, enmities, and law-suits these would produce, even after his death, in families that might have remained happy, if he had left them unmolested ; and that if every one were to follow his example, human society must necessarily be overturned.

With regard to his political life, he begged him to consider, that instead of being spent for the good of others, it had been rather the means to satisfy

his own passions ; that thousands had been made unhappy through his ambition, which had often put him upon dangerous and violent measures to keep himself in office : That he had arrogated to himself an unconstitutional power, lived at a luxurious expense, and perhaps made too free with the revenues of the State : That he was chargeable with having given new laws inconsiderately, and abolishing established ones without reason ; with having discarded old and approved ministers of the Crown, and chosen new ones without knowing them, and trusting them without being sure of their honesty, merely because he thought they would prove themselves friends and accomplices to his profligate or ambitious purposes : That the morals of the nation had never been his care ; on the contrary, he had rather fostered immorality by bad examples, by giving every facility to commit sin, and even making laws tending to promote it.

At these reproaches, severe and humiliating as they were, the Count seemed to take no offence ; only alleging occasionally, on certain parts of his conduct, something by way of excuse or extenuation. The predominating feelings in his mind, were those of regret and humanity,—regret for those actions that had proved so detrimental to society, and humanity for those friends whom he had precipitated into the same misery and ruin with himself. Reflections on the broken ties of personal friendship,—the remembrance of pleasures mutually enjoyed,—and the melancholy prospect in which they all at last were to terminate, appeared greatly to interest and soften his heart. This certainly was the side on which he felt most tenderly ; and scarcely was it touched when his sensibilities

visibly overpowered him, and he burst into tears, owning, that in this respect he found himself very culpable, and was absolutely at a loss to say any thing in his own defence. The expression of his countenance and his whole attitude, betrayed how much uneasiness this review and examination of his life had occasioned him ; and he appeared to feel a kind of relief in giving vent, in showers of tears, to this inward anxiety.

He confessed without reserve his private licentiousness, his success in corrupting the victims of his passion, and even reconciling them to their vices ; the imprudence and rashness by which he had brought ruin on his friends, and plunged his parents in the deepest affliction ; the ignoble and impure motives of all his public actions, which in the eye of reason deprived them of those pretensions to virtue or philanthropy, to which their outward appearance might seem to entitle them. " I cannot deny," says he, " that I have been a dangerous seducer. I have often deceived innocence by my principles, and even afterwards reconciled them, and made them easy again about their transgressions. I foolishly persuaded myself that these irregularities were consistent with the laws of society ; that the great ones in England and France lead the same unrestrained lives. As to their immorality, I never gave that much consideration. I always believed that it belonged to the clergy to attend to the morals of the people. I judged of the sentiments of the nation by my own ; and imagined that every one, like myself, looked upon pleasure as his only happiness. I am aware that many of my public regulations were precipitate, and framed for selfish ends ; and now that I con-

sider matters more coolly, I perceive they may have been the occasion of great mischief. With regard to religion, I will not conceal that it has frequently been with me a subject of ridicule; but of this kind of inconsiderateness, I have been guilty mostly in the company of such persons as were already prejudiced against it. Though I made no secret of my irreligion, I never made it my business to make proselytes. In all this I acknowledge myself culpable before God and my own conscience."

These unfeigned concessions of having done wrong, appeared to be a material step towards a more general and penitential acknowledgment of guilt. Dr Munter was not insensible of the advantage which it had thrown into his hands, and looked upon it as a promising and hopeful augury of his convert's final reformation. He had already supplied him with an excellent treatise on the immortality of the soul, and the responsibility of men for their actions, which he recommended him to read with attention. This tended powerfully to enlighten and rectify his mind on these subjects; and when its arguments were followed up by a subsequent conversation on the comparative merits of the two systems,—that which would degrade man to the level of the brute creation, and that which elevates him to the image and resemblance of his Maker,—the effect of the whole was to render a future existence not only probable, but highly desirable. The Count admitted that the evidences in its favour were irresistible.

Having kindled in the breast of his disciple a hope and a wish for immortality, Dr Munter wisely declined entering into minute disquisitions respecting the nature and separate existence of the soul,

lest these speculative truths should lead them from their main object, into researches that might tend rather to perplex and bewilder,—to quench instead of cherishing and fanning the smoking flax into warmer desires, and brighter anticipations. It was enough for his purpose in the meantime, that he had brought him to acquiesce and believe in the existence of eternity. This deception,—the persuasion of there being no future life,—which had hitherto rendered him insensible to moral distinctions, and deluded him into a false and fatal security, being removed, the main pillar that supported his system fell in consequence to the ground.

It was no difficult matter now to convince him that his notions of the morality of actions, with reference to their good or bad effects to society, must be altered and rectified before he could promise himself the happiness of that future life, which he sincerely hoped and wished for. “According to your former principles,” observed his reverend friend, “and even by your own rule of judgment, your actions have been proved to be immoral, and incapable of standing the test. But suppose you had to reproach yourself only with being the cause of all the misfortunes of your friends, it must assuredly be very difficult or rather impossible, even on that ground, to bear the scrutiny of God’s stricter account.” “I acknowledge this,” said he, “and therefore shall say nothing to excuse myself before God, and I hope he will not demand this of me. I trust in my repentance and his mercy. Do not you think that God will forgive me on account of this philosophical repentance?” “According to my notion of repentance,” replied the other, “I can give you no

hopes. I know but one way to receive God's pardon, and this is not by a philosophical, but by a Christian repentance. I cannot yet produce the reasons why I am obliged to think so, but if you only reflect on God's mercy in which you trust, you will find that it is this very mercy which makes it necessary for him to be just, and to shew his aversion to moral evil. Such mercy as that of God, which cannot degenerate into weakness, must, no doubt, be very terrible to him who has offended against it."

The impression which these representations had made on the mind of the Count, could now no longer be resisted or concealed. He was concerned about his moral condition; more, however, from the danger he saw himself in, than on account of having offended and incurred the displeasure of God. To increase this sensibility and uneasiness, and to represent the gross immorality of his conduct, as well as the perversity of his motives, in their true light, he was shewn how faulty and untenable his theory had been, as to the morality of human actions;—that their mere relation to society was a false criterion to judge them by,—that to determine their goodness or badness by our own impressions, was an unsafe maxim, since the passions biassed the judgment, and were always ready to supply us with various excuses,—that the weakness and narrow bounds of the understanding, rendered it impossible for us always to foresee or regulate their consequences,—that a higher and more perfect rule must necessarily be supposed, which rule is only to be found in the will of the Deity, whose understanding is infinite, and *not subject*, like ours, to be warped by errors or

infirmities, and who will not permit his divine laws to be trespassed with impunity. This standard, he was informed, was contained in the Scriptures, which he could not fail to have discovered, had he but read them even with the slightest attention; that it was confirmed by the dictates of natural conscience, as might be seen in the most ignorant and savage tribes, who, corrupted as they are by custom and education, yet still retain, amidst all their barbarism, fragments of this original law written on the heart, and will reason on some actions more soundly than civilized nations, whose moral sense has been biassed and tainted by their habits and prejudices.

The Count henceforth admitted unequivocally the fallacy of his own moral theory, and owned that the notion of morality was not a consequence of education, prejudice, or custom, but born with us, and laid deep in our nature: that it took its origin from our Creator; and that, by the dictates of this inward feeling, we were informed of the will of God, in regard to good or bad actions. The inference to be drawn from this was, that since he had transgressed against a higher authority than that of human laws or civil institutions, in order to qualify himself for mercy and forgiveness, it was necessary to try his former life by a severer test, and to acknowledge his faults and crimes: that if he wished to die in the peace and confidence of a Christian, there was no other possibility of attaining this fortitude and tranquillity of soul, than by fulfilling those conditions which God in his word had laid down to us, as the only terms for our receiving his pardon.

The doubts and apprehensions in which he was

now implicated, and which frequently agitated him even to tears, made Christianity appear necessary to him, and he really wished it might comfort him in his last moments, though he still imagined it impossible to be fully convinced of its truth. At the same time, he was aware that his own system could have lent him but a tottering support; and had renounced his former principles, once deemed indisputable, which had made him resolve to approach death without farther scrutiny, and even without receiving a visit or an advice from any clergyman. As he had professed, however, to be candid, and to state without disguise whatever in the Christian religion appeared objectionable or incredible, he proposed at the very outset what seemed to him to be a sort of inconsistency or contradiction,—that Christianity could not be the only way revealed by God for our everlasting happiness, seeing it was so little known among mankind; and even among Christians themselves there were comparatively few that kept its precepts.

To this Dr Munter thought it sufficient at present to remark, that it was but a weak inference against the goodness and justice of God, his not revealing to all men a doctrine which is the only one that can render them happy; since we did not know whether God would not save those who are ignorant of Christianity, by its dispensations, if they behaved as well as lay in their power; and that it could be no reason for a man, whom God had presented with a blessing which he had denied to others, to reject this blessing, or not to value it, because God had not given it to all men. All the blessings of his providence were distributed unequally among men: for instance,

honour, riches, health, talents, and even the knowledge of natural religion; so that this objection defeated itself, by proving more than he intended. Neither was it a more rational inference to conclude, that because Christianity was observed by so very few, therefore it cannot be a sufficient means to answer the purpose God intended it for, and consequently its origin cannot be a divine one. Christianity, it ought to be observed, was the religion of free beings, whose belief must be the result of conviction, and not of force or compulsion; and who are under no controul in a matter which concerns their happiness. Besides, prejudices, errors, and passions, can render the strongest moral arguments ineffectual. However, it cannot be denied that mankind, upon the whole, since the establishment of the Christian religion, have been greatly reformed, and that its power over the human mind is stronger than many seem to credit.

“But,” interrupted the Count, “even good Christians often commit sins. Shall, or can a man in this world be perfect; and is it the intention of Christianity to produce effects, which in our present condition are quite impossible?”

“There is a great difference,” was the reply, “between the sins of a true Christian, of whom only we speak, and between the crimes of a wicked man; the former falls but to rise again,—the latter continues in his transgressions, and repeats them. And if there was but one Christian only upon the whole earth, whose life did honour to his profession, it would be a sufficient reason for every one that knew him, to examine the religion of this single Christian, and to adopt it if it were found well-grounded.” The doubts of the Count were

by no means yet satisfied, though his air expressed an anxiety and concern that seemed to encourage the hope of his soon becoming a Christian.

Before conducting him, however, into the doctrines of the Gospel, Dr Munter thought it better to direct his attention to its precepts, and the excellency of its morals; not doubting that if he was first convinced of this, its mysteries, if laid before him as Scripture proposes them, separated from human explications, would no longer appear improbable or unworthy of credit. He requested him to study the history of Christ as a man, to examine his moral character—his innocence—his disinterested benevolence—his heroic death—subjects which his bitterest enemies could never challenge, and which had extorted praise and admiration even from Voltaire and Rousseau. At the same time, to assist him in his meditations, he presented him with a history of the Life of Christ, and Gellert's Lectures on Morality. These he read in private, and their influence soon became visible, from the altered tone in which he spoke. "Had I but a year ago," he exclaimed, "read such books in retirement from dissipation, I should have been quite another man. The morals and personal conduct of Christ are excellent. The first are undoubtedly the best maxims for men to make themselves happy in all situations in life. Here I have met with many things that have affected me much. I should be quite unreasonable not to own that I ought to have lived as this book teaches me. Had I but made them my companions in the days of my prosperity, I am sure it would have convinced and reformed me. I cannot seriously enough repent

of having led so bad a life, and of having acted upon such wicked principles, and used means so detrimental. My present condition, and even my death, do not concern me so much as my base actions; and it is quite impossible to make any reparation for what I have done to the world."

His attitude was now completely changed into penitence and humility. He expressed in his countenance the shame, sorrow, and uneasiness that overwhelmed him. Frequently he would start, on a sudden, from the couch on which he used constantly to lie,—then sit for half-an-hour together, hanging down his head, buried in deep thought, sobbing and shedding many tears. His forlorn condition excited the sympathy and compassion of his assiduous visitor, who, though it was yet too early to soothe him into absolute repose, by encouraging any thing like presumptuous assurance, nevertheless gave him to hope that his repentance might not be too late; since, with regard to pardon and acceptance with God, there was no distinction between those who came early, and those who came late, if mercy was sought in faith and sincerity.

Of his unfeigned penitence, no doubt almost could now remain. The manner in which he spoke of his past life,—the remorse with which he was touched, and the anguish he felt from the reproaches of conscience, all seemed to indicate that he was in earnest. But he was reminded that neither repentance alone, nor reparation of injuries, nor amendment of life, those means which natural reason recommended for obtaining pardon, were sufficient to expiate our sins before God, or satisfy divine justice: That were a judge to par-

don every criminal upon his shewing signs of grief, or even serious repentance, it would augur weakness, or perhaps goodness, rather than wisdom and justice, or a due respect for the qualities that besit the judicial character.

He was told, that though he could not repair the damages he had done, because he was so near eternity, he nevertheless could still do something which resembled, in some respects, a reparation; which was, that he should endeavour to efface those bad impressions he had made on the minds of the people, by shewing himself now quite a different man in his conversation, and his whole behaviour. To this he remarked, that he had already thought that to be his duty; that he heartily wished he could only contribute something towards the reformation of those of his friends whose morals he had corrupted by his example and his conversation: that he had spoken to an officer about the moral doctrines of Christianity, and exhorted him to obey them strictly, though in several respects he was not yet himself fully convinced.

He had received in course of these conversations, one or two very affecting letters from his parents, reminding him of the paternal admonitions and good examples he had seen and heard in his youth—expressing their grief and concern about his present unhappy circumstances—and recommending him to humble himself before God for his crimes, and fly for refuge to the blood of the Redeemer. The gentle remonstrances and tender solicitations conveyed in these letters, affected him most deeply. He wept in reading them, and begged his friend to write, assuring them that he

was conscious of the afflictions his misconduct had occasioned them ; but that he heartily repented, and would do his best to die like a Christian.

As he was now better prepared for being made acquainted with the arguments in favour of the truth of Christianity, having admitted its excellence, and desired its consolations, Dr Munter had no longer any hesitation in entering fully into the subject with him. He observed that there were two ways to become convinced of the truth of Christianity. The first was a constant practice of Christ's precepts ; by which a man may be convinced by his own experience of the excellency of his religion. The other was a candid examination, whether Christ had proved himself to be a true messenger of God, by delivering a doctrine worthy of God, and by performing undoubted miracles. As to his doctrines, he had himself owned, that they were truly divine ; and if his resurrection, the greatest of his miracles, could be proved, it followed of course that the rest of his miracles were true, or at least might be so. It was necessary, he told him, that he should himself examine the evidences in behalf of this miracle, and that for this purpose he should give him a book, (*West's Observations on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*), written by a deist, who was induced to turn Christian after examining the history of the resurrection.

West's treatise, together with Burnet's philosophical examination of the arguments for Christianity, proved highly satisfactory, and tended to remove many of the ignorant and perverse scruples he had entertained. The following arguments of West made a deep impression on his understand-

ing: That the disciples of Christ were not credulous, but with difficulty were convinced of the resurrection of Christ, by the unanimous testimony of all their senses: That the Jews never examined the affair judicially, though they had the best opportunities for it, and had an interest in shewing it to be fictitious: That the propagation of the gospel must be considered as another argument for the truth of the resurrection; since, if it had not been certain that Christ was risen, Christianity could not have spread so rapidly and so far as it did. In this respect the doctrine of Mahomet was not to be compared with the religion of Christ.

Upon inquiring whether any testimonies of this event were to be met with in heathen authors, the Count was informed that it was mentioned in Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, and Josephus, though the genuineness of the passage in the latter historian has been disputed.

The wonderful harmony and coincidence between the Old Testament and the New, in regard to man's redemption, was next pointed out to him; the several passages of the prophets explained, which corresponded with the evangelists; the intrepid honesty that characterized both the founder and first apostles of the Christian religion, who sacrificed their lives to confirm the truth of what they preached: These furnished evidence that could hardly fail to prepossess every unprejudiced mind in favour of the credibility of the gospel history. Had Christ meant to impose upon the Jews, was the remark of the Count, he would have conformed to their prejudices, availed himself of the literal magnificence with which he was prefigured in ancient prophecy, and appeared among them in

the character of a worldly hero. But he had employed quite different means. He agreed that it was impossible for an impostor to act thoroughly the part of an honest man ; and that there were prophecies which, in regard of their being fulfilled, did not depend entirely upon Christ : For instance, their casting lots on his garments, and his being crucified. One as well as the other depended on accidental circumstances ; for if the Romans had not been at that time masters of Jerusalem, he might not have been crucified, but rather stoned to death.

The several Scripture passages that treat of man's redemption, were diligently canvassed and compared with each other. Dr Munter endeavoured to prove that this redemption, as taught in the Bible, does not contradict any of God's attributes, and is in all respects adapted and suitable to the condition of fallen man : that it rather glorified the Divine perfections, and was absolutely necessary to human happiness. He entreated his penitent most earnestly to convince himself of this chief doctrine of Christianity, that there is no salvation without Christ, and to embrace it for his own everlasting welfare. " I shall raise no difficulties," returned the Count, " but do as much as I can to become convinced of a doctrine which must be of so great importance to me. I have no other hopes but from this quarter only, and why should I not be desirous of partaking thereof ? I formerly thought that whoever embraced Christianity was to renounce all reason ; but I now see plainly that nothing stands more to reason than it does. I promise that I shall do my utmost to make my sentiments conformable to the will of

God ; and I sincerely wish I may have a lively sensation of the comforts of religion." Upon this latter subject he was cautioned not to be too sanguine, since the particular circumstances in which he was placed might perhaps create fear and anxiety towards the close of his life. Besides the natural horror of dissolution, there were the appalling accompaniments with which his death would be attended, and the consciousness of having by his own crimes been the cause of his misfortunes ; these feelings religion might not altogether remove, but it would comfort him by a calm and hopeful prospect into eternity.

At a subsequent interview, they resumed the consideration of the doctrine of the atonement,—the objections which reason might oppose to it,—the manner in which it illustrates the divine perfections,—and its absolute necessity to human happiness. The result of this conversation was a complete triumph over the remaining sophistry and scepticism of the Count, who now for the first time, with tears in his eyes, professed himself a convert and a believer. " I should be guilty," said he, " of the greatest folly, if I would not embrace Christianity with joy, when its arguments are so overbalancing, and when it breathes such general benevolence. Its effects upon my heart are too strong. Oftentimes I cannot help crying when I read the history of Christ. I think already with hope on my death. I have acquainted myself with the most terrifying circumstances. I do not know how I shall be when the awful hour comes ; but at present I am not uneasy about it : I find nothing that makes me anxiously wish for *this life*. I will confidently expect forgiveness of

my sins through Christ. I reflect with grief and indignation on my former idea, that perhaps there was no eternity; and I feel it would be a very unhappy prospect, if all my wishes and expectations of futurity should be vain. I have now examined Christianity with greater exactness than I ever did my old system, and by this examination I am convinced of its truth. I therefore will remain firm; neither my former principles nor new doubts shall henceforth stagger me."

This declaration was listened to by his anxious confessor, with feelings of rapture and gratitude. They embraced each other in a kind of transport. They prayed together fervently. "The scene," says he, "was moving to me beyond description. Never felt I such joy; never have I been so sure of having brought back a sinner from his errors. I shall never forget this solemn and joyful hour, and never cease to praise God for it."

The Bible henceforth became his delight, and his constant study. He frequently prayed to God to enlighten his mind, and to confirm him in the truth. He began to entertain the officers that guarded him with religious conversation. He longed for an opportunity to declare his conviction to all his former acquaintances, especially Count Brandt; and wished that those whom he had seduced might be brought in like manner to alter their sentiments. He was furnished, according to his own request, with books on the authenticity of the sacred writings, proving them to have been the productions of the inspired penmen to whom they are attributed. The excellent works of Dr Less, professor of theology at Gottingen, on the Truth of the Christian Religion, he read

with great advantage, particularly those parts that treat of miracles. The solidity of the arguments there advanced, confirmed his belief in the reality of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, and consequently in the credibility of the doctrines they were intended to prove. He perused, with much interest, Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, a subject which he had expressed a wish to become acquainted with; and was pleased to find many predictions, not merely concerning Christ in particular, but whole nations, fulfilled in the most satisfactory manner.

“An unexceptionable evidence,” he observes, “is as certain as our own experience; and whoever wants the latter testimony, may consider the present state of the Jews who are living witnesses to the truth of Christ's prophecies. No persecution, oppression, or contempt could ever induce this people to mix with other nations, or to adopt their manners and customs. The wonders by which Christ has confirmed his divine mission, can be proved with the same certainty. They were performed without any preparations,—without any circumstances that might have imposed upon the senses,—without any previous expectation,—before a number of incredulous spectators, in such a manner that no imposition can possibly be suspected. They were, besides, of such a nature, that every man of common understanding might perceive that those means which were made use of, never could of themselves produce such effects. A man born blind received his sight,—one that had been four days in the grave came to life again,—a paralytic was restored to health; and all this by only *speaking* a word. If we were to suppose that in

the regular course of nature, such a thing was to happen just at this time, or that God produced these events by the interposition of Almighty power, it follows, in the *first* instance, That Christ must have been informed of it before; and in the *second*, That God heard him: both of which are equally a miracle, and a proof of his divine mission.—Of these facts, and others upon which the truth of revelation is founded, I am now as sure as if I saw them before me. When a number of credible witnesses agree in things in which our senses only are concerned, I am as much convinced of them as if I knew them from my own experience.”

From the short mention made in Less's book of the chief deistical writings, he found that the objections made against revelation, were so very trifling, that he felt ashamed of having suffered himself to be imposed upon by such insignificant arguments. “I never imagined,” says he, “that Christianity was founded upon such strong evidences, or that they would have convinced me so. After a calm examination, I have found them to be unexceptionable; and none, if they only take proper time, and are not against the trouble of meditating, can ever examine it without being convinced of its truth. Every thing is naturally and well connected, and recommends itself to a mind given to reflection. I never found in deistical writings a system so well connected; and upon the whole, I am inclined to believe that there is no such thing as a regular system of infidelity.—The more I read and learn from Scripture, the more I grow convinced how unjust those objections are which Christianity is charged with. I find, for instance, that

all which Voltaire says of the intolerance of the Christians, and of blood-shedding, caused by Christianity, is a very unjust charge laid upon religion. It is easy to be seen, that those cruelties said to be caused by religion, if properly considered, were the production of human passion, selfishness, and ambition; and that religion served in such cases only for a cloak. To be convinced of this, one need only read the history of the cruel transactions of the Spaniards in America."

From this time there was a considerable alteration in the manner of the Count, visible to all who attended him. There was a certain calmness and serenity of mind that seemed to arise from the hope that God for Christ's sake would pardon his sins. But to do away every kind of enthusiastic confidence, and to remove all suspicions of his trusting to ill-grounded expectations, he was reminded not to allow himself to be carried away by a too sudden composure of mind, and not to forget, since he had hopes of being pardoned before God, what he had been before his conversion; else his former carelessness might gain power over him again, and obstruct his endeavours of conforming himself to the will of God; which might cause him a great deal of uneasiness at the close of his life. And as he appeared to entertain the idea that some particular feelings or indications of his being pardoned were necessary, he was told not to rely implicitly on inward sensations, which, though not always false symptoms, were matters of great uncertainty, and not to be regarded as unequivocal consequences of faith and repentance: That the best and most certain conviction of our being pardoned, was to be conscious that we repent of our sins sincerely,

that we acknowledge Christ to be our Redeemer, that we perceive our progress in holiness, and that we most earnestly endeavour to conform our sentiments and actions to the law of God : that whoever might think other sensations to be necessary, was in danger of being carried away by enthusiasm.

The Count replied, that he never could endure enthusiasm in religion, and that this was one great reason that made him averse to Christianity formerly ; for he remembered to have seen many, who gave themselves out as illuminated and converted, lead very wicked and immoral lives, to the scandal of religion, and the public triumph of its enemies. But that, in his own case, he had not for one moment judged of himself too indulgently : that he reflected on his sins with horror and detestation, and had not ceased to repent seriously of them. And upon calmly reviewing his situation before his downfall, when he enjoyed his sensual pleasures, he confessed that he was now far more happy than when he was in his greatest outward prosperity. “ I feel the power of the gospel,” says he, “ in quieting my conscience, and reforming my sentiments ; and though slight emotions of the passions by which I once was ruled ; still sometimes disturb me, I find no delight in them, but endeavour to suppress them immediately. I detest my extravagances, even those which gave me pleasure ; and I believe, that in case I had an opportunity of indulging myself again, I should not commit them. I am ready to convince you, by any test that you may demand of me, to shew how ready I am to sacrifice my former affections. Never should I have done so

before I was enlightened by religion. I do not know whether this is a sufficient reason for you to be satisfied with me. Try me in what manner you may think proper; and if you are satisfied, do not mind if others should judge otherwise, and say you had attempted to bring me over by reasoning."

He was aware the world would not give him the credit he deserved for the sincerity of his penitence,—that they would perhaps regard his confessions as extorted from him by the importunities and declamations of an enthusiast, which had inflamed his imagination, rather than convinced his understanding; and that his altered sentiments would be represented as the effect of terror or melancholy, rather than of argument. In opposition to these uncharitable and injurious surmises, he asserts that his conviction did not result from overheated feelings, or rhetorical figures, but from cool reflection, and an impartial investigation of the truth; which are the only methods consistent with the freedom of human reason, and worthy of religion. Any other attempt to conquer his prejudices, or convince him of his errors, he was persuaded, would have had a quite contrary effect. This he repeatedly stated to Dr Munter. "I acknowledge it," says he, "with gratitude before God, that you took this method. In no other manner could you have prevailed with me; I would have opposed you with obstinacy. Perhaps some impression might have been made upon me; but a solid and lasting conviction never could have been brought about. Besides, God cannot be displeased, since religion is so reasonable, that men are gained over by reason.

Christ himself acted so ; and Paul accommodated himself at Athens, and before Felix and Agrippa, to the way of thinking of those he had to deal with. I hope the manner in which I came to alter my sentiments, in regard to religion and virtue, will raise the attention of those who think as I formerly did. The deists will never trust the conversion of their brethren, which is brought about in the latter days of their life. They say they are taken by surprise through the declamations of the clergyman ; they have lost their reason ; they are stupid or frantic, by the violence of their illness ; the fear of death made them ignorant of what they did. But now, since I came to learn Christianity in the manner I did, nobody shall say so. I have examined the Christian religion during a good state of health, and with all the reason I am master of. I tried every argument,—I felt no fear,—I have taken my own time,—and I have not been in haste.”

The Count had now adopted the doctrine of Christ's redemption as his only comfort, and the only sure foundation of his hopes. His faith, through earnest prayers to God for enlightening his mind, had surmounted all his specious objections against the gospel ; and every subsequent examination into its nature and divine origin, only added fresh confirmation to his belief. The other doctrines and mysteries connected with the atonement, he was now prepared to acknowledge ; and in order to do away any doubts or misapprehensions on the subject, Dr Munter thought it advisable to explain shortly to him their reasonableness and their usefulness. He shewed him the beneficent intention of revelation in restoring natural

religion among men, which was nearly lost, and in making discoveries unknown to mere reason, but which for the happiness of men, were necessary to be known : That mysteries were not contrary to this design, but rather consistent with the character of a religion that proposed to teach more than unassisted reason could do,—such as the Trinity of the Godhead,—the incarnation and Sonship of Christ,—the miracles he wrought, as the credentials of his being a messenger of God,—the inscrutable wisdom and incomprehensible efficacy of the atonement, &c.

It was not therefore to be wondered at, that this revelation should open up to us prospects which our eyes could not otherwise fully discern ; or in other words, that it should teach mysteries, and require our faith to believe them. And he who would for this reason decline adopting the Christian religion, shewed himself unacquainted with its intention and its object. He did not do that justice to religion which he does to other sciences : For though they contain more mysteries than religion ever did, he nevertheless does not object to them. In physic, chemistry, and philosophy, for instance, thousands of incomprehensibilities are to be met with ; but nobody on this account ever thinks them to be altogether dreams and deceptions. Besides, the very nature of these mysteries was such as not to be exactly conveyed in the language of man, nor rendered intelligible in their full signification, to his narrow and limited conception, through such an imperfect medium. It was sufficient that they did not contradict reason ; their purpose was beneficial to mankind ; it tended to the manifest advantage of every one to believe

them ; and there was an obligation implied in the reverence that was due to the testimony and authority of Him who revealed them.

These reasons appeared to the Count entirely satisfactory, and he was ready to admit those doctrines that were inexplicable, because they were parts of the same system, and founded on the same divine authority. "The more we think upon these mysteries," says he, "the more of divine wisdom we discover in them. Let us only avoid asking every where, Why? We must rest satisfied with the authority of their author. Even in human sciences, this modesty is requisite ; else we never should come to any certainty. Most common things may employ all our researches for all our lifetime, before we discover the first cause."

As to the theoretical parts of Christ's religion, he was now fully convinced ; and sincerely wished to be the same as to the practical parts of it ; although in this respect he professed his readiness to do any thing demanded of him. "I own with joy, I find Christianity more amiable the more I get acquainted with it. I never knew it before. I believed it contradicted reason and the nature of man, whose religion it was designed to be. I thought it an artfully contrived and ambiguous doctrine, full of incomprehensibilities. Whenever I formerly thought on religion in some serious moments, I had always an idea in my mind how it ought to be, *viz.* that it should be simple, and accommodated to the circumstances of men in every condition. I now find Christianity to be exactly so ; it answers entirely that idea which I had formed of true religion. Had I but formerly known it was such, I should not have delayed turning Christian till this time of my imprison-

ment. But I had the misfortune to be prejudiced against religion, first through my own passions, but afterwards likewise through so many human inventions foisted into it, of which I could see plainly that they had no foundation, though they were styled essential parts of Christianity."

He professed to have no other hopes of pardon than what are founded on God's word; and was convinced that there are no means of obtaining it but the merits of Christ. "I shall strive to qualify myself for this through sincere faith in my Redeemer; and I pray God to strengthen me in this respect, since I find within myself nothing but incapacity and weakness. The saving of my life, and all other temporal emoluments, appear to me but very small in comparison of everlasting happiness. I derive all my comfort in my last moments from religion; and, supported by that confidence which I place in God, I hope to die with a Christian-like resolution. Formerly, perhaps, I might have been able to die with an outside appearance of firmness; but I believe it would only have been affectation, and totally different from that I hope now to maintain at the hour of death. I have resigned every thing like ambition or affected fortitude, and shall submit to whatever God has decreed relating to me, without murmuring and without reluctance. I cannot but persuade myself, that, although now in my fetters, and near a disgraceful end, I am by far more happy than I was in my former grandeur. My temporal prosperity never procured me that true tranquillity of mind which I now enjoy in prison, and in bonds."

Among the subjects upon which he frequently conversed, was the event of his approaching death,

which, he declared, presented nothing dreadful to him, except the appalling circumstances with which it might be attended, since he knew where it was to conduct him. His increasing faith, however, supplied him with increasing comfort against those disquieting apprehensions. Upon the state of the soul after death, and its separate existence, he made some very sensible and pertinent remarks: "It should not make me uneasy, if there was even any truth in the opinion of those who assert that the soul, when separated from the body, should be in a state of obscure ideas and sensations, or in a kind of sleep. For if my soul was not conscious of itself, or was only in a place of security and ease, I should lose nothing by it. Should this sleep last a thousand, or even ten thousand years, it would not make me unhappy, for, during all this time, I should be conscious of nothing. However, it is by far more agreeable to me, to learn from Scripture, that my soul, instantly after parting from the body, shall enter, conscious of itself, into possession of its happiness.—The Scripture tells us but little about the state the soul shall be in, during its separation from the body, yet even this little is matter of great comfort. If God had found it useful and necessary to have given us further information, he would have done it. It is fully sufficient to quiet my soul, when I know it will be in the hand of God."

"I find no pleasure in my former notion, that, perhaps, there is no eternity, and have no persuasion of its being true. There is not a shadow of probability left of it; the strong proofs of the contrary are always before my eyes. Besides, I am so much interested in my being at present better

informed, that I would not part with my conviction on any account, or act wilfully contrary to it. If by committing any crime, even what the world did not acknowledge to be such, I could gain the greatest temporal advantage, I am confident I should not commit it. If I was promised for certain that my life should be spared, and that I should be restored to my former situation, under condition that I contradicted the confessions I have made, and that I confirmed with an oath my new assertion, I am sure I should rather die than contradict truth, and take such an oath."

The Count held frequent conversations with his spiritual guide, on the other doctrines and mysteries of Scripture; which evinced how well he had made himself acquainted with the arguments in their favour, and how ready he was to give a reason for the hope that was in him. He remarked on the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, that he believed the chief objections against it, were started after it had been positively asserted by Christ. From that time, those who had a bad conscience became fearful; and they endeavoured, by such objections, to secure themselves against anxious expectations about their condition hereafter.

He made, from time to time, many striking and judicious remarks on the sacred Scriptures; and spoke of the inspired penmen,—of their manner of writing,—of their probity and simplicity, in terms of the highest praise. On the style of the Bible, he observed, that the railleries of the Free-thinkers about Christ and his doctrine, were plain proofs that they had no intention of acting honestly. The impieties and scurrilous blasphemies he had formerly read in some deistical books, which had

then hindered his progress towards the truth, clearly convinced him of this. He was of opinion that the old and unusual expressions of the Bible, could not be the true reason why they should think them ridiculous, since they do not laugh at other ancient writings which are written in such a style. If they, for instance, were to read the books of Confucius, he was persuaded they would not hesitate about his style, but praise his morals. In the same manner they extol the fables of Æsop; but the parables and narrations of Christ did not please them: notwithstanding these are derived from a greater knowledge of nature, and contain more excellent morality. Besides, they are proposed with a more noble and artless simplicity, than any writings of this kind among ancient or modern authors. There must be, therefore, something else, he concluded, that prejudices them against Christ; and he knew not what else it could be but their // heart, which made them averse to his precepts.

“ I consider it a kind of folly,” he continues, “ that the Deists pretend to be offended at the humble appearance Christ and the first teachers of Christianity made. I need not observe that, in relation to God, nothing is either little or great, but I cannot help remarking, that the humble appearance of Christ was very well adapted to the design of his mission. The common people looked upon him as one of their equals, and placed confidence in him. For this reason Christ chose his apostles among the lower class of mankind, and the apostles conversed mostly with such. And even those common people were as proper spectators of their miracles, as an assembly of philosophers; as they were all of such a nature, that nothing

more was required to judge of them than the natural senses, and a common share of understanding. A private soldier is perhaps more fit for such an observation, than a general, who has his head full of other things, or thinks it not worth his while to attend to it. The evidence which is given by men of common understanding in behalf of Christ's miracles, is therefore worthy of credit. The learned and the philosophers can now consider those facts, and examine whether they are real miracles, and then determine how far they are in favour of Christ and his doctrines."

He commended the Epistles of St Paul, and observed, that he was a writer of great genius, and possessed much wisdom and true philosophy. He was particularly pleased with his decision of the disputed question, whether it was lawful to eat what was sacrificed to idols? and said it did honour to his prudence. Of the Apostolical writings in general, he confessed, he admired them the more, the more he became acquainted with them. He thought the authors expressed themselves extremely well, now and then with inimitable beauty, and at the same time, with simplicity and clearness. After quoting several passages, particularly from the eighth chapter to the Romans, he added, "I should like to see other publicans and tent-makers write in the same manner as the Evangelists and Apostles did." The Christian religion, as a whole, appeared to him so engaging, that he was convinced it must please every one who is properly acquainted with it: That we should see the best effects of it among the common people, in reforming the world, if it were properly represented, and made intelligible to their different capa-

cities ; and if they were made sensible, that, in this life, they could never be happier, than by following the precepts of Christianity. Every one then would be convinced, that, supposing even this religion to be a delusion, it must be such an one as contradicts entirely the very nature of every other delusion, because it is the best and truest way to happiness. He added, that the objections which he had formerly thought unanswerable, were now quite gone, or at least, of so little consequence, that he doubted about the truth of religion no more than about his own existence.

He was now so conscientious, that he examined every thing he did, and considered whether it agreed with the will of God. And he found himself by this, so well, so composed and happy, that he was sure he should constantly think and act in the same manner. In the meantime, being so near eternity, he wished to do every thing in his power to be in a situation in which he might hope to overcome the terrors of death, and to be certain of a blessed immortality. He believed his duty in this point consisted chiefly in having his former life continually before his eyes, that he might keep up a lively sense of repentance ; and in striving to confirm himself in his present sentiments, to meditate upon them, and to accustom himself more and more to them. " This," said he, " is now my whole occupation ; it is so interesting to me, and pleases me so well, that nothing is more agreeable to my taste. A little ago I read, and could not suppress my desire for other books ; but this inclination has now left me. I do not like to read or to meditate on any thing else than what concerns my chief business ; which is, a prepara-

tion for eternity. Thank God, I am now advanced so far, that my doubts do not make me any wise uneasy; for no objection presents itself but what I am able to answer to my satisfaction."

This alteration in the views and conduct of the Count, appeared to some of his former friends so strange and unaccountable, that they could scarcely believe it. None, however, who had an opportunity of seeing him, could have the least reason to doubt of his sincerity; or think he merely intended to deceive the world. Dissimulation was no part of his character. There could not be a surer proof of the effects of religion upon his heart, than the surprising tranquillity of mind he possessed under his present melancholy circumstances. In allusion to the reproaches and sceptical surmises that his professions of peace and consolation might give rise to, he observes, "The Free-thinkers will say, I should have found within myself strength enough against my misfortunes, without applying to religion. They will say, I shewed myself now a coward, and was for this reason, unworthy of my former prosperity. I wish to God I had not been unworthy of it for other reasons. However, I should like to ask these gentlemen, in what manner I should have found comfort within myself? I durst not think on my crimes,—on my present situation,—on futurity, if I wanted tranquillity of mind. Nothing was left for me but to endeavour to stupify myself, and to dissipate my thoughts. But how long would this have lasted in my present solitude, and being removed from all opportunities of dissipation? And suppose it had been possible, *it would have been of little use; for the cause of*

fear and anxiety remained always, and would have roused me frequently from my artificial insensibility. I tried this method during the first weeks of my confinement, before I reflected on my condition. I lay for hours together on my bed. My fancy composed romances,—I travelled through the whole world, and my imagination produced a thousand pictures to amuse myself with. But even then, when I did not despair of saving my life, and did not know whether, and how far my crimes might be discovered, this dissipation would not answer the purpose. If I did dream in this manner, perhaps for several hours, my terrors and my anxieties would return again.”

“ Perhaps some people will say, I should have exerted my pride, and shewn, at least by my outward conduct, that nothing could humble me. But alas ! what a miserable pride is it to have a bad conscience, and to think of dying on a scaffold. No ! I find it is better to derive my comfort from the only true source, which is religion. And I wish that those who blame me now for taking shelter under it, may find, in their last hours, the same tranquillity it affords to me. There is but one thing in this world that makes me really and continually uneasy, which is, that I have seduced others to irreligion and wickedness. I believe I should not properly enjoy my future happiness, if I knew any of them I have deluded would be eternally miserable. It is, therefore, my most fervent wish, nay, my own happiness depends on it, that God would shew mercy to all those I have by any means turned from him ; and call them back to religion and virtue. I pray to God for this most fervently.”

The formal impeachment of the Count had already been laid before the supreme tribunal of his country. His whole political conduct was examined; and every thing produced by his counsel that could be advanced in mitigation or defence. He was aware that many of his actions, whatever might be stated in excuse or alleviation, could not be justified by the laws of the land, and therefore never entertained sanguine hopes of his acquittal; although the instinctive love of life led him for a time to repose in trembling solicitude under the shadow of this uncertainty. All his doubts, however, were at length expelled, by the melancholy intelligence of his fate. The charges against him were produced on the 21st of April, and sentence pronounced on the 25th. His counsel was only allowed one day to prepare his defence; but it is to be presumed that neither abler advice, nor longer time would have been of much avail. Many of the accusations were frivolous, or capable of a satisfactory answer; and some of his ministerial offences which were treated as high treason, even if they had been true, would not have been deemed capital in any free or civilized country.

A copy of his sentence was officially transmitted to his apartment. He received it with calmness and composure, and read it without anxiety, or shewing even the least alteration in his countenance. The tenor of it was, according to a custom of barbarous and useless revenge that is still permitted to disgrace the criminal code of civilized nations, That he had forfeited his honour, his life, and his estates; that he was to be degraded from all his dignities; have his coat-of-arms broken; *his right hand, and afterwards his head cut off; his*

body quartered and laid upon the wheel ; and his head and hand stuck upon a pole. The fate of Count Brandt, and the misfortunes of his other friends, appeared to move him much more than his own.

When those about him began to express their sincere compassion, and to exhort him to suffer with the patience and submission of a Christian, he replied, " I assure you I am very easy about that. Such punishments should make an impression upon others ; and therefore they ought to be severe. I had prepared myself for this and more. I thought I might perhaps be broken upon the wheel, and was already considering whether I could suffer this kind of death with patience. If I have deserved it, my infamy would not be removed, though those disgraceful circumstances were not annexed to it. And if I have not deserved it, which I cannot assert, sensible people would do me justice ; and I should gain in point of honour. And in my present condition, what is honour or infamy in this world to me ? Now that I am on the point of leaving this world, these cannot affect me any more. It is equally the same to me after death, whether my body putrifies under ground or in the open air ; whether it serves to feed the worms or the birds. God will know very well how to preserve those particles of my body which, on the day of resurrection, are to constitute my future glorified body. It is not my all which is to be laid upon the wheel. Thank God I know very well that this dust is not my whole being.—And although the way which leads me out of this world is very disagreeable, yet I have reason to praise God that he has made

choice of it; that he has shewn me the approaching death beforehand, and at the same time, has extricated me out of the pleasures and dissipations of this life. In no other manner should I have become acquainted with truth, or should have reformed my sentiments; though I am sure I should have adopted Christianity in all situations, had I known it so well as I do now." *David H.*

The Count was sensible that the news of his melancholy sentence must soon reach his father, who, it is said, had all along predicted, or at least apprehended the fate of his too ambitious son, even in the midst of his prosperity; and had written to him in the most tender and pathetic manner, on the subject of his profligacy and irreligion. In order to alleviate as much as possible, the grief which his former misconduct, and his present degraded condition, must occasion his venerable parents, he wrote them a very consoling and satisfactory letter, and requested it might be delivered immediately after his death, which was to take place in course of three days.

"Your letters," says he, "have increased my pain; but I have found in them that love which you always expressed for me. The memory of all that sorrow which I have given you, by living contrary to your good advices, and the great affliction my imprisonment and death must cause you, grieves me the more since enlightened by truth. I see clearly the injury I have done. With the most sincere repentance I beg your pardon and forgiveness. I owe my present situation to my belief in the doctrine and redemption of Christ. Your prayers and your good example have contributed much towards it. Be assured that your

son has found that great good which you believe to be the only true one. Look upon his misfortunes as the means which made him obtain it. All impressions which my fate could make upon you will be alleviated by this, as it has effaced them with me. I recommend myself to your further intercession before God. I pray incessantly to Christ, my Redeemer, that he may enable you to bear your present calamities. I owe the same to his assistance. My love to my brothers and sisters. I am, with all filial respect," &c.

He wrote letters to several of his acquaintance, all in the same devout and penitential strain. In these he laments being the cause of their distress; recommends them to embrace religion, where alone he had found refuge and consolation; and encourages them to look forward with the hope of enjoying together that happiness which is promised hereafter, to every sincere penitent.

The tranquillity of the Count appeared the more calm and unfeigned, the nearer his end approached. He assured Dr Munter, that religion, and his firm hopes of being pardoned before God, had produced this ease of mind. He owned that his natural coolness of temper, his accustoming himself for many years to keep his imagination within bounds, and his entertaining himself rather with reflections of sound reason than images of fancy, had in some respects supported him; but he was convinced that all this without religion would never have composed his mind. "I am unable," says Dr Munter, "to describe the ease and tranquillity with which he spoke. I expected much from the power of religion over his heart, but it exceeded my most sanguine expectation."

He had requested Dr Munter to appoint a day when he should receive the sacrament, as he wished to comply with this solemn institution, before he suffered. He expressed a desire that Count Brandt might be allowed to join him in the celebration of this solemnity, which was to set his seal to the public confession of his Christianity; but this being a matter of some delicacy, was not complied with. He was greatly moved on the occasion; and seemed more subdued under recollections of the divine love, manifested in the redemption of Christ, than with the thoughts of the appalling and ignominious circumstances under which he was next day to suffer. "This man," says Dr Munter, "who received his sentence of death without any apparent alteration of mind, was, during the whole time of this sacred ceremony, as if he was melting into tears. I never observed a tear in his eyes as often as we were talking about his misfortunes and death; but on account of his sins, and the moral misery into which he had thrown himself and others,—on account of the love of God towards him and all mankind, he has wept more than I myself could have believed, had I not seen it."

His expressions of gratitude for the divine goodness, and his complete resignation to the will of heaven, were ardent and sincere. "I know what God has done for me, and what it has cost Christ to procure my salvation. I know how great the blessing is which I shall enjoy through him. I submit, therefore, without the least reluctance, to his will, in regard to myself, because I know he loves me. I look upon my death, and all those awful and ignominious circumstances that are to attend it, as

things which God found necessary for my good. In the beginning of my confinement, I thought quite differently from what I do now, even when I recollected that my affairs might perhaps turn out in the manner they have done. I wished to fall sick and to die. I even had the thought of abstaining from eating, and to starve myself to death; yet I never should have laid hands on myself, though I had had an opportunity for it. I now praise God heartily that neither of the two has taken place."

How conscientious he was to avoid every thing that might be offensive to God, and to perform even the minutest duties, when he was persuaded they were enjoined by religion, appears from some observations he made on the propriety of saying grace before meat. "I think," said he, "that it is the duty of a Christian to pray before he sits down to a meal, though my sentiments in this respect do not favour superstition. It is but just to direct our thoughts on such occasions full of gratitude toward him who supplies our wants. I have therefore made it for sometime a rule to pray before and after dinner and supper. However, my old custom had so much power over me, that I frequently sat down to eat before I had said grace. Now it may be equally the same whether I direct my thoughts towards God before or after having taken two or three spoonfuls of soup; but it has vexed me to find that my old, careless way of thinking has made me forget what I thought to be my duty."

The fatal morning, (April 28), was now arrived, when the sentence of the Count was to be put in execution. He had arranged with Dr Munter the previous evening, how they were to

act on this trying occasion. He had taken leave of his friends in a very affecting manner, and made some trifling presents of the money he had about him. He had retired to bed pretty early, after reading for a good while, and slept for five or six hours together very soundly. In the morning he spent a considerable time in deep meditation. He then got up, dressed himself, and conversed with the officer very composedly. When Dr Munter entered, he found him lying on a couch, dressed as he intended to go to the place of execution, and reading Shlegel's Sermons on the sufferings of Christ.

The Count received him with his usual serenity and composure. "I was thinking," said he, "last night, whether it might not strengthen me in the way to death, if I was to fill my fancy with agreeable images of eternity, and future bliss: But I rather think it better to take this great step in cool consideration. Fancy, if once put in agitation, can soon take a false turn. It could dismiss, perhaps at once, my agreeable and pleasing prospects of eternity, and eagerly catch at the formidable circumstances of death; by which means I fear I should be unmanned. Even in going to the place of execution, I will not indulge it, but rather employ my reason in meditating on the walk of Christ to his death, and apply it to myself. And now that I am so near my end, I find how necessary and how beneficial to man, the positive assertion of Christ is of the existence of eternity. If I was not sure of this, mere reason could give me but little satisfaction on the question, whether a few hours hence, any thing would be left of me that retained life? I can likewise tell you from

my present experience, that a bad conscience is worse than death. I now find comfort against death; but so long as the former lasted, I had no peace within me. I believe I should have become quite hardened, if this wound had not been healed. I am now calm and composed, and I am sure I shall remain so." -

He here put the question, how far he might be permitted to keep up his fortitude by natural means; for instance, by endeavouring to retain his presence of mind, and not letting himself be carried away by imagination and fancy? Dr Munter replied, "If God has given you a certain strength of soul, it is his will that you should make use of it, in those moments when you stand most in need of it. But no inward pride, or any ill-founded complacency is to interfere. You are to do nothing merely for the sake of being applauded by the spectators, on account of your resolution and composure. You are to be above such things. God loves sincerity, which consists in shewing ourselves outwardly as we are inwardly.—Shew yourself, therefore, exactly in the manner as you feel yourself within. If you even should be so much affected as to shed tears, do not hide them, and do not be ashamed of them; for they are no dishonour to you. You cannot conceal from yourself for a moment the cause of your death; and you would do wrong, and offend true Christians, if you were to die with a cheerfulness which can only fall to the share of those that suffer for the sake of truth and virtue. I wish to see you on the scaffold with visible signs of repentance and sorrow, but at the same time with a peace of mind which arises from a confidence of being pardoned before God. I should

even dislike to see you conceal the natural fear of death." To this the Count made answer, that he had no inclination to make a shew before men; and should not force himself to appear outwardly different from what he felt; that he should as much as possible, direct his thoughts towards God, and not disturb himself by studying to satisfy the expectations of the spectators.

At this moment the door of the prison was opened, and an officer entered in order to conduct him to the place of execution. He maintained the same calmness and serenity; and endeavoured to soothe his pious confessor, who was greatly affected, and expressed much concern for him. "Make yourself easy," said he, "by considering the happiness I am going to enter into, and with the consciousness that God has made you a means of procuring it for me;" then rising from his couch, he followed his conductor, bowing as he entered the coach, to those that were standing around.

Upon the way he partly conversed with the officer that went with him, and partly sat in deep meditation. All the while no other alteration was visible, but that he was pale, and seemed to think and converse with more difficulty than formerly. However, he had his full presence of mind, knew several of those that stood about the coach, bowed to many, pulling off his hat, and to some he bowed in a friendly manner. He assured his attendants that his ease was not a forced one; that he was not ambitious to gain the applause of men; although he could not promise that he should not shew any uneasiness upon the scaffold; but that his soul looked with calmness and hope beyond death. "And how little," (he exclaims), "is that which

I am now going to suffer, when I compare it with the sufferings Christ bore when he died.—Recollect only his words, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” and consider what excruciating pain must have forced these expressions from him.”

They had now reached their mournful destination, where thousands of spectators were in anxious attendance. His friend Brandt was already arrived, and had mounted the scaffold first. In a few minutes, the eyes and motion of the crowd seemed to announce that Struensee's turn was next. He passed with decorum and humility through the crowd, and ascended the stairs with some difficulty. He desired Dr Munter to remember him to several of his acquaintance; and to tell some of them, that if he, by his conversation and actions, had misled them in their notions of virtue and religion, he, as a dying man, acknowledged the injury he had done them, begged them to efface those impressions, and to forgive him. He prayed for the repentance and salvation of his enemies, declaring that he left the world without hatred or malice against any person whatever. He expressed his unfeigned contrition for all those actions by which he had offended God and man; and his firm trust in the redemption of Christ, as the only ground of his pardon and acceptance. As he wished the conversation on the scaffold to be as short as possible, since his thoughts were now wholly absorbed in the contemplations of that eternity upon which he was about to enter, he began to prepare by undressing himself. The fear of death was visible in his whole countenance; but at the same time, submission, calmness, and hope, were expressed in his air and

deportment. He inquired of the executioner, how far it was necessary to uncover, and desired them to assist him. He then hastened towards the block, which was stained and still reeking with the blood of his friend ; laid himself quickly down, and endeavoured to fit his neck and chin properly into it. When his hand was cut off, his whole frame fell into convulsions. The next stroke of the axe, in a moment severed his head from his body.

Such is the melancholy end, in which the extraordinary career of this distinguished but unfortunate man terminated. His name has become inseparably blended with the history of the kingdom over which he presided, although the circumstances of his death have cast a shade over his memory and his fame. The judgment that will be pronounced upon him, will differ according to the different estimates taken of his character. Had he remained in his former prosperity, been successful in his political speculations, and died a natural death, he might have been handed down to the remotest ages, as a great and enlightened statesman ; even if he had been at bottom the greatest villain. With many, the admiration of his talents, and his singular fortune, would have concealed his want of principle, and been a sufficient apology for the irregularities of his life. Viewed through these false excuses, instead of being branded as the hapless victim of crimes and debaucheries, his praises might have been sung, and monuments erected to his honour, as the Solon of Denmark, the wise administrator of its laws, and the elegant reformer of its manners. The world has seen him *die a malefactor* ; but those who judge not according

to the opinion of the world, will reckon him happy in his misfortunes. The Christian dispositions he manifested at his death, will be a sufficient inducement to forgive him the ignominy wherewith he had stained his life, and to rejoice that he died a humble and devout believer in the gospel.

It is worthy of remark, that during the time these tragical scenes were acting, public amusements continued uninterrupted. On the 25th, the King went to the opera, after signifying his approbation of the sentence. On the 27th, the day when it was solemnly confirmed, there was a masqued ball at Court; and the King went again to the opera on the 28th, the day of execution. The passion which prompts an absolute monarch to raise an unworthy favourite to honour, is still less disgusting than the unfeeling levity and caprice with which, on the first alarm, he always abandons the same favourite to destruction. And it ought not to be forgotten, that the very persons who had represented the patronage of operas and masquerades as one of the offences of Struensee, were the same who thus paraded their unhappy Sovereign through an unseasonable and unbecoming succession of such amusements.

We have thus detailed at considerable length the whole of this interesting case,—the process by which the Count was led from the grossest infidelity, to a steady and animating conviction of the truth of revelation,—the difficulties that impeded his progress, as well as the means and arguments that were employed to remove them. A more hopeless enterprise could not well be imagined, than to contend against opinions so obstinately and ably defended; nor could a more delicate

task, perhaps, be imposed upon a Christian minister, than to preserve with such nice discrimination, the balance of feeling in the mind of the penitent, so as to prevent hope from growing into presumption, or faith into enthusiasm,—to repress the risings of unwarrantable triumph, without diminishing the assurance of pardon and acceptance. This task, however, was accomplished with singular judgment and success.

Seldom has scepticism met with a more prudent and skilful dissector than in Dr Munter. The plan he adopted was most judicious, and exactly suited to the circumstances of his convert. The tenderness and sagacity he displayed in his treatment were admirable. With cautious and gentle hand he carries the probe of severe examination, deeply and effectually into the heart; while at the same time he is equally ready to administer the healing balm of Christian consolation. Here there are no over-wrought and exaggerated pictures of heavenly glory, or extatic bliss. No declamations or rhetorical figures are employed,—no attempts to inflame the imagination or the passions,—nothing to encourage presumptuous assurance, or excite feelings of enthusiastic rapture. The infidel is reasoned out of his system, deliberately and by degrees. He is convicted by decisive appeals to his conscience, and delicate remonstrances on the bad consequences of his actions and his example. At every succeeding conference some new discovery of truth is made, some unexpected light springs up to dispel the delusions of that metaphysical labyrinth in which his mind was entangled. The pride of self-sufficiency gradually subsides,—the barriers of sophistry and error, within

which he had entrenched and fortified himself, fall prostrate before the irresistible evidence of argument and demonstration. He is led not only to make unreserved confession of his sins, but to a cordial hatred and repentance of them,—and to an earnest desire of making some reparation to society, for the injuries his crimes had inflicted upon it. The doctrines of the gospel which he had rejected as too mysterious to be believed, and exacting too much for human reason or human weakness to submit to, he comes at length to receive and to embrace, as all his hope and all his salvation. The returning prodigal flies, in his despair, back to the friendly mansion he had foolishly quitted, on a far journey after lawless gratifications, which he could not indulge according to his wishes, under the vigilance and restraints of a father's house.

Of the genuineness and sincerity of his penitence, there can be, we think, but one opinion. Hypocrisy formed no part of his character: neither can he be accused of having renounced his former sentiments, and embraced Christianity with credulity or precipitation. The result of his inquiries was exactly such as might have been predicted from the trivial nature of his objections, and his slight acquaintance with the subject: the memorable confession he made, and it is one which might be extorted from every infidel and every atheist, would they speak the truth, confirms this fact. “My unbelief and my aversion to religion, were founded neither upon an accurate inquiry into its truth, nor upon a critical examination of those doubts that are generally made against it. They arose, as is usual in such cases, from a very general and superficial knowledge of religion on one

side, and much inclination to disobey its precepts on the other, together with a readiness to entertain every objection which I discovered against it."

Had artful means been employed to delude him into a blind confidence of the divine mercy, or work upon his fancy by images either of hopes or fears; such artifices and expedients would, in his case, have been totally misapplied. To the agitations of terror and doubt that sometimes disturb the intellect of weak or superstitious men, he was an utter stranger. Even death was not formidable to him, because he looked upon it as the mere consequence of natural causes, and saw nothing to dread beyond it. His inquiries were the result of slow and mature deliberation. The temper of his mind,—the nature of his public employments,—and the means by which he rose to his prosperity, had taught him a habit of acting, in all circumstances, with coolness. This calculating spirit he carried into his researches upon the nature and truth of revealed religion. Every argument he examined separately, and upon its own evidence. Nothing was adopted but upon implicit, and sometimes reluctant, conviction; and he would not abandon the strong-holds of error, within which he had taken secure refuge, until he saw the shallow and dangerous foundations on which the whole fabric of delusion was reared.

Speaking to Dr Munter of his conversion, he mentions the scruples he at first entertained on the subject of changing his religion, and the means by which they were happily conquered, in such a candid and concise manner, that we cannot do better than close this sketch with his own account of it.

“Do not mind,” said he, “if it should be said you ought to have urged upon me arguments that were not so philosophical and more evangelical. I assure you, that by no other means you would have found access to my heart, than by those you have chosen. There were only three ways which you might have taken : declamation, working upon the imagination, and cool inquiry. If you had chosen that of declamation, I should have immediately thought, if the man has a good cause, why does he not propose his reasons without any art ; if God has revealed a religion, it must stand the test of inquiry. I therefore should have heard you without any emotion. If you had endeavoured to work upon my imagination, you must have done so by filling it with terrible descriptions of eternity. This method would have had still less effect than declamation. I was always upon my guard against my fancy, and for that very reason, avoided reading poets and other authors that might inflame it ; and I was very sure, that after death, there was nothing either to hope or to fear. Any impression you might have made through fear, would soon have worn off, and would have entirely vanished by recollecting my former system. The only way left you, was that which you chose, I mean cool inquiry.

“ I will tell you now what resolution I had taken before you came, and for what reasons I entered into conversation with you. About eight days before your first visit to me, the commander of the castle asked me if I chose to converse with a divine ? Thinking, however, that every clergyman would be apt either to preach too much, or tire me with melancholy declamations, I declined

the proposal, and said, I and all divines differ very much in opinion, and I have no inclination to dispute. However, I knew that I must expect a clergyman to attend me by order of government; I therefore resolved to receive him civilly, and to hear him with decency and composure. I intended to declare to him, at the end of the first visit, that if he was ordered to see me frequently, he would be welcome; but I should beg of him not to entertain any hopes of converting me, for I was too well convinced of my own opinion, and should therefore never enter into any useless disputations.—When you came, I immediately perceived that you had no intention to declaim to me in the style of a preacher, or to fill me with fears and terrors. You only desired me, since the matter was of so great consequence, to examine into my own principles, and the evidence for Christianity. I found this reasonable, I had time to do it, and fancied I should, by this inquiry, discover that Christianity had no foundation, and convince myself more strongly of the truth of my principles.

“ We began our conferences with great coolness; I read the books you gave me, though with diffidence, yet with attention. This did not continue long, and I could not help perceiving that I had been mistaken. It can scarcely be believed how much it has cost me to own my error, with regard to myself as well as with regard to you. You may remember that I did not from the first deny that I had acted wrong, and had been unhappy in my former situation, and that my conscience reproached me. But, considering my former obstinacy, it was a great victory over myself, to confess that my former principles were

false. To proceed so far was only to be done by reason. You are the best judge why you treated me in the manner you have done ; but the success entirely justifies you : my conversion is, through the grace of God, providentially brought about. Sensible Christians will rejoice that my soul is saved, and that you have chosen this method, which, in regard to me, was the only one that could be effectual."

COUNT BRANDT.

THE name of Brandt has been repeatedly mentioned in the preceding sketch, as the intimate companion, and the unfortunate fellow-sufferer of Struensee, to whose patronage he chiefly owed his greatness, and his disgrace. As their histories are inseparably blended together, both having flourished in the same Court, and died on the same scaffold, little remains of much interest or importance, to be added to the account already given. Like his friend and political benefactor, he had professed himself a libertine and an infidel; though he afterwards saw reason to alter his sentiments, and had candour enough to acknowledge his errors, and yield to the force of conviction. This happy change that took place during his imprisonment, in his principles and his conduct, was attested by undisputed authority; and will afford sufficient evidence of its own veracity, to all who are not disposed to treat such conversions with discredit and contempt, as the offspring of superstition or enthusiasm.

ENEVOLD DE BRANDT was of Danish extraction, and of a noble family. He had the misfortune, it appears, to lose his father in early life; but his mother, a virtuous and accomplished lady, survived to be the witness of his melancholy and ignomi-

nious end ; although the salutary reform which accompanied it, must have afforded no small alleviation to her sorrows. He received an excellent education, and saw none but the best examples. Every care was taken to train him, by moral and religious instruction, in the paths of virtue and piety. The recollection of these early impressions he was never able entirely to shake off ; and he confessed he often felt their secret power visiting his conscience, in the midst of levity and dissipation, and especially when consigned to the solitude of a prison. He mentions, in particular, the time when he was first admitted as a communicant to the Lord's Supper, as being much struck with the solemnity of the ceremony, and having partaken of the sacrament with the most fervent devotion. The words of the clergyman made an impression on his mind which he could never forget : " Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

He was early introduced to the notice of the king, and seems to have been treated by his Majesty with great kindness and partiality ; but, as has been stated, having incurred the royal displeasure, he was exiled from Court, and retired for a short time to France. It was while under this temporary disgrace that he became acquainted with Struensee, through whose interest he was recalled from Paris, and reinstated in his office, and soon after advanced to the rank of Count. This intimacy, it would appear, proved the origin of his unbelief, and the cause of his subsequent misfortunes ; although, in restoring him to his country, Struensee professed to act from the best motives, and solely with the intention of performing a

kindness to a man whom he really esteemed. His appointment, under the medical Prime Minister, was to superintend the palace, and take a personal charge of his Majesty; an office which gave him every opportunity to promote the designs, and establish the authority of his ambitious patron, to whose interest he was attached by gratitude, and by a present of ten thousand rix-dollars.

His fidelity to that unpopular and unprincipled administration, speedily drew down upon him the reproaches and the vengeance of his fellow-citizens; who accused him as a rebel to the honour and the interests of his country,—as supporting a government which was founded in crimes and villainies,—and co-operating with a traitor, who had arrogated to himself royal powers,—dishonoured their king in the eyes of the whole world,—and, by keeping him under a strict and despotic guardianship, prevented the injuries and the complaints of the public from being conveyed to his ears.

He had many friends among the discontented nobility, who were anxious for his welfare, and tried to win him off from the obnoxious party. They intreated him to return to his deserted allegiance,—to assist the nation in throwing off the galling bondage in which they were held, and inflicting just punishment on the authors of their wrongs and their miseries; and to apprise the king of the danger that threatened himself and his empire, as he was the only man permitted to converse with him,—all access to the throne being denied to the rest of his subjects. They reminded him of the insecurity, and the unpopularity of his situation; and the risk he was exposed to of falling a victim to the rage of an exasperated faction; and some

even admonished him, by private letters, to avoid that destruction which common prudence might have told him was inevitably to result from the impolicies and intrigues of his accomplices.

The Count was, however, too much engrossed with the gallantries and amusements of a profligate court, to attend to the remonstrances or the predictions of his friends. He was arrested, as has already been noticed, on the 15th of January, 1772; and after a slight resistance, conveyed to the Citadel and laid in irons. The Reverend Dean Hee was appointed by the King's commission to attend him during his imprisonment, an office which he accepted with some reluctance, knowing too well what were the sentiments and the former life of the prisoner; that he had been entirely devoted to his pleasures, and one that turned every part of religion into ridicule. When he was introduced by General Holben, Commander of the Castle, the Count received him with great civility.

Having expressed his sympathy for his misfortunes, and his wish to comfort him in his distressed condition, he took the opportunity of recommending religion, as the best and only source of consolation. Brandt shewed no aversion to talk upon the subject, and seemed not at all inclined to conceal his former way of thinking. He assured him he had never been entirely without religion; though he owned he had not always spoken of it with a becoming respect; but that often when he had talked very freely against it, he had no other intention in what he said than to appear witty. He admitted, that though he had been far from being virtuous, yet he had ever entertained a secret reverence for piety; and had several times conversed

with Struensee, in the hope of bringing him to better sentiments, though he would never listen to him, but always desired him to keep silence on that head. Much of the scepticism and profane ridicule to which he was addicted, had been originally imbibed, and fostered by reading deistical writings; and among the rest, he mentioned the works of Voltaire, to whom he owed very little that was good. He said he had spent, when upon his travels, four days with this veteran advocate of unbelief; and had heard nothing from him but what had a decided tendency to corrupt the heart and the morals.

His intercourse with Struensee, who never from his infancy had any sense or impressions of religion, together with his own natural levity of disposition, appear to have been the main root of his infidelity, and the chief impediment that hindered him, long after his imprisonment, from seriously reflecting on his miserable condition. There were doubts on certain parts of Scripture, which he confessed had created him some uneasiness, especially about the fall of man, original sin, &c. but these were readily and satisfactorily answered, as they appeared to be merely the offspring of wilful prejudice or superficial thinking. His mind being thus laid open to conviction, the advices and conversations of his visitor became daily more and more agreeable, although the habitual vivacity of his temper, occasionally betrayed him into inconsistencies, and gave rise to many false reports with regard to the sincerity of his repentance. He was so much addicted to this carelessness or levity of manner, especially in the early period of his confinement, that after shedding tears for an hour,

sitting all the while on his bed, he would turn immediately to singing; and on one occasion, on a rumour being spread of his obtaining pardon, he requested of the royal commission to have his fetters taken off, and made some other strange proposals to them. These sudden paroxysms of indiscretion, however, he was himself ready to acknowledge and to lament; which he did in a manner that seemed to evince the sincerity of his contrition; and they had no effect in discouraging the visits, or abating the hopes of his venerable instructor, who earnestly exhorted him to beg forgiveness for these transgressions, to be more upon his guard against such temptations, and instead of displaying a contemptible vanity, rather to shew himself a penitent sinner, who was as anxious to edify others by his conversation now, as he formerly was to corrupt them by it.

Many of the stories that were propagated concerning his misconduct, were the idle inventions of malicious people, who industriously circulated reports of his pretended follies, for the sake of rendering suspicious that veneration which the Count had begun to profess for religion, lest his example might open the eyes of those who adhered to his former principles. The falsity of these calumnies was manifestly proved by the respectable Commander of the Castle, who assured Dean Hee that the Count devoted all his solitary hours to the perusal of such religious books as he had supplied him with; that he scarcely ever laid the Bible out of his hands, and very seldom spoke of any thing else, much less of any thing that could give offence; and he added, that if any thing improper or unbecoming had happened, he would be the first to give him information of it.

The reports of the officers that guarded him, and who were to give an account of him every morning, unanimously attested the same fact, that his conversation was not only decent, but oftentimes edifying; for he frequently represented to them what comforts religion administered to every one who was convinced of its truth and importance; that it was the only means which could support and tranquillize the mind; which happiness he enjoyed, and was indebted for it solely to religion. He declared to them at the same time, that during his greatest prosperity, and in the enjoyment of his licentious pleasures, he never felt any real satisfaction. He frequently took occasion to mention the unhappiness of his former condition; and spoke with gratitude of the obligations he was under to the mercy of Providence, which had several times spared his life in the most imminent dangers, when he might have been snatched away in his sins, and left to perish for ever. But he was now resolved to set himself earnestly to the business of repentance, and to work out his salvation with fear and trembling.

His own endeavours were ably seconded by the instructive conversations of his teacher, who exhorted him to make the best use of his time, and to turn his thoughts towards God in fervent prayer, that his soul might be saved. These exhortations were always listened to with serious attention, and made a very salutary impression on his mind; for to the last day of his existence, he seldom spoke without tears in his eyes, of the profligacy of his former life, the depravity of his heart and the exceeding greatness of the divine mercy. To fill up the intervals of his time, and confirm him the more in his good resolutions, he was supplied with proper books;

that he might follow out, at his leisure, the various subjects on which they conversed. Gibson's *Pastoral-Letters* translated, and some of Dr Doddridge's writings were brought him, as containing many solid arguments for the truth of the Christian religion. Hervey's *Meditations*, and Newton on the *Prophecies* edified him much; particularly the latter, from the clear proofs it gave him of the divinity of the sacred Scriptures, upon which all religion is built. Several passages of the Bible which he did not fully understand, he desired to have explained to him, and would occasionally start objections; evidently, however, from a wish to be better informed. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and the 13th of St Luke's Gospel, he remarked as having made a deep impression upon him. Prayer was an exercise in which he frequently engaged; and he considered it an essential part of his duty, from which he derived great ease and comfort of mind.

The alteration of his sentiments was visible in his whole deportment, and left no doubt as to the efficacy of the means employed for his reformation. He pitied the miserable condition of those who were still under the yoke of sin and unbelief, which he himself had borne; and was much pleased that he now found such delight in the true word of God, whose influence upon his heart, since he had read it with good intentions, convinced him of its divine origin. His imprisonment he regarded as the means of setting his soul at liberty, and he found in his chains so little to regret or annoy him, that he would frequently take them up and kiss them. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to hear of the happy change that had been effected

in the sentiments of his fellow-prisoner, Struensee, of whom he often spoke; and desired Dean Hee to go and inform him how sincerely he rejoiced to know that he had embraced the truth, and to beg of him to continue steadfast in it to the last. "Tell him," added he, "on my part, that my experience has now taught me, that true ease of mind is nowhere to be found but in Christ crucified."

This intelligence was mutually agreeable to both parties; for Struensee had repeatedly expressed his sorrow to hear that Brandt had been so gay and thoughtless; and hoped it would make some impression on his mind, and lead him to a more serious consideration of religion, if told that he was now better informed, and firmly convinced of the truth; and he regarded it as his duty to acquaint him with the alteration of his principles, that as he had been his seducer, and accessory to his misfortunes, he might contribute as much as possible towards his reformation; and that as he had shared with him in his prosperity and his sufferings, they might enjoy together the happiness of a blessed immortality.

As the termination of his life drew nearer, the Count appeared to grow more calm and resigned. He seemed to repose full confidence in the honesty of his judges, that they would act no otherwise than according to law and conscience. He spoke of his approaching death without fear or anxiety, seeming to possess an inward assurance of being pardoned before God, though he acknowledged himself undeserving of so great mercy. Even the probability of his release, or of his escaping the scaffold, could no longer inspire him with his former levity, or attachment to the world; and he expressed his

persuasion, that if God foresaw, in case his life were saved, that he should be carried away again by vanity and sin, he would pray of him not to spare his life, but rather let him die; for he thought it infinitely better for him to enter into a happy eternity and be with Christ, than to become again a slave of sin, and to forfeit in this manner everlasting felicity. And if he should be condemned by the laws of men, these blessed hopes would overbalance the ignominy of his fate; and he would leave the world fully convinced that such was the will of God, who, seeing that he might again relapse, had in kindness prevented it, by a wise though severe dispensation.

Towards the close of his imprisonment, he told his venerable attendant, that he had three different obstacles to conquer, which, through the assistance of divine grace, he had at last entirely overcome. The first was, that he felt it hard for him to confess he really was so great a sinner. The second was, to follow the counsels tendered for his reformation; and own to his former acquaintance that his sentiments were totally changed. The third, though not expressly stated, appears to have been some doubts as to the possibility of his salvation. These victories, however, difficult as they were, he ultimately obtained; and his subsequent conduct evinced, that they were not imaginary but real triumphs over the pride of reason, the opinion of the world, and the apprehensions of nature.

The 24th of April was the day when he was to receive his sentence: When Dean Hee entered, he found him reclining on his bed, and more thoughtful than common, but he expressed himself with calmness and resignation, though he was fully in-

formed as to the issue of his trial, and even the manner of his death. A copy of his sentence had been transmitted to him, which he took from the drawer of a table that stood next him, and gave to his friend to read. He was not in the least dejected or discomposed, and shewed a firmness and peace of mind, quite surprising for one in his situation. Next day he was informed that his execution was to take place on the 28th; this communication he received without emotion or concern, and said he would readily submit to the will of God.

The charges against him were vague and frivolous, and could never have been construed into capital crimes except by a tribunal determined on his destruction. He was accused of being the accomplice and the confidant of Struensee: That instead of disapproving or opposing his administration, which he could not but perceive to be audacious, and detrimental both to the King and the whole empire; he, as a criminal subject, and unworthy of his trust, had acted in concert with him, suffering himself to be employed in keeping every body from speaking to the King, or giving information of his misgovernment: That he had behaved towards his Majesty with insolence and disrespect; opposing his royal will, to serve his own private interests; and abetting the usurpations of his protector, with the view of amassing a fortune, and obtaining greater honours: That within a short time he had received presents out of the Treasury, to the amount of 60,000 rix-dollars; though neither his conduct nor his services deserved such a reward; and, in returning thanks to his Majesty, he had purposely omitted to name the sum, lest the transaction should be discovered.

But the most criminal of all the charges, and that which made his insolence, ambition and avarice appear as nothing in comparison, was, That he had laid violent hands on his Majesty, having beaten, flogged, and scratched his sacred person; and though he might have had no intent to commit murder, yet he had the same guilt as if he had made the attempt, since the issue of the assault might have proved fatal, and death been caused by an unlucky blow on a tender part. The answer which the Count gave to this grievous and treasonable accusation was, That his Majesty, who inherited from his father an irresistible propensity for wrestling and boxing, and used frequently to amuse himself with such sports, had repeatedly challenged him to a match; and to gratify his master's taste for this perverse recreation, as well as to repay some severe chastisements which he had received from him, perhaps out of courtesy,—he had been induced to enter the lists, and in the scuffle had slightly wounded the King on the neck. But he stated, in his defence, that he had received the royal pardon for this assault, and had continued long after it to enjoy his favour and confidence; a fact which his accusers could not deny, but they alleged this forbearance was only temporary, and might be revoked at his Majesty's pleasure.

These several accusations put together were considered as amounting to high treason, and punishable by the Danish law with forfeiture, confiscation, and death. The Count prepared himself to meet his fate with becoming solemnity. The sacrament was administered to him, which he partook with every appearance of ardent devotion and Christian penitence. Instead of sitting, he knelt

down and received it with many tears, and with evident signs of inward hope.

Knowing the many injurious reports that were spread of his behaviour in the time of his imprisonment, his confessor submitted to him, whether it might not be advisable to make a declaration before proper witnesses what his real sentiments were. With this proposal he readily complied; and, in presence of the Commander of the Castle, with several other officers, he acknowledged his errors and his misconduct, in having been led astray by bad examples; he confessed that he had acted very inconsiderately, that his carelessness had been very great, and in the beginning of his imprisonment had induced him to talk in a manner he was now ashamed of; though he was sure in his conscience that many untruths were invented and propagated among the people, but he forgave those who had been guilty of such things. He begged the Commander and the other officers to forgive him, if, by his levity, he had offended any one of them; and wished that God's mercy in Christ might always attend them as their greatest blessing. He confessed himself guilty before the omniscient God; but that without hypocrisy he had sought for the divine mercy, which, through Christ, he hoped to obtain. He declared he was ready to die, and was not afraid of it; and spoke all this with such firmness, and in terms so moving, that all present were greatly affected by it; and sincerely wished God would preserve him in his happy situation of mind to the last.

The morning of his execution he spent in devotion, and seemed firmly persuaded of his entrance into immortal glory. He had enjoyed sound

repose and was quite tranquil. In his prayers, which were fervent and comprehensive, evincing a presence of mind altogether astonishing, he expressed himself as a penitent and humble sinner; but at the same time, as one who entertained the surest hopes of pardon and acceptance. He prayed for the Church of Christ, for the King and the nation, for all that were misled by error and irreligion. He thanked God for the mercies he had shewn him in his imprisonment; intreated his forgiveness for all wherein he had offended others; and avowed his willingness to forgive those that were his enemies. In reading the Lord's Prayer, which he did with much attention, now and then adding remarks and explanations of his own, when he pronounced the words, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," he exclaimed, "Thou, O God and my Redeemer, who knowest my heart, and that of all men, thou knowest how free my heart is from hatred and malice against any person whatever; and that I wish well to all, both in this world and that which is to come."

When he had finished prayers, his chains, which were fixed in the wall, were taken off; and he put on the clothes in which he intended to appear on the scaffold. He drank a cup of coffee, and eat something, walking up and down in the room, which he could not do before. The prison-door was then opened by the officer commissioned to carry him to the place of execution. He ascended the scaffold without fear or agitation,—heard his sentence read, depriving him of his honours and dignities; and saw his coat-of-arms broken by the hand of the executioner. After acknowledging

the justice of his doom, and receiving the last benediction of the Church, he undressed himself for the block, and received his punishment, amidst the earnest prayers and intercessions of his friends. .

The preceding Narrative contains the substance of that written by Dean Hee ; which he never would have published but for the sake of confuting the many false and unjust reports that were circulated of the Count, while he was a state-prisoner, and even after his death ; as if his repentance had been hypocrisy, his fortitude and cheerfulness at death temerity and presumption. It was to contradict such calumnies that he drew up his short account, chiefly from memory, as he kept no journal of his conferences, never having any intention to make them public. But, as he himself acknowledges, " being fully convinced of the contrary, my conscience would not permit me to keep silence ; but rather to declare that the alteration of his sentiments was unfeigned, and that he hearkened to the invitations of the Gospel. I do this with so much the more readiness, since I believe that the greatest part of what has been said, has proceeded from a zeal to promote the cause of infidelity. There is a set of people who think it their duty to defend incredulity, even at the expense of truth and conscience. They have assiduously propagated every thing that has been said of the levity of behaviour in the Count, which I myself observed at the beginning, but which he owned and so much repented of afterwards."

The integrity of Hee's motives, and the veracity of his whole statement will be readily admitted by all who are not prepossessed against the subject ; or who do not treat with ridicule and scorn

all accounts of reformed libertines and infidels, as the fables of weak, though it may be well-meaning zeal. His narrative has nothing else but its truth and authenticity to recommend it. There is nothing ornamental or elegant in the style, or interesting in his discussions. He has not the eloquence or the address of Dr Munter, nor the forcible and nervous arguments of Bishop Burnet. But his character as an honest man, and a divine of established reputation, will make amends for minor defects, and remove those unfavourable suspicions which are apt to attach to confessions made in the malefactor's dungeon, or under the terrors of the executioner's axe. He appears to have had no other design in view, than to promote the cause of religion and virtue; and to perform an office of justice and humanity to the memory of an unfortunate man, who, though a profligate and a criminal, lived to abandon his errors, and wiped off the ignominy of his fate, by dying in the faith and hope of a Christian.

LORD LYTTELTON.

THERE is in general an unfavourable impression annexed to reformations that begin on a sick-bed, or in the solitude of a prison. Many are persuaded, that, under such circumstances, all confessions and resolutions of amendment savour much more of enthusiasm than of reason ; and flow rather from a sense of danger or a temporary despondency, which health and freedom would speedily wear off, than from a cordial hatred and aversion to sin, or a total change of heart and disposition. They allege that the parties are in a state of unnatural excitement ; that it is impossible to place any reliance on the sincerity of their professions, or the reality of the feelings which they express ; and which, however sincere at the time, can afford no satisfactory proof as to the result, since, were they released from disease and confinement, the probability is, they would forget their resolutions with their fears, and relapse when exposed again to the opportunities and enticements of vice.

Much of that joy and tranquillity which appears to soothe the departing moments of reformed libertines, they ridicule as a delusive consolation, and built on a false security ; or they reckon it an artificial courage, excited by the earnest, and often injudicious exhortations of ministers, which inspire *them* with the fervour and boldness of martyrs ;

raising a confidence that must appear presumptuous in their situation, and inconsistent with their knowledge of religion. Their faith, they pretend, is not founded on preference or conviction,—their hopes of futurity is a mere picture of the imagination,—a fabric which their eager credulity has raised of visions and shadows; and which, descried through the mists and fumes of an over-heated fancy, is easily mistaken for solid architecture.

Doubts and surmises of this kind are not unfrequent; and they are often confirmed by experience and observation, since it cannot be denied that vows and declarations made in adversity, are apt to be suggested by interested motives; that they are sometimes retracted without scruple or remorse; and prove as evanescent in their effects, as they have been sudden and unadvised in their formation. And it is equally true, that the highly-wrought and feverish excitements produced by a few conferences on religion, or in a few days, can furnish no irrefragable evidences of peace or pardon; and often have but too little resemblance to the humble hope and discerning faith of a Christian.

Neither can outward courage and firmness be interpreted as unequivocal proofs of that fortitude and resolution which arise from well-grounded conviction, and can be inspired only by a firm belief in religion. Instances of this intrepid spirit may be found in the lowest extreme of human character, in the gloomy habitations of criminal wretchedness, and among the hardened outcasts of society. Many, even the worst of men, have quitted the world, not merely without dejection or dismay, but with a surprising calmness, and an air of triumph. Even under the delusion of false prin-

ciples, they have boldly adventured to contemplate the king of terrors with a reckless and undaunted bravery. The feeblest minds, and the basest of our passions, when strongly excited, have been able to surmount these fears and apprehensions. Indignant pride, disappointed ambition, inconsolable grief, have faced a thousand times the horrors of self-destruction, and embraced them as the sweet oblivion of their sorrows.

No inference, however, can be drawn from these appearances, against the animating and tranquilizing effects of religion, even on the minds of those who have adopted it as an extreme resource, and perhaps without minutely investigating the evidences of its truth. It does not follow that because some pretenders to conversion have been guilty of delusion and credulity, or affected sentiments and principles which they did not possess, that all who have embraced Christianity in their last moments, and spoken with confidence of its consolations and rewards, must necessarily be hypocrites and enthusiasts. Such charges might perhaps appear to be supported by reason, were the arguments for religion never found to be irresistible, but in the retreats of misery, or in the languor of affliction,—had it no victories to boast of, but over hearts already softened and subdued by misfortune; and if its evidences never convinced the understanding, until disease had conquered the passions, or captivity withdrawn the libertine from the external allurements of sense.

But Christianity has many trophies to record of its success in vindicating its own authority, and making the most refractory powers of human nature bend to its influence. It has produced the

same conviction on men of the greatest learning, of sound and rational views, and who could not be suspected, from their circumstances and professions, of fraudulence or incapacity; who have explored its foundations with severe and impartial scrutiny, and examined its pretensions with cool and mature deliberation. It has even overcome the malice and opposition of its declared enemies; who have sat in judgment upon it, not with the intention of honest dealing, but with the disingenuity of finding or making it false. Their discoveries have ended in their own confutation; and they have risen from the inquiry, convinced, in spite of their prejudices, and contrary to their expectations. They have given to the world the strongest proofs of their sincerity, by regulating their lives according to its precepts; exhibiting, in their conduct, an irreproachable testimony to its truth, and a living evidence of its excellence. Many have even entered the lists as champions to maintain its purity, and defend it against the assaults of its adversaries, distinguishing themselves as popular and able writers in the theological controversies of their day. And however much they may have differed in their previous habits and pursuits, yet, when brought under the sceptre of religion, and made to feel its transforming power, they are found to be united in one common sympathy,—to breathe one common spirit,—and preserve a uniformity of character, which identifies their belief as one ruling principle common to them all.

That Christianity carries with it sufficient proofs of its divine origin; that it repays the trouble of a serious and candid examination, with complete conviction, whatever may have been the nature or

force of pre-conceived opinions, are truths which were proved and exemplified in the life of the eminent individual who forms the subject of the present sketch;—a nobleman who made no inconsiderable figure, both in the political and literary annals of his country; and who gained no mean distinction, as a poet, an orator, a statesman, and a historian.

GEORGE, LORD LYTTELTON, was the eldest son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley, Baronet, in the county of Worcester, where he was born, 17th January, 1709. His birth, it appears, was premature by two months; and like Addison, Doddridge, and various other men of talents, he was not expected to live. Genius, like some delicate plants of the rarest virtues, often requires to be fostered into existence, and is reared with great difficulty. At an early age he was sent to Eton school, where he received the elements of his education. Here he soon began to display a poetical genius, by writing pastorals, and other light pieces; and to distinguish himself by the superiority of his academic exercises, which were recommended to his school-fellows as models for imitation.

From Eton he was removed to the University of Oxford, and entered to Christ-Church, where he pursued his studies with great ardour and industry, and fully sustained the high character he had already acquired. It was during his short career at the University that he gave to the world his poem on "Blenheim," a field which has been rendered immortal by one of Marlborough's most splendid victories. This production, though not

possessing great force or elegance of versification, was respectable for a youth of sixteen, and gave promise of future excellence. Here also he wrote his "Progress of Love," and sketched the plan of his "Persian Letters," which afterwards gained him great reputation; not only on account of the beauty of their composition, but also for the excellent observations they contained on the manners of mankind, though perhaps they breathed too much of that ardent and undefined passion for liberty, which a man of genius always catches when he first enters the world. It appears, however, that in after life, when his notions of liberty were modified by time and experience, he retracted some of the principles and sentiments which he had then entertained.

Having finished his University studies, Mr Lyttelton, in 1728, being his nineteenth year, set out on his travels, to make the tour of Europe, which was then, and is still esteemed necessary to complete the education of an accomplished gentleman. On his arrival at Paris, he accidentally became acquainted with the Hon. Mr Poyntz, the British minister at the Court of Versailles, who was so much pleased with the superior talents of the young traveller, that he invited him to his house, and employed him in several political negotiations; which he executed not only to his entire satisfaction, but with surprising judgment and ability. After continuing for a considerable time at Paris, he proceeded to Lyons and Geneva: thence to Turin, where he was honoured with very flattering attentions from the King of Sardinia. He next visited Milan, Venice, Genoa, and the far-famed capital of Italy, where he studied the fine

arts with uncommon ardour and success, so that even in that celebrated city, he was esteemed a perfect judge of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

During the whole of his travels, his moral conduct appears to have been highly correct and exemplary, and he displayed a literary enthusiasm, rarely to be met with among young men of fortune. Instead of spending his time at the coffee-houses frequented by the English, and indulging in all the fashionable vices and follies of the countries through which he passed, his constant practice was to divide his hours alternately between study, and the society of men of distinguished character, or literary acquirements. By such habits alone, he considered that the great object of travelling,—the enlargement of the mind,—could ever be effectually accomplished; and this object he never ceased to pursue with the most laudable diligence and zeal. With his relations and friends at home, he regularly corresponded. Several of his letters to his father are still extant, no less admirable for the elegance of their composition, than for their expressions of filial affection and duty; and they display acute judgment and sound principles, as well as tender attachment to his relations.

From Paris he sent a poetical epistle to his relation, Dr Ayscough, in which he alludes to the objects and advantages he sought in foreign travel:

Me other cares in other climes engage,
 Cares that become my birth and suit my age;
 In various knowledge to improve my youth,
 And conquer prejudice—worst foe to truth;
 By foreign arts domestic faults to mend,
 Enlarge my notions and my views extend.
 The useful science of the world to know,
 Which books can never teach, nor pedants show.

From Rome he wrote another to Mr Pope, which displays much good taste and felicity of versification, and has been prefixed, in some editions, to the works of that admirable poet. Mr Lyttelton had formed an early acquaintance, and a great intimacy with that distinguished favourite of the Muses; and when he was advanced to power, he forgot not the friend of his youth. Their attachment was reciprocal, and Mr Pope's high opinion of him is thus expressed in a letter to Dean Swift, "He is one of those," says he, "whom his own merit has forced me to contract an intimacy with, after I had sworn never to love a man more, since the sorrow it cost me to have loved so many now dead, banished, or unfortunate; I mean Mr Lyttelton, one of the worthiest of the rising generation."

Upon his return from the continent in 1729, with every accomplishment to recommend and advance him in the world, he was made Page of honour to the Princess Royal, and soon after was elected member of Parliament for the borough of Oakhampton in Devonshire; which he continued to represent in several Parliaments, to the entire satisfaction of his constituents, who re-elected without putting him to the usual expense attending such occasions. When he entered upon his parliamentary career, the anti-ministerial party were using every effort to remove Sir Robert Walpole. Mr Lyttelton eagerly enlisted under the banners of the opposition, and soon distinguished himself as a leader among the ranks of Walpole's enemies; although his father, who was a Commissioner of the Admiralty, always supported the measures of the Court. For many years, the name of Lyttelton was in every account of every

debate in the House of Commons. He spoke with ease and fluency, though his oratory was marked with elegance and good sense, rather than with the fervour of genius. He disapproved of the excise, as an unnecessary restriction upon trade, and opposed the standing army as burdensome upon the nation. Warmed with a patriotic ardour, which generally glows in the bosom of virtuous and liberal youth, he keenly supported the motion for petitioning the King, to remove that veteran minister who had so long directed the councils of the British nation; and the powerful eloquence of the young orator rendered his opposition very formidable to the declining party, though his zeal was considered, even by his own friends, as too violent and acrimonious.

Soon after he had entered Parliament, his public conduct recommended him to the friendship of Frederick, Prince of Wales, father of his late Majesty, George III. who, being driven from St. James's, (1737), kept a separate Court, and set himself at the head of the opposition. Lyttelton was appointed Secretary to his Royal Highness, and was supposed, from his particular intimacy, to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. As it was the business of the Prince, in his present circumstances, to increase his popularity, he was advised by his Secretary, to extend his patronage to literary men; and, accordingly, he became the friend and patron of many eminent characters, as Hammond, Thomson, West, Pope, Fielding, and Young. Mallet was made under-secretary, with a salary of £200. The Author of the Seasons was introduced to the Prince, and being interrogated about the state of his affairs, he

replied, "that they were in a more poetical posture than formerly," and had a pension allowed him of £100, a-year.

Meanwhile the various avocations of Mr Lyttelton did not prevent him from cultivating those talents which he was the means of rewarding in others. He produced about this time a number of little poetical pieces of remarkable beauty and tenderness. He had a happy facility of paying extempore compliments, which often gained him no small reputation. Being in company one evening with Lord Cobham and several of the nobility, his Lordship mentioned his intention of placing a bust of Lady Suffolk in a wood at Stowe, and turning to Mr Lyttelton, said, "George, you must furnish me with a motto for it;" which he immediately did in the following couplet:—

Her wit and beauty for a Court were made,
But truth and goodness fit her for a shade.

Upon another occasion, when Mr Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, lost his commission in the Guards, in consequence of his spirited behaviour in Parliament, Mr Lyttelton, on hearing the circumstance, instantly produced these lines:—

Long had thy virtues mark'd thee out for fame,
Far, far superior to a Cornet's name;
This generous Walpole saw, and grieved to find
So mean a post disgrace that noble mind;
The servile standard from thy free-born hand
He took, and bade thee lead the patriot band.

In 1741, he was united to a most amiable young lady, whose charms had often inspired his Muse, and to whom he had been for some time very tenderly attached. She was the daughter of Hugh Fortescue, Esq. of Filleigh in Devonshire, and sis-

ter to Matthew, Lord Fortescue. In many respects he was exceedingly fortunate in the choice he had made. Her virtuous principles, and varied accomplishments, together with the amiable dispositions of her heart, seemed to promise every requisite for conubial felicity. But unhappily it was not of long continuance: for the object of his fondest affections was torn from his bosom a few years after their union. She left him a son, Thomas, afterwards Lord Lyttelton, and two daughters, one of whom was married to Viscount Valentia. To solace his grief, he wrote the beautiful and well-known lines which are inscribed on her tomb; together with a long poem to her memory, which will continue to be admired, whilst conjugal affection, and a taste for poetry exist.

He did not, however, continue a widower longer than three years; when he again sought happiness in a second marriage, with Elizabeth, daughter of Field-Marshal Sir Robert Rich, an intimate friend of his former wife; but unfortunately his hopes were disappointed. Her imprudent conduct gave him great uneasiness, and a separation, by mutual consent, took place a few years after their marriage.

In 1744, a revolution in the Cabinet opened a way for the minority to power and preferment; for after a long course of opposition, Sir Robert Walpole, that highly gifted minister, at length was obliged to retreat, and gave room for his enemies to share among them his honours and emoluments. Among others, Mr Lyttelton was now admitted into the ministry. He was appointed one of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and exerted all his eloquence and zeal in supporting the measures of his party.

During his continuance in that station, he maintained his former credit, by using his influence in promoting the interests of science and literature. All those eminent men whom he had already recommended to the Prince of Wales, he continued to patronize. For Thomson, especially, he retained a particular regard, and was now able to place him in independence. He conferred upon him the office of Surveyor-General of the Leeward Islands, from which, after his deputy's salary was deducted, he received about three hundred pounds per annum. The friendship and generosity of his noble patron, the grateful poet as celebrated in immortal verse, having dedicated to him a very beautiful and picturesque episode in his Spring.

O Lyttelton, the friend! thy passions thus,
 And meditations vary as at large,
 Courting the muse, thro' Hagley Park thou strayest;
 Thy British Tempe! There along the dale,
 With woods o'erhung, and shagg'd with mossy rocks—
 You silent steal; or sit beneath the shade
 Of solemn oaks, that tuft the swelling mounts,
 And pensive listen to the various voice
 Of rural peace.

From these abstracted, oft
 You wander through the philosophic world;
 Where in bright train continual wonders rise,
 Or to the curious, or the pious eye.
 And oft, conducted by historic truth,
 You tread the long extent of backward time;
 Planning, with warm benevolence of mind,
 And honest zeal, unwarp'd by party rage,
 Britannia's weal; bow from the venal gulph,
 To raise her virtue, and her arts revive.
 Or turning thence thy view, these graver thoughts
 The Muses charm; while, with sure taste refin'd,
 You draw th' inspiring breath of ancient song,
 Till nobly rises, emulous, thy own.

Upon the death of the poet, who had left his affairs in much embarrassment, notwithstanding his income, Mr Lyttelton undertook to revise his Tragedy of Coriolanus; and brought it upon the stage, for the benefit of his family, recommended by a prologue, in which he so affectingly lamented the loss of the departed bard, that the audience were melted into tears. By this tragedy, Mr Lyttelton realized a considerable sum, with part of which he discharged the poet's debts, and the surplus he remitted to his sister, whom he also took under his protection.

In 1751, Mr Lyttelton, by the death of his father, succeeded to the title of Baronet, with a very considerable estate, to which he made little addition; but he spared no expense to adorn it with an elegant mansion, and to heighten the charms of that rural scenery which the poet of the Seasons has so beautifully described, and which rendered Hagley one of the most delightful residences in the kingdom.

His exertions in Parliament, and the esteem in which he was deservedly held, contributed to raise him still higher in the scale of political preferment; and accordingly, in 1754, having resigned his office of Lord of the Treasury, he was made Cofferer to his Majesty's Household, and sworn of the Privy Council. Next year he exchanged this appointment for that of Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the room of Mr Legge. He soon found, however, that his qualifications were inadequate to the difficult duties of that high office; for however great were his oratorical powers,—his talents as a writer,—and his other accomplishments; in calculations, and on the subject of finance,

he was very deficient ; for it is no less remarkable than true, that he never could comprehend the most common rules of arithmetic.

The year after his elevation to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, his curiosity led him to visit the interesting district of Wales, which he described to a friend in a very picturesque style, but with perhaps too much affectation of delight. About the same time he published his "Dialogues of the Dead," in which the morality of Fenelon, and the spirit of Fontenelle, are happily blended. They were eagerly read, and much admired at the time, though they seem rather the effusions of a leisure hour, than the production of careful study.

He continued to hold his place in the cabinet, till near the termination of the reign of his sovereign, when a change in the ministry was rendered necessary by the commencement of the continental war. Retiring from employment under the crown, he was recompensed for his services with a peerage, by letters patent, dated the 19th of November, 1757, by the style and title of Lord Lyttelton, Baron of Frankley in the county of Worcester. He now rested from ministerial turbulence and public responsibility, but occasionally delivering his opinion in the House of Lords with his usual acuteness and eloquence.

Politics, however, even in the ardour and bustle of parliamentary life, were not allowed to engross altogether his attention. It is well known, that, at an early period, his mind had become tinctured with sceptical principles ; and he was long possessed with the most serious doubts of the truth of Christianity. Of these doubts it is not now easy to ascertain the origin or the cause. They arose in

part, most probably, from a superficial acquaintance with religion, as he appears to have studied the subject only so far as to discover that it contained mysteries which he could not comprehend. In the pride of juvenile confidence, which is impatient under difficulties that impede the ardour of mental pursuit; and forgetting the impotence of human reason to scan the works of the Almighty, or penetrate the secrets of infinite wisdom, he was disposed to reject revelation as propounding things hard to be understood; without considering the tendency of its doctrines, or examining the evidence on which they were founded.

In this state of imperfect knowledge, and presumptuous reliance on the supposed omnipotence of reason, it is not surprising that he should have listened to the blandishments of infidelity. Entering into the world with these sceptical tendencies, the society with which he mingled, unfortunately contributed rather to confirm than to remove them. It does not appear what influence his visit to the continent had upon his religious principles, although, it is more than probable, that he could not breath in so tainted an atmosphere, without imbibing a portion of its contagion. Certain it is, however, that the companions with which he associated, strengthened his prejudices against the Christian religion; and if they did not succeed in making him a confirmed infidel, they sapped the foundation of his faith, and impressed his mind with scruples and objections that remained with him for years.

But amidst all his scruples he still kept himself open to conviction; and was ready to listen to arguments, and to weigh them with impartiality.

in this unsettled state between dubiety and disbelief, he continued until his thirty-seventh year; and then he thought the time was come when he ought no longer to doubt or believe by chance. In a conversation, it appears, with his friend West, at Wickham, produced that happy resolution which set him to study and investigate the Scriptures, whether or not they contain the words of eternal life. To the solution of this important question he applied himself with all possible candour, and earnestness. He conversed with learned and religious friends on the subject. He examined with attention the evidences and doctrines of Christianity; (and his researches being honest, ended in conviction.) He found that it was a true religion, that it was stamped throughout with indubitable characters of its divine original.

What he had thus learned he was anxious to communicate to others; which he immediately did by writing and publishing his admirable Dissertation on the Conversion of St Paul; a treatise which is allowed to be a masterly performance of the controversial kind, and to which, as Dr Johnson observes, infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer. It obtained for him much applause from the friends of religion, and even of literature. The University of Oxford, as an expression of their approbation, offered to confer on the writer the degree of Doctor of Laws; which, however, he refused, saying, that he chose not to be under any particular obligation; that, if he should happen to write any thing of the like kind in future, it might not appear to proceed from any other motive whatever, than a pure desire of doing good. To none was it more grateful than to his own fa-

ther, who thus records his happiness, and his opinion of the performance, in a very affectionate letter.

“ I have read your religious treatise with infinite pleasure and satisfaction. The style is fine and clear, the arguments close, cogent, and irresistible. May the King of kings, whose glorious cause you have so well defended, reward your pious labours and grant that I may be found worthy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to be an eye witness of the happiness which I doubt not he will bountifully bestow upon you. In the meantime, I shall never cease glorifying God for having endowed you with such useful talents, and given me so good a son.

Your affectionate Father,

THOMAS LYTTELTON.

Of this Dissertation, published in 1747, we need only observe at present, that it is the best and most original of all Lyttelton's works. It was written by the advice of Mr West, in consequence of a suggestion dropt by his friend in conversation, that he thought the Conversion and Apostleship of St Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine religion; independent of all the other proofs of it, which might be drawn from prophecies in the Old Testament; from the necessary connection it has with the whole system of the Jewish religion; from the miracles of Christ, and from the evidence given of his resurrection, to all the other apostles. A proof so compendious, Mr West was persuaded, might be of use to convince those unbelievers who will not attend to a longer series of

arguments. To this hint we owe the excellent "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St Paul:" of which the reader will find subjoined a pretty full analysis of the leading arguments or propositions.

After his retirement from public life, Lord Lyttelton devoted himself to literary pursuits. His time was chiefly occupied in preparing his History of Henry II. which he has enriched with the researches and deliberations of twenty years; and in which he endeavoured to present an accurate and comprehensive view of the English constitution at that early period; and of the changes subsequent to the Norman conquest. The style of this work is perspicuous and unaffected, often rising to force and elegance. His sentiments are judicious and liberal, and favourable to the rights and interests of mankind. Though not popular, it retains its character as a standard work. Hayley, in his Essay on History, alludes to it in the following elegant lines:—

See candid Lyttelton, at length unfold
The deeds of liberty, in days of old!
Fond of the theme, and narrative with age,
He winds the lengthen'd tale thro' many a page;
But there the beams of patriot virtue shine;
There truth and freedom sanctify the line;
And laurels, due to civil wisdom, shield
This noble Nestor of the historic field.

The character of Lord Lyttelton now stood deservedly high, both on account of his public conduct, and the fame of his literary productions. But his mortal career was now hastening to a close. His appearance never was that of a strong or of a healthy man. He had a slender, emaciated frame, and a meagre face: he arrived, how-

ever, at a considerable age, notwithstanding the infirmities of his constitution. Of his last illness and death, which took place at his seat of Hagley, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, a very full and affecting account has been given by his physician, Dr Johnson of Kidderminster; which, as it contains some very instructive traits of his moral character, we shall here subjoin.

“ On Sunday evening the symptoms of his Lordship’s disorder, which for a week past had alarmed us, put on a fatal appearance, and his Lordship believed himself a dying man. From this time he suffered by restlessness rather than pain; though his nerves were apparently much fluttered, his mental faculties never seemed stronger, when he was thoroughly awake. His Lordship’s bilious and hepatic complaints seemed alone not equal to the expected mournful event; his long want of sleep, whether the consequence of the irritation in the bowels, or, which is more probable, of causes of a different kind, accounts for his loss of strength, and for his death, very sufficiently.

“ Though his Lordship wished his approaching dissolution not to be lingering, he waited for it with resignation. He said, “ It is a folly, a keeping me in misery, now to attempt to prolong life; ” yet he was easily persuaded, for the satisfaction of others, to do or take any thing thought proper for him. On Saturday he had been remarkably better, and we were not without hopes of his recovery.

“ On Sunday, about eleven in the forenoon, his Lordship sent for me, and said he felt a great heaviness, and wished to have a little conversation with

me, in order to divert it. He then proceeded to open the fountain of that heart, from whence goodness had so long flowed, as from a copious spring. "Doctor," said he, "you shall be my confessor when I first set out in the world, I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the Christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me; but I kept my mind open to conviction. The evidences and doctrines of Christianity, studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the Christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life; and it is the ground of my future hopes. I have erred and sinned; but have repented, and never indulged any vicious habit. In politics, and public life, I have made public good the rule of my conduct. I never gave counsels which I did not at the time think the best. I have seen that I was sometimes in the wrong; but I did not err designedly. I have endeavoured in private life, to do all the good in my power, and never for a moment could indulge malicious or unjust designs upon any person whatsoever." At another time he said, "I must leave my soul in the same state it was before this illness; I find this a very inconvenient time for solicitude about any thing."

"On the evening, when the symptoms of death came on, he said, "I shall die; but it will not be your fault." When Lord and Lady Valentia came to see his Lordship, he gave him his solemn benediction, and said, "Be good, be virtuous, my Lord; you must come to this." Thus he continued giving his dying benediction to all around him. On Monday morning, a lucid interval gave some small hopes, but these vanished in the even-

ing; and he continued dying, but with very little uneasiness, till Tuesday morning, August 22nd, 1778, when, between seven and eight o'clock, he expired, almost without a groan."

The works of Lord Lyttelton, most of which have been mentioned in the order of time in which they were written, claim for him a very respectable rank among our noble authors. His poems still preserve a place among the select productions of the British Muse; rather, however, on account of their correctness and elegance of diction, and the delicacy of their sentiment, than as exhibiting any uncommon poetical talents. They are perused with pleasure rather than admiration; and if they do not always rise to sublimity, they contain nothing offensive. Though rigid criticism may find objections in some of them, they display much tenderness of feeling, and not unfrequently discover a force of imagination, and a power of poetry, which cultivation might have raised to excellence. Four of his speeches may be found in the edition of his Works by Ayscough, which display sound views, powerful eloquence, and inflexible integrity: That on the Scottish Bill, 1747; on the Mutiny Bill; and more particularly on the clause concerning Half-pay Officers, 1751; on the repeal of the act called the Jew Bill, 1753; and one in the House of Lords, 1763, concerning Privilege of Parliament, as extending to cases of writing and publishing seditious libels.

But the most popular and most valuable of his productions, is his Dissertation on the Conversion of St Paul, written, as we have observed, after he had renounced his sceptical sentiments, and become a confirmed believer in the truth of Chris-

tianity. In this treatise, he has advocated very ably the cause of religion, and executed with success the design with which he set out. Great hopes were entertained of its utility, and time has now shewn that this expectation was not ill-founded; for it is esteemed one of the most masterly defences of the Christian religion that has appeared, and has been the means of recommending and promoting it in various parts of the world.

The author *first* considers the account which St Paul himself has given of the miraculous manner of his conversion, recorded both in the Acts of the Apostles, and in several of his own Epistles; and thence he deduces the following alternative, *viz.* That the person attesting such things of himself, either was an impostor, who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive; or he was an enthusiast, who, by the force of an overheated imagination, imposed on himself; or he was deceived by the fraud of others; Or, lastly, what he declared to be the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen; and therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation.

That he was not an impostor, who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive, must appear evident by considering, that the apostle could have no rational motive to undertake such an imposture; nor could he possibly have carried it on with any success, by the means we know he employed. As to the inducements to such an imposture, they must have been either the hope of advancing himself by it, in his temporal interest, credit, or power; or the gratification of some of his passions under its authority, and by the means it afforded.

The former of these motives will not bear out the supposition in question; the party he abandoned, the doctrines he espoused, the prejudices he opposed, are all against it. The circumstances under which he became a disciple of Christ, shew that it could be with no hope of increasing his power or his wealth. The certain consequence of his taking such a part, was not only the loss of all he had, but of all hopes of acquiring more. Those whom he had left, were the disposers of wealth, of dignity, of power, in Judea. Those whom he went to, were indigent men, oppressed and kept down from all means of improving their fortunes. Those among them who had more than the rest, shared what they had with their brethren; but, with this assistance the whole community was hardly supplied with the necessaries of life. And even in churches he afterwards planted himself, which were much more wealthy than that of Jerusalem, so far was St Paul from availing himself of their charity, or the veneration they had for him, in order to draw that wealth to himself, that he often refused to take any part of it even for necessary purposes. It is most evident, therefore, both from the state of the Church when St Paul first came into it, and from his behaviour afterwards, that he had no thoughts of increasing his wealth, by becoming a Christian: whereas, by continuing to be their enemy, he had almost certain hopes of making his fortune, by the favour of those who were at the head of the Jewish state; to whom nothing could more recommend him than the zeal he shewed in that persecution.

As to credit or reputation, these too lay all on the side he forsook; the sect he embraced was un-

der the greatest and most universal contempt of any then in the world. The chiefs and leaders of it were men of the lowest birth, education, and rank. They had not one advantage of parts, or learning, or other human endowments, to recommend them. The doctrines they taught were contrary to those which they who were accounted the wisest and the most knowing of their nation professed. The wonderful works that they did, were either imputed to magic, or to imposture. The very Author and Head of their faith had been condemned as a criminal, and died on the cross between two thieves. Could the disciple of Gamaliel think he should gain any credit or reputation by becoming a teacher in a college of fishermen? Could he flatter himself that either in or out of Judea, the doctrines he taught could do him any honour? No; he knew very well that the preaching of Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness. He afterwards found by experience, that in all parts of the world, contempt was the portion of whoever engaged in preaching a mystery so unpalatable to the world, to all its passions and pleasures; and so irreconcilable to the pride of human reason. Yet he went on as zealously as he set out, and was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Certainly then, the desire of glory, the ambition of making to himself a great name, was not his motive to embrace Christianity.

Neither could it be the love of power. Power? over whom? over a flock of sheep driven to the slaughter, whose Shepherd himself had been murdered a little before. All he could hope from that power, was to be marked out in a particular

manner for the same knife, which he had seen so bloodily drawn against him. Could he expect more mercy from the chief priests and the rulers, than they had shewn to Jesus himself? Would not their anger be fiercer against the *deserter* and *betraye*r of their cause, than against any other of the apostles? But he had not even the desire of usurping any ambitious sway among them. He assumed no authority over the Christians. He pretended to no superiority over the other apostles, but declared himself *the least of them, and less than the least of all saints*. Even in the churches he himself planted, he never pretended to any primacy or power above the other apostles; nor would he be regarded any otherwise by them, than as the instrument to them of the grace of God, and preacher of the gospel; not as the head of a sect: All the authority he exercised over them was purely of a spiritual nature, tending to their instruction and edification; without any mixture of that civil dominion in which alone an impostor can find his account.

His was not that unhallowed ambition which would convert religion into a mere engine in support of temporal power; as has been done by many ancient legislators, as well as by all those pretenders to divine revelation, and others whom history mentions, in different ages and countries. He innovated nothing in government or civil affairs,—he meddled not with legislation,—he formed no commonwealth,—he raised no seditions,—he affected no temporal power. Obedience to their rulers was the doctrine he taught to the churches he planted; and what he taught he practised himself. Nor did he use any of those soothing arts by which ambitious and cunning men recommend

themselves to the favour of those whom they endeavour to subject to their power.

He did not even affect an absolute spiritual power over the churches he planted. He preached Christ Jesus, and not himself. Christ was the head, he only the minister; and for such only he gave himself to them. He called those who assisted him in preaching the gospel, his fellow-labourers and fellow-servants. And so far was he from taking any advantage of a higher education, superior learning, and more intercourse with the world, to claim to himself any supremacy above the other apostles, that he put himself quite on a level with them, and made light of all these attainments.

But had he been an impostor, whose aim was power, he would have acted a contrary part; he would have availed himself of all those advantages,—he would have extolled them as highly as possible,—he would have set up himself, by virtue of them, as head of that sect to which he acceded, or at least of the proselytes made by himself. This was no more than was done by every philosopher who formed a school; much more was it natural in one who propagated a new religion.

Had the apostle been actuated by the same lust of dominion as the Bishops of Rome, or aspired to be the monarch of Christendom, he was much likelier than they to have succeeded in such an attempt. It was much easier for him to make himself head of a few poor mechanics and fishermen, whose superior he confessedly was in point of abilities, than for the Roman Pontiff to have usurped an undisputed supremacy over the powers and

principalities of the world. They had to see their claims in direct contradiction to Scrip, while he had every opportunity of wresting Scrip in favour of his pretensions. He could easily corrupted a faith not yet fully known; and v in many places, could only be known by w published himself. Now, had he been an imp he would not have confined himself to quot same gospel as was delivered by the other ap when he had such a latitude to preach wh pleased, without contradiction. He would have twisted and warped the doctrines of Ch his own ends, to the particular use and expect of his own followers, and to the peculiar st and increase of his own power.

That this was not done by St Paul, or by other of the apostles, in so many various pa the world where they travelled, and in ch absolutely under their own direction; th gospel preached by them all, should be on the same, the doctrines agreeing in every pa lar, without any one of them attributing m himself than he did to the others, or establ any thing, even in point of order or disc different from the rest, or more advantage his own interest, credit, or power,—is a most and convincing proof of their not being imp and acting entirely by divine inspiration.

As it appears then, that St Paul had noth gain by acting the part he did, let it be cons on the other hand, what he gave up, and w had reason to fear.

He gave up a fortune, which he was in tl way of advancing. He gave up that repu which he had acquired by the labours and s

of his whole life. He gave up his friends, his relations and family, from whom he estranged and banished himself for life. He gave up that religion "which he had profited in, above many of his equals in his own nation; and those traditions of his fathers, which he had been more exceedingly zealous of;" a sacrifice, hard to a man of his warm temper, and especially to a Jew,—a nation known to have been more tenacious of their religious opinions, than any other upon the face of the earth. The departing, therefore, so suddenly, from the favourite tenets of the proudest and strictest sect among the Jews, and from their disciple becoming their enemy, was a most difficult effort for one to make, so nursed up in the esteem of them, and whose early prejudices were so strongly confirmed by all the power of habit, all the authority of example, and all the allurements of honour and interest.

These were the sacrifices he had to make in becoming a Christian; but he had also numerous inconveniences to fear from such an apostasy: The implacable vengeance of those he deserted: That sort of contempt which is hardest to bear, the contempt of those whose good opinion he had most eagerly sought; and all those other complicated evils which he describes in his second epistle to the Corinthians; evils, the least of which were enough to have frightened any impostor, even from the most hopeful and profitable cheat. But where the advantage proposed bears no proportion to the dangers incurred, or the mischiefs endured, he must be absolutely out of his senses who will either engage in an imposture, or, being engaged, will persevere.

The obvious inference to be drawn from this part of the argument is, that the desire of wealth of fame, or of power, could be no motive to make St Paul a convert to Christ. But if these suppositions will not account for the apostle's conversion neither will that which now comes under inquiry *viz.* whether the gratification of any other passion under the authority of that religion, or by the means it afforded, could be his inducement.

That there have been some impostors, who have pretended to revelations from God, merely to give a loose to irregular passions, and set themselves free from all restraints of government, law, or morality, both ancient and modern history shews. But the doctrine preached by the apostle was absolutely contrary to all such designs. His writings breathe nothing but the strictest morality obedience to magistrates, order, and government with the utmost abhorrence of all licentiousness idleness, or loose behaviour, under the cloak of religion. We nowhere read in his works, that saints were above moral ordinances; that dominion of property, is founded in grace; that there is no difference in moral actions; that any impulses of the mind are to direct us against the light of our reason and the laws of nature. Nor does any part of his life, either before or after his conversion to Christianity, bear any marks of a libertine disposition. As among the Jews, so among the Christians, his conversation and manners were blameless. It was not then, the desire of gratifying any irregular passion, that could induce St Paul to turn Christian.

There is another observation which may be stated, as an additional proof with regard to the

purity of the apostle's motives. That whereas it may be objected to the other apostles, by those who are resolved not to credit their testimony; that having been deeply engaged with Jesus during his life, they were obliged to continue the same professions after his death, for the support of their own credit, and from having gone too far to go back; this can by no means be said of St Paul. On the contrary, whatever force there may be in that way of reasoning, it all tends to convince us, that St Paul must naturally have continued a Jew, and an enemy of Christ Jesus. If they were engaged on one side, he was as strongly engaged on the other. If shame withheld them from changing sides, much more ought it to have stopt him, who, being of a much higher education and rank in life than they, had more credit to lose, and must be supposed to have been vastly more sensible to that sort of shame. The only difference was, that they, by quitting their Master after his death, might have preserved themselves; whereas he, by quitting the Jews, and taking up the cross of Christ, certainly brought on his own destruction.

As, therefore, no rational motive appears for St Paul's embracing the faith of Christ, without having been really convinced of its truth; but, on the contrary, every thing concurred to deter him from acting the part he did: It may be proved, in the next place, that if he had been so unaccountably wild and absurd, as to undertake an imposture so unprofitable and dangerous, both to himself and those he deceived by it, he could not possibly have carried it on with any success, by the means he employed. For if the apostle's

conversion, and the part that he acted in consequence of it, was an imposture, it was such an imposture as could not be carried on by one man alone. The faith he professed, and of which he became an apostle, was not his invention. He was not the author or beginner of it, and therefore it was not in his power to draw the doctrines of it out of his own imagination; with Jesus, who was the Author and Head of it, he had never had any communication before his death, nor with his apostles after his death, except as their persecutor.

As he took on himself the office and character of an apostle, it was absolutely necessary for him to have a precise and perfect knowledge of all the facts contained in the gospel, several of which had only passed between Jesus himself and his twelve apostles, and others more privately still, so that they could be known but to very few, being not yet made public by any writings; otherwise, he would have exposed himself to ridicule among those who preached that gospel with more knowledge than he; and as the testimony they bore would have been different in point of fact, and many of their doctrines and interpretations of Scripture repugnant to his, from their entire disagreement with those Jewish opinions in which he was bred up; either they must have been forced to ruin his credit, or he would have ruined theirs. It was therefore impossible for him to act this part but in confederacy, at least with the apostles.

But how could he gain these men to become his confederates? How could he learn of them by what secret arts they so imposed upon the senses and understandings of men? Was it by furiously persecuting them and their brethren, as we find that

he did, to the very moment of his conversion? Would they venture to trust their capital enemy with all the secrets of their imposture,—with those upon which all their hopes and credit depended? All this is still more impossible than that he should attempt to engage in their fraud without their consent and assistance.

Had the miraculous story of his conversion been an imposture, there were difficulties at the very outset which could not be overcome. To account for the way he chose of declaring himself a convert to Christ, we must suppose, that all those who were with him when he pretended he had his vision, were his accomplices; otherwise the story he told could have gained no belief, being contradicted by them whose testimony was necessary to vouch for the truth of it. And yet, how can we suppose that all these men should be willing to join in this imposture? They were probably officers of justice, or soldiers, who had been employed often before in executing the orders of the high-priest and the rulers, against the Christians.

What then should now induce them to betray the business they were employed in? Or does it even appear that they had any connection with the man they so lied for,—or had any reward from him for it? But they must have been accomplices in carrying on this wicked fraud, and the whole matter must have been previously agreed on between them,—a supposition too improbable to be admitted. Had the Jews, either at Damascus or Jerusalem, who were concerned in discovering the cheat, been able to convict him of fraud in this affair, the whole scheme must

have been nipt in the bud. But we find that many years afterwards, when they had all the time and means they could desire, to make the strictest inquiry, he was bold enough to appeal to Agrippa, in the presence of Festus, upon his own knowledge of the truth of his story,—a very remarkable proof, both of the notoriety of the fact, and the integrity of the man.

But further, let us observe in what manner this wondrous imposture was carried on by Paul himself. His first care ought to have been to get himself owned and received as an apostle; till this was done, the bottom he stood upon was very narrow; nor could he have any probable means of supporting himself in any esteem or credit among the disciples. Intruders run a double risk; they are in danger of being detected, not only by those upon whom they attempt to practise their cheats, but also by those into whose society they force themselves, who must always be jealous of such an intrusion, and much more from one who had before been their declared enemy. To gain the apostles, therefore, and bring them to admit him into a participation of all their mysteries, all their designs, and all their authority, was absolutely necessary; but instead of attending to this, he went into Arabia, returned to Damascus, and did not repair to Jerusalem till three years had elapsed. Among the apostles themselves he used no arts to conciliate favour, and betrayed no fears as to the grounds of his apostleship. “He even withstood Peter to the face, and reproved him before all the disciples, because he was to be blamed.” If he was an impostor, how could he venture to offend one whom it so highly con-

cerned him to agree with,—and to please. Accomplices in fraud, are obliged to shew greater regard to each other,—such freedom belongs to truth alone.

There is another part of his apostolical functions connected with this stage of the argument, deserving of particular notice; and that is, the difficulties St Paul had to encounter among the Gentiles, in the enterprise he undertook of going to *them*, making himself *their* apostle, and converting them to the religion of Christ. In this enterprise he had to contend, *first*, with the policy and power of the magistrates, which was every where armed with all its terrors against Christianity. When, therefore, St Paul undertook the conversion of the Gentiles, he knew very well that the most severe persecutions must be the consequence of any success in his design.

In the *second* place, he had to contend with the interest, credit, and craft of the priests. How gainful a trade they, with all their inferior dependants, made of those superstitions which he proposed to destroy; how much credit they had with the people, as well as the state, by means of them, and how much craft they employed in carrying on their imposture, all history shews. St Paul could not doubt that all these men would exert their utmost abilities to stop the spreading of the doctrines he preached,—doctrines which struck at the root of their power and gain. Whatever, therefore, their cunning could do to support their own worship, whatever aid they could draw from the magistrate, whatever zeal they could raise in the people, St Paul had to contend with, unsupported by any human assistance.

The apostle had, in the *third* place, to encounter all the prejudices and passions of the people. Had he confined his preaching to Judea alone, this difficulty would not have been so great. The people there had begun to be somewhat favourably disposed towards the miracles and teaching of the apostles; but among the Gentiles, no such dispositions could be expected. Their prejudices were violent, not only in favour of their own superstitions, but in a particular manner against any doctrines taught by a Jew; whom all other nations hated and despised. What authority then could St Paul flatter himself that his preaching would carry along with it, among people to whom he was at once both the object of national hatred, and national scorn?

But besides the popular prejudices against his nation, the doctrines he taught were such as shocked all their most ingrafted religious opinions. They agreed to no principles of which he could avail himself to procure their assent to the other parts of the gospel he preached. They expected no Christ, like the Jews. They allowed no such Scriptures as the Old Testament, which contained predictions and proofs of the Messiah, to which he could refer.

Besides, they were strongly attached to idolatry, not by their prejudices alone, but by their passions, which were flattered and gratified by it. Its rites dazzled their senses by magnificent shews, and allured them by pleasures often of a very impure and immoral nature. Instead of all this, the gospel proposed to them no other terms of acceptance with God, but a worshipping him in spirit and truth, sincere repentance, and perfect submission to the

Divine law ; the strictest purity of life and manners, and renouncing of all those lusts in which they had formerly walked. How unpalatable a doctrine was this, to men so given up to the power of their lusts, as the whole heathen world was at that time !

But the wisdom and pride of the philosophers, was a source of opposition no less strong than the prejudices of the vulgar : for whatever refinement they pretended to, their systems were all equally irreconcilable with the doctrines of Christ. The wisdom upon which they valued themselves, chiefly consisted in vain, metaphysical speculations, in logical subtleties, in endless disputes, in high-flown conceits of the perfection and self-sufficiency of human wisdom, in dogmatical positiveness about doubtful opinions, or sceptical cavils about the most clear and certain truths. It must appear at first sight, that nothing could be more contradictory to the first principles of the Christian religion, than those of the atheistical or sceptical sects, which at that time prevailed very much, both among the Greeks and the Romans. Besides the contrariety of their tenets to those of the gospel, the pride that was common to all the philosophers, was of itself an almost invincible obstacle against the admission of the evangelical doctrines, calculated to humble that pride, and teach them that professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

The Christian religion at once overturned their several systems, taught a morality more perfect than theirs, mortified their pride, confounded their learning, discovered their ignorance, and ruined their credit. Against such an enemy, what would they not do ? Would they not exert the whole power of

their rhetoric, the whole art of their logic, their influence over the people, their interest with the great, to discredit a novelty so alarming to them. St Paul had therefore to contend, in his enterprise of converting the Gentiles, with all the opposition that could be made by all the different sects of philosophers; with a pride no less intractable, no less averse to the instructions of Christ and his apostles, than that of the Scribes and Pharisees. If he had had nothing to trust to but his own natural faculties, his own understanding, knowledge, and eloquence; could he have hoped to be singly a match against such formidable opposition? He might as well have attempted, alone, to have erected a monarchy upon the ruins of all the several states then in the world, as to have erected Christianity upon the destruction of all the several sects of philosophy among the Gentiles, particularly the Greeks and the Romans.

Having thus satisfactorily shewn, that in converting the Gentiles, St Paul could have no assistance, but was sure on the contrary of the utmost opposition from the magistrates, the priests, the people, and the philosophers; it necessarily follows, that to succeed in that work, he must have called in some extraordinary aid, some stronger power, than that of reason and argumentation. Accordingly, he tells us, that it was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that he preached. It was to the supernatural efficacy of this Divine power, that he ascribed all his success wherever he planted the gospel. If that power really went with him, it would enable him to overcome all those difficulties that obstructed his enterprise. But this concession is inconsistent with the supposition of his being an impostor.

It may be shewn farther, that alleging him to have been an impostor, he could not by *pretending* to miracles, have overcome all these difficulties and carried on his work with success. Two circumstances are principally necessary to give miracles falsely pretended to, any reputation,—an apt disposition in those whom they are designed to impose upon, and a powerful confederacy to carry on and abet the cheat,—one or other of these has always accompanied all the false miracles ancient and modern, which have obtained any credit among mankind, such as oracles, augurs, magicians, and the impostures of Priests and Kurgul omens. Neither of these assisted the apostle. Had he remained in Judea, the signal miracle of *Christ* might be said to have predisposed the minds of that credulous people, and prepared them for the admission of others, supposed to be wrought by the same power. But among the Gentiles the apostle found no such dispositions. What possessions could there have been in their minds, either in favour of him, or the destruction of his religion? or rather, what propensities could be stronger than those, which they necessarily had against both?

As there were no propensities either in the minds of the people, neither were there any credit, deracy strong enough to support their superstitions against the Gentiles, had the apostle been attended by a powerful tender. He was in no countenance of the rulers or their magistrates; no one of great authority gave him any help; all eyes were open and vigilant to detect his imposture. All hands were ready to punish him as soon as he was discovered. It is to be considered, that these open enemies were not only

practised, were not a gross or ignorant people, apt to mistake any uncommon operation of nature, or juggling tricks, for miraculous acts. The churches planted by St Paul were in the most enlightened parts of the world; in the midst of science, philosophy, freedom of thought; and in an age more inquisitively curious into the powers of nature, and less inclined to credit religious frauds, than any before it.

None of these advantages attended the apostle which concurred to favour the miracles of the Abbé Paris, or the famous impostor Alexander of Pontus, mentioned by Lucian. The methods by which those remarkable frauds were conducted, were directly opposite to those used by St Paul, who never had recourse to ambiguous answers, cunning evasions, and juggling artifices to support his pretensions. He could receive no assistance from the dispositions of those whom he tried to convert, and had no powerful confederacy to carry on or abet the cheat. On the contrary, he had to contend alone, or at most with two or three companions, against the opposition of magistrates, priests, philosophers, and people, all combined to detect and expose the imposture. From all this, it may be reasonably concluded, that no human means were adequate to the effect.

Though the argument drawn from these considerations alone, might be sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation; yet there is another branch of the inquiry which may be regarded as additional evidence, *viz.* whether the apostle was not an enthusiast, who by the force of an overheated imagination, imposed upon himself? The ingredients of which enthusiasm are generally com-

posed, are these :—great heat of temper, melancholy, ignorance, credulity, and vanity, or self-conceit. The first of these the apostle possessed ; but this quality alone will not be sufficient to prove him to have been an enthusiast, in the opinion of any reasonable man. The same quality has been common to others, who were not enthusiasts ; as the Gracchi, Cato, Brutus, and many more among the best and wisest of men. Nor does it appear, that this disposition had such a mastery over the mind of St Paul, that he was not able at all times to rule and control it by the dictates of reason. His zeal was eager and warm, but tempered with prudence, and even with the civilities of life, as appears by his behaviour to Agrippa, Festus, and Felix.

As to melancholy, it neither appears by his writings, nor by any thing told of him in the Acts of the Apostles, nor by any other evidence, that St Paul was inclined to it, more than any other man. Though he was full of remorse for his former ignorant persecution of the Church of Christ, we read of no gloomy penances, no extravagant mortifications, such as the Brahmins, the Taugues, the Monks of La Trappe, and other melancholy enthusiasts inflict on themselves. And as to *ignorance*, St Paul was so far from it, that he appears to have been master, not of the Jewish learning alone, but of the Greek,—and on this account he may be regarded as less liable to the imputation of enthusiasm than the other apostles.

That credulity formed no part of his character, the history of his life undeniably shews. He seems indeed to have been slow and hard of belief in an extreme degree ; having paid no regard to all the

miracles done by our Saviour, the fame of which he could not be a stranger to; nor to those performed after his resurrection, and in his name, by Peter and John, and the other apostles. All these he resisted; so that his mind, far from being disposed to a credulous faith, or a too easy reception of any miracles wrought in proof of the Christian religion, appears to have been barred against it by the most obstinate prejudices, as much as any man's could possibly be. That the apostle was equally void of vanity or self-conceit, must appear from the slightest examination both of his motives and his actions; and that he was as free from these infirmities as any man, may be gathered from all that we see in his writings, or know of his life. Throughout his Epistles, there is not one word that savours of vanity, nor is any action recorded of him, in which the least mark of it appears. How contrary is his modesty, and self-abasement to the spirit of vanity! How different from the practice of enthusiastical pretenders to raptures and visions! Nothing can be more evident than that in St Paul's character and disposition, those qualities do not occur that seem to be necessary to form an enthusiast, and therefore it is reasonable to conclude he was none.

It may be shewn, moreover, that he could not have imposed on himself, even though he had possessed such qualities, either in regard to the miracle that caused his conversion, or to the consequential effects of it. The power of imagination in enthusiastical minds is, no doubt, very strong; but it always acts in conformity to the opinions imprinted upon it at the time of its working; and can no more act against them, than a rapid river

can carry a boat against the current of its own stream. But how does the fact stand with the apostle. When he set out to Damascus, his mind was strongly possessed with opinions against Christ and his followers. To give these opinions a more active force, his passions at that time concurred. In such a state and temper of mind, if an enthusiastical man had imagined he saw a vision from heaven, denouncing the anger of God against the Christians, and commanding him to persecute them without any mercy, it might be accounted for by the natural power of enthusiasm. But that in the very instant of his being engaged in the fiercest and hottest persecution against the Christians, no circumstances having happened to change his opinions, or alter the bent of his disposition, he should at once imagine himself called by a heavenly vision to be the apostle of Christ, whom but a moment before he deemed an impostor and a blasphemer, is in itself wholly incredible; and so far from being a probable consequence of enthusiasm, that just a contrary effect must have been naturally produced by that cause. The warmth of his temper carried him violently another way; and whatever delusions his imagination could raise to impose on his reason, must have been raised at that time, agreeably to the notions imprinted upon it.

If it be supposed, in order to try to account for his conversion without a miracle; that the vision he and his company saw on their journey, was the effect of a meteor which did really happen, this would not resolve the difficulty. This natural phenomenon may account for the apostle's blindness, for the light they all saw, the terror they were in, and the noise they heard; but how will

it account for the distinct words they heard, or the signs and wonders that followed. It is a much harder task for unbelievers to account for the success of St Paul, in preaching the gospel, upon the supposition of his having been an enthusiast, than his having been an impostor. Neither of the suppositions can ever account for it; but the impossibility is more glaringly strong in this case than the other.

But in addition to these attestations, let it be remembered, that the apostle wrought signs and wonders which it was impossible for enthusiasm to imagine, or imposture to counterfeit, or any power of nature to perform. These supernatural gifts were also communicated to the various churches which he planted in different parts of the world. Are we to conclude that all these miracles were pretended; or are they to be ascribed to the effect of imagination or imposture, either in himself, or the persons on whom he operated. How was it possible that he and they could be so cheated by that enthusiasm, as to imagine they had supernatural powers when they had not. Suppose that enthusiasm could make a man believe he was able by a word or a touch, to give sight to the blind, motion to the lame, or life to the dead; would that conceit of his make the blind see, the lame walk, or the dead revive? And if it did not, how could he persist in such an opinion, or upon his persisting, escape being shut up for a madman?

But such a madness could not infect so many; once, as St Paul supposes at Corinth to have been endowed with the gift of healing, or any other miraculous power.—One of the miracles which he pretended to, was the speaking of languages the

never had learned. And St Paul says, he possessed this gift *more than them all*. If this had been a delusion of fancy, if they had spoken only gibberish or unmeaning sounds; it would soon have appeared when they came to make use of it where it was necessary, *viz.* in converting of those who understood not any language they naturally spoke. St Paul particularly, who travelled so far upon that design, and had such occasion to use it, must soon have discovered that this imaginary gift of the Spirit was no gift at all, but a ridiculous instance of *frenzy*, which had possessed both him and them.

But if those he spoke to in divers tongues, understood what he said, and were converted to Christ by that means, how could it be a delusion? Of all the miracles recorded in Scripture, none are more clear from any possible imputation of being the effect of an enthusiastic imagination than this. For how could any man think that he had it, who had it not; or if he did so, not be undeceived, when he came to put his gift to the proof? Accordingly, we do not find such a power to have been ever pretended to by any enthusiast, ancient or modern.

It must thus appear manifest, that St Paul could not have imposed on himself by any power of enthusiasm, either with regard to the miracle that caused his conversion, or to the consequential effects of it; especially the miracles wrought by him, and the extraordinary gifts conferred upon him, and upon the Christian converts to whom he wrote. To suppose all this to have been only owing to the strength of his own imagination, when there was in reality no such thing at all, is to sup-

pose him to have been all this time quite out of his senses ; and then it is absolutely impossible to account how such a distempered enthusiast and madman, could make such progress, as we know he did, in converting the Gentile world. The inference from the whole argument is obvious and unanswerable, *viz.* That St Paul was not deceived by the fraud of others, and that what he said of himself cannot be imputed to the power of that deceit, any more than to wilful imposture or to enthusiasm ; and then it follows, that what he related to have been the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen ; and therefore the Christian religion is a Divine revelation.

The Treatise concludes with some excellent observations, to shew that the mysteries of the Christian religion do not furnish any just reason for rejecting the strong and convincing evidence with which it is supported, since the same objections which are urged against revelation ; will go against other systems both of religion and philosophy, which sceptics themselves profess to admit. Even in Deism itself, there are several difficulties which human reason can but ill account for ; such as the origin of evil, reconciling the prescience of God with the free-will of man, &c. which have baffled the wisdom of the greatest philosophers to comprehend, and which the metaphysical Locke, after all his speculations, acknowledged he could not do, although he admitted both as articles of his creed. The creation of the world, the production of matter, the agency of the Deity in that beneficent work, were mysteries common to every system of *Deism* ; yet no wise man will from these deny the

being of God, or his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, which are proved by such evidence as carries the clearest and strongest conviction, and cannot be refused without involving the mind in far greater difficulties, even in downright absurdities and impossibilities.

The only part, therefore, that can be taken is, to account, in the best manner that our weak reason is able to do, for such seeming objections; and when *that* fails, to acknowledge its weakness, and acquiesce under the certainty that our very imperfect knowledge, or judgment, cannot be the measure of the Divine wisdom, or the universal standard of truth. So likewise it is with respect to the Christian religion. Some difficulties occur in that revelation, which human reason can hardly clear; but as the truth of it stands upon evidence so strong and convincing, that it cannot be denied without much *greater difficulties* than those that attend the belief of it, we ought not to reject it upon such objections, however mortifying they may be to our pride. *That* indeed would have all things made plain to us; but God has thought proper to proportion our knowledge to our *wants*, not our *pride*. All that concerns our *duty* is clear; and as to other points, either of natural or revealed religion, if he has left some obscurities in them, that can be no reasonable cause of complaint.

The proper use of our intellectual faculties, is to distinguish the genuine doctrines of religion from others erroneously or corruptly ascribed to it; to consider the importance and purport of them, with the connection they bear to one another; but especially to examine with the strictest

attention, the evidences by which religion is proved, internal as well as external. If the external evidence be convincingly strong, and there be no internal proof of its falsehood, but much to support and confirm its truth; then surely no difficulties ought to prevent our giving a full assent and belief to it. It is our duty indeed, to endeavour to find the best solutions we can to them; but where no satisfactory ones are to be found, it is no less our duty to acquiesce with humility, and believe that to be right which we know is above us, and belonging to a wisdom superior to ours. If the glorious light of the gospel be sometimes overcast with clouds of doubt, so is the light of our reason too. But shall we deprive ourselves of the advantage of either, because these clouds cannot perhaps be entirely removed while we remain in this mortal life? Shall we obstinately shut our eyes against the day-spring from on high that has visited us, because we are not able as yet to bear the full blaze of his beams? Here philosophy, as well as true Christianity, would teach us a wiser and modester part. It would teach us to be content within those bounds which God has assigned us, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

SIR JOHN PRINGLE, BART.

SIR JOHN PRINGLE, Bart., was born at Stichel-House, in the county of Roxburgh, April 10, 1707. His father was Sir John Pringle of Stichel, Bart. and his mother was sister to Sir Gilbert Elliot of Stobs. Both the families from which he descended were ancient and honourable; and were greatly esteemed for their attachment to the religion and liberties of their country, as well as for their piety and virtue in private life. John was the youngest of several sons, only three of whom, besides himself, arrived to years of maturity. His grammatical education he received at home under a private tutor; and when sufficiently qualified to commence his academical studies, he was removed to the University of St Andrews, where he was put under the immediate care of Mr Francis Pringle, professor of Greek, and nearly related to his father. After continuing there some years, he went to Edinburgh, in October 1727, where, however, he remained only one year.

Being designed, it appears, for the mercantile line, he went over to Holland with the view of settling at Amsterdam; but when at Leyden, accidentally hearing Boerhaave lecture, he was so remarkably struck both with the matter and the man; that his attention was henceforth turned to the profession of physic.

This favourite science he was anxious to study at Leyden, at that time the most celebrated school of medicine in Europe ; and as Boerhaave, the distinguished professor in that University, was considerably advanced in years, Mr Pringle was unwilling to lose the opportunity of benefiting by that great man's lectures. For Boerhaave he entertained a high and just respect ; but it was not his disposition or character, to become the implicit and systematic follower of any man. While at Leyden, he contracted an intimate friendship with Van Swieten, then a fellow student in the same science, and who afterwards became so famous at Vienna, both by his practice and his writings. When Mr Pringle had gone through his proper course of studies, he was admitted to the degree of Doctor of Physic, July 20, 1730.

His inaugural Dissertation was " *De Marcere Senili* ;" and his Diploma was signed, besides the other professors of the University, by Boerhaave, Albinus, and Gravesande ; names of great celebrity, not only in medicine, but in general learning.

Upon quitting Leyden, he settled as a Physician at Edinburgh, where, by his abilities and good conduct, he gained the esteem both of the magistrates of the city and the professors of the College ; and such was his known acquaintance with ethical subjects, that he was appointed in 1734, to be joint professor of Moral Philosophy with Mr Scott, during that gentleman's life, and sole professor after his decease. In discharging the duties of this new employment, his text-book was *Puffendorff de Officio Hominis et Civis* ; and agreeably to the method he pursued through life, of making fact and experiment the basis of science, he re-

commended to his pupils, Lord Bacon's works, and particularly the "Novum Organum" of that Father of true philosophy.

He continued for several years in the practice of physic at Edinburgh, and in performing the functions of his professorship, till 1742, when he was appointed physician to the Earl of Stair, who then commanded the British army in the Netherlands, employed there in defending the interests of the young Queen of Hungary, against the ambitious claims of France. Through the interest of this nobleman, Dr Pringle was constituted physician to the military hospital in Flanders, with a salary of twenty shillings a-day, and half-pay for life. He did not on this occasion resign his professorship of Moral Philosophy; the University permitted him to retain it, and Messrs Muirhead and Cleghorn were appointed to teach so long as he might find it necessary to be absent.

The exemplary attention which Dr Pringle paid to his duty, as an army physician, is apparent from the very excellent work he wrote upon the subject. One fact is particularly mentioned, highly creditable to his humanity. It had been the custom when the enemy was near, for the security of the sick, to remove them a great way from the camp; the consequence of which was, that many perished before they came under the care of the physician. The Earl of Stair being sensible of this evil, at the suggestion of Dr Pringle, proposed to the French Commander, the Duke de Noailles, that the hospitals on both sides should be considered as sanctuaries for the sick, and mutually protected; to which the French General readily agreed, and took the first opportunity of shewing his regard for the humane proposal.

At the battle of Dettingen, Dr Pringle was in the coach with Lord Carteret, during the whole time of the engagement, and from their situation they were exposed to imminent danger. They had been taken unawares, and were kept betwixt the fire of the lines in front; a French battery being on the left, and a wood full of hussars on the right. They had occasion frequently to shift the coach to avoid being in the eye of the battery. Soon after this, the Earl of Stair retired from the army, which was no small affliction to Dr Pringle. He offered to resign with his noble patron, but was not permitted; he therefore contented himself with testifying his respect and gratitude to his Lordship, by accompanying him forty miles on his return to England; after which he took leave of him with the utmost regret.

But though Dr Pringle was thus deprived of the immediate protection of a nobleman, who knew and appreciated his worth, his conduct in the duties of his station procured him effectual support. He attended the army through the campaign of 1744, and so powerfully did he recommend himself to the Duke of Cumberland, that, in the spring following, he had a commission from his Royal Highness, appointing him Physician General to his Majesty's forces in the Low Countries and parts beyond the seas; besides a second commission, by which he was constituted Physician to the Royal Hospitals in the same countries. In consequence of these promotions, he now resigned his professorship; and shortly after he was recalled from the army in Flanders, to attend the forces which were to be sent against the rebels in Scotland, in 1745. In *this* official capacity he accompanied the Duke of

Cumberland in his expedition to the North; and after the battle of Culloden, he remained with the forces till their return to England in the middle of August.

In 1747, he again attended the army abroad, and next year upon the conclusion of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, he embarked with the forces for England. From that time he principally resided in London, where, from his known skill and experience, and the reputation he had acquired, he had every reason to expect he might succeed as a physician. During his residence in the metropolis, which comprehended nearly thirty years of his life, he enriched the science and literature of his country, by many learned and valuable communications; and had various marks of literary distinction conferred upon him, both at home and abroad. In 1750, he published in a letter to Dr Mead, "Observations on the Jail or Hospital Fever."—A work which was occasioned by the jail distemper that broke out at that time in the city of London. It was well received by the medical world; and was afterwards embodied in his grand work on the "Diseases of the Army."

It was in the same year that Dr Pringle began to communicate to the Royal Society, of which he had been chosen a member five years before, his famous "Experiments upon Septic and Antiseptic Substances, with remarks relating to their use in the theory of Medicine." These experiments, which comprehended several papers, seven in number, were read at different meetings of the Society. They gained him a high and just reputation as an experimental philosopher, and procured for him the honour of Sir Godfrey Copley's gold

medal. The whole of these were afterwards subjoined, by way of Appendix, to the celebrated Treatise above mentioned.

It would be tedious, and here unnecessary, to enumerate the various Essays which were transmitted through his hands to the periodical works of the day. Besides his own particular department, he discovered an extensive acquaintance with the phenomena of the natural world, and other subjects quite unconnected with his professional studies. In the 49th and two subsequent volumes of the Philosophical Transactions, several communications from him are to be met with. The account of an earthquake felt at Brussels, of another at Glasgow and Dumbarton, and of the agitation of the waters in Scotland, and at Hamburgh, Nov. 1756, were given by him. Two other articles of his may be mentioned, of considerable length, as well as value, viz. a relation of the different accounts that had been given of a very extraordinary fiery-meteor, which appeared on Sunday the 26th of November 1758, between eight and nine at night; with a variety of remarks which he made upon the whole, in which no small degree of philosophical sagacity was displayed. Besides his papers in the Philosophical Transactions, he wrote in the "Edinburgh Medical Essays, vol. v. an account of the success of the *Vitrum Ceratum Antimonii*."

But the most valuable and the most celebrated of his works, was his "Observations on the Diseases of the Army," which he gave to the public in 1752. It is divided into three parts; the first of which, being chiefly historical, may be perused with pleasure by every reader. The latter parts

lie more within the province of physicians, who are the best judges of the merits of the performance ; and to its merits the most decisive and ample testimonials have been given. It received great improvements from the author in course of the many editions through which it has passed ; and on the continent it has been translated into the French, German, and Italian languages. Scarcely any medical writer has mentioned it without some tribute of applause. The most illustrious foreigners have passed their encomiums on the writer, and ranked his Treatise as a classical and standard book in the science ; among these may be noticed, the celebrated Baron Van Haller, who refers particularly to him in his *Bibliotheca Anatomica*.

The reputation that Dr Pringle thus gained, was not of a kind which is ever likely to diminish. From the time he was appointed a physician to the army, it seems to have been his grand object to lessen, as far as lay in his power, the miseries and calamities of war ; nor was he without considerable success in this noble and benevolent study. The utility of this Treatise has been admitted experimentally by the most eminent military characters, who have acknowledged their obligations to the instructions contained in it ; and it has proved the happy instrument of saving the lives of many hundreds of soldiers. Its peculiar merits consist in the proofs adduced, of the effects of air and situation upon the health of soldiers in garrisons and encampments ; and the means proposed for obviating the usual causes of disease in military life ; the identification of the fatal fevers in camps, hospitals, jails, and other places contaminated by human effluvia ; and

the recommendation of modes of treatment, simple, effective and suited to the nature of the morbid cause.

Though Dr Pringle had not for some years been called abroad, he still retained his place of physician to the army; but in 1758, he entirely quitted the service, and, as his residence was now fixed wholly in London, he was immediately admitted a licentiate of the College of Physicians,—a privilege which he might have obtained much earlier, had he been finally determined as to his settlement in the metropolis. After the accession of George III. to the throne, Dr Pringle was appointed physician to the Queen's household; and this honour was succeeded by his being constituted, in 1763, physician extraordinary to her Majesty. In 1766, his Majesty was graciously pleased to testify his sense of Dr Pringle's abilities and merit, by raising him to the dignity of a Baronet of Great Britain; and ten years after, her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales appointed him her physician in ordinary, an office to which a salary of £100, a-year was annexed. In 1774, he was made physician extraordinary to his Majesty, being the last medical promotion which he had the honour to receive.

In course of this distinguished professional career, Sir John Pringle was admitted a member of most of the scientific and learned bodies, both at home and in various parts of Europe. He was four times chosen one of the Council of the Royal Society. In 1763, he was elected a member of the Academy of Sciences at Haarlem, and the same year made a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, London. In 1766, he was elected a

foreign member, in the physical line, of the Royal Society of Sciences at Gottingen, and in 1776, he was enrolled in the list of the members of no less than four learned bodies abroad, viz. the Royal Academy of Sciences at Madrid; the Agricultural Society of Amsterdam; the Royal Academy of Medical Correspondence at Paris; and the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St Petersburg. Next year he was nominated by his Serene Highness, the Landgrave of Hesse, an honorary member of the Society of Antiquaries at Cassel; and in 1778, he succeeded the celebrated Linnaeus, as one of the foreign members, of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris. This honour was then extended only to eight persons, on which account it was justly esteemed a most eminent mark of distinction; and we believe there have been few or no instances, in which it has been conferred on any other than men of great reputation and acknowledged abilities.

In October the same year, Sir John was chosen a member of the Medical Society at Hanau; and in March following, he was elected a foreign member of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres at Naples. He was besides admitted into the fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries, both of London and Edinburgh; but the highest literary honour to which he arrived, was his being chosen President of the Royal Society, London. This was in November 1770, in consequence of the death of James West, Esq. His election to this high station, though he had a powerful opponent in Sir James Porter, was carried by a very considerable majority. At the time Sir John Pringle was called to preside over

that illustrious body, a wonderful ardour for philosophical science, and for the advancement of natural knowledge, had begun to display itself throughout Europe; and no where appeared with greater advantage and enthusiasm than in our own country. This spirit he endeavoured to cherish by all the methods that were in his power; and he happily struck upon a new way to distinction and usefulness, by the discourses he delivered on the annual assignment of Sir Godfrey Copley's medal.

This gentleman had originally bequeathed five guineas to be given at each anniversary meeting of the Royal Society, by the determination of the President and Council, to the person who had been the author of the best paper of experimental observations for the year past. In process of time, this small pecuniary reward was changed into the more liberal form of a gold medal; when it became a truly honourable mark of distinction, and a just and laudable object of ambition. It had been always usual with the president, on delivering the medal, to pay some compliment to the gentleman on whom it was bestowed. Set speeches, adapted to the occasion, were next introduced, giving a sketch of the history of that part of philosophy to which the experiment related. These discourses, however, were but short, and obtained no publicity, as they were merely inserted in the minute-books of the Society. None of them had ever been printed before Sir John Pringle was raised to the chair. His first discourse was well received, and was very happy in its subject.

The medal on this occasion was awarded to Dr Priestly, who had greatly distinguished himself by his magnetic and electrical experiments, as well as his

pursuits in other branches of natural philosophy. The paper read in this meeting was his "Observations on the different kinds of Air;" and the learned president embraced with pleasure the opportunity of celebrating the important communications of his friend, and of relating with accuracy and minuteness what had previously been discovered on the subject. At the close of his speech, he begged Dr Priestly to continue his liberal and valuable inquiries,—a request which he did not fail to comply with.

His second discourse was equally well received; and in point of composition, was considered superior to the former. In it he gave a curious and interesting account of the Torpedo, and of some ingenious experiments made by Mr Walsh, the successful competitor, relative to the electrical properties of that extraordinary fish. The whole discourse abounds with ancient and modern learning, and exhibits the President's knowledge in natural history as well as in medicine, to great advantage. The next occasion which called upon him to exercise his abilities in this way, was on a subject eminently important, being no less than an attempt to establish Sir Isaac Newton's system of the universe. This was undertaken and successfully accomplished by Dr Maskelyne, in his "Observations made on the mountain Schehallien, (Perthshire), for finding its attraction," which obtained the honour of the Society's gold medal. Sir John Pringle took advantage of this opportunity to give a perspicuous and accurate relation of the several hypotheses of the ancients, with regard to the revolutions of the heavenly bodies: and of the noble discoveries with which Copernicus enriched the as-

tronomical world. He then traced the progress of the grand principle of gravitation down to Sir Isaac's illustrious confirmation of it; to which he added a concise narrative of the experiments made on Chimbaraco, by the two French philosophers, Bouguer and Condamine, and by Dr Maskelyne at Schehallien. This distinguished astronomer has had the singular honour of establishing so firmly, the doctrine of universal attraction, by this finishing step of the analysis, that the most scrupulous can no longer hesitate, to embrace a principle which gives life to astronomy, by accounting for the various motions and appearances of the hosts of heaven.

The fourth medal was assigned to Captain Cook, for his skilful treatment and success in preserving the health of the men of his Majesty's ship the Resolution, during her voyage round the world. This was a subject perfectly congenial to the disposition and studies of Sir John Pringle, whose life had been much employed in pointing out the means which tended not only to aid, but to prevent the diseases of mankind; and it is probable, from his intimate friendship with Captain Cook, that he might have suggested to that sagacious navigator, some of the plans which he followed with such astonishing success. With a company of 118 men, he performed a voyage of more than three years, throughout all the climates from 52 degrees north, to 71 south, with the loss of only one man by sickness. By precautions equally wise and simple, he rendered the circumnavigation of the globe, so far as health is concerned, quite a harmless object. And besides his admirable skill in preserving the lives and health of his sailors,

he discovered and surveyed vast tracts of new coasts, dispelled the illusion of a Southern Continent, and fixed the bounds of the habitable earth, as well as those of the navigable ocean, in the antarctic hemisphere. To this mark of honour, therefore, that distinguished voyager seemed well entitled; but he was not present to receive it, being then upon his last expedition, from which unfortunately he never returned.

The next annual dissertation gave Sir John an opportunity of displaying his knowledge in a way in which it had not hitherto been tried. The discourse took its rise from a paper by Mr Mudge, an eminent surgeon at Plymouth, to whom the prize medal had been adjudged, containing "Directions for making the best composition for the metals of Reflecting Telescopes." On this occasion the learned Baronet related a variety of particulars concerning the invention of reflecting telescopes, the subsequent improvements of these instruments, and the state in which Mr Mudge found them, when he first set about manufacturing them in greater perfection. From this recapitulation he naturally directed his thoughts to the wonders that astronomy presents to our view, and to the admirable advantages which philosophical science has derived, from the methods that have been pursued for enlarging the powers of vision.

His sixth and last discourse was on the theory of gunnery, occasioned by Dr Hutton's curious paper on the "Force of fired gun-powder, and the initial velocity of cannon-balls, determined by experiments," which had obtained the gold medal. This was probably a subject to which Sir John had paid very little attention, though he had so long

attended the army. Yet it is surprising with what degree of perspicuity and judgment, he has stated the progress that was made from time to time, in the knowledge of projectiles, and the scientific perfection to which his friend Dr Hutton had carried this theory. He was not one of those who delighted in war, and in the shedding of human blood; and he was happy in being able to shew, that even the study of artillery might be useful to mankind; accordingly he has not forgotten to mention this among the other military topics which he discusses. This was the last of his anniversary dissertations; although, had he continued to hold the chair of the Royal Society, he would no doubt have found other occasions of displaying his acquaintance with the history of philosophy. But the opportunities which he had of signalizing himself in this respect, were important in themselves, happily varied, and amply sufficient to give him a solid and lasting reputation.

He was now arrived at a late period of life; and considering the extreme attention that was paid by him to the various and important duties of his office, and the great pains he took in the preparation of his discourses, it was natural to expect that the burden of his honourable station should grow heavy upon him in course of time. This load was increased not only by the weight of years and labours, but by the misfortune of an accidental fall, from which he received considerable injury; and which in its consequences affected his health and weakened his spirits. Such being the state of his body and mind, he began to entertain thoughts of resigning the presidency. It has been said likewise, and believed, that he was much hurt by the

disputes introduced into the Society, on the question, Whether pointed or blunt electrical conductors are the most efficacious in preserving buildings from the effects of lightning?—a subject which was agitated with as much intolerance and asperity of temper, as ever were the points in Hebrew, or the dogmas of speculative theology.

Perhaps the general state of his health, and his declining years, will form sufficient reasons for his resignation; his intention, however, was by no means agreeable to his literary friends, and to many distinguished members of the Royal Society. Accordingly, they earnestly solicited him to continue in office; but his resolution being fixed, he gave in his resignation at the anniversary meeting of 1778, and was succeeded by Sir Joseph Banks, a gentleman who devoted a long life to the service of natural philosophy, and whose name has since filled so prominent a space in the annals of general science. But though the ex-president had quitted his official relationship to the Royal Society, and did not attend its meetings so regularly as formerly, he still retained his literary habits and connections. His house continued to be the resort of ingenious and learned men, both of his own country and from abroad. He was held in particular esteem by all foreigners of any literary pretensions, none of whom visited England without waiting upon him, and paying him the greatest respect. He treated them in return with distinguished civility and regard; and when a number of gentlemen met at his table, foreigners were usually a part of the company. His guests were collected from almost every kingdom in Europe; and in one instance, it happened that each of them

was of a different nation ; there being eight persons present, *viz.* a Scotsman, an Englishman, a Dutchman, a German, a Frenchman, a Spaniard, an Italian, and a Russian. Though they were all diversified in country, education, modes of life, and principles of religion ; these proved no obstacle to their mutual harmony and intercourse.

In consequence of his increasing infirmities, Sir John resolved on a journey to Scotland, in the hope that an excursion to his native country might prove advantageous to his health. Accordingly he spent the summer of 1780, principally in Edinburgh ; and whether or not he had then formed a design of fixing his residence permanently in that city, he was so well pleased with the place to which he had been habituated in his younger years, and with the respect shewn him by his friends, that he purchased a house there, to which he intended to return in the following spring. This scheme he began immediately to carry into execution. He sold his house in London, disposed of the greatest part of his library, and in April 1781, he removed to Edinburgh.

Here he was treated, by persons of all ranks, with every mark of distinction ; but he found not that ideal happiness realized, which his imagination had pictured to itself. Edinburgh was not then to him what it had been in early life. The vivacity of his spirits, which, in the buoyancy of youth, spread such a charm on the objects that surround us, was fled, and with it the capacity of enjoyment. Most of his old friends and contemporaries were dead ; and though some of them remained, they could not meet together with the same strength of constitution, the same ardour of pursuit, the same

animation of hope, which they formerly possessed. The younger men of eminence paid him the sincerest testimonies of esteem and regard; but it was too late in life for him to form new habits of close and congenial friendship. He found likewise, the air of the place too sharp and cold for his frame, which time and climate had rendered peculiarly sensible to the severities of weather. To these inconveniences, perhaps may be added a restlessness of mind peculiar to invalids, and which in the midst of bodily complaints, is still hoping to derive benefit from a change of place. Accordingly, Sir John determined to return once more to London, where he arrived in the beginning of September; having, before his departure from Edinburgh, presented to the Royal College of Physicians in that city, ten volumes folio of "Medical and Physical Observations," in manuscript; adding an injunction, that they should not be published nor lent out of the library, on any pretence whatever.

The cordiality and affection with which he was received back by his friends, tended somewhat to revive his languid spirits. He again resumed his customary entertainments of conversing with men of letters, and attending the meetings of a select society in the Strand, which he had long frequented. His mornings were chiefly employed in receiving and returning the visits of his various acquaintance; and he had usually a small party to dine with him at his apartments in King Street, St James' Square. His strength, however, declined with a rapidity which did not permit his friends to hope that his life would long be continued; and on the 14th of January 1782, he was seized with a fit, from which

he never recovered. He was attended all the time of his illness, with unwearied assiduity, by Dr Saunders, for whom he had the highest regard; and in whom he had, in every respect, justly placed the most unreserved confidence. But all medical attention served no purpose, for he died in the course of four days, being on Friday the 18th of the month, in the 75th year of his age.

His death shewed the high estimation which was every where entertained of his merit, for the account of it was received with a sensation of deep and general regret. On the 7th of February he was interred in St James's Church, with great funeral solemnity, and with a very honourable attendance of eminent and respectable friends. That every proper tribute of respect might be paid to so distinguished a character, an elegant monument, with an English inscription, was erected in Westminster Abbey, under the direction and at the expense of his nephew and heir, Sir James Pringle of Stichel, Bart. At Edinburgh, his memory was honoured with a public testimony of regard, for at the first meeting of the College of Physicians after his decease, all the members appeared in deep mourning.

Sir John was married, in 1752, to Charlotte, second daughter of Dr Oliver, an eminent physician at Bath, and who had long been at the head of his profession in that city. This connection, however, was but of short duration, the lady having died within a few years after their union. He had, in course of his long practice, acquired a very handsome fortune, which, at his death, he disposed of with great prudence and propriety. As a proof of his affectionate regard for several of his friends

and relations, he appropriated a sum of about £700 a-year to annuities ; which, on the decease of the annuitants, were revertible to his nephew, Sir James, whom he had appointed his sole executor, and with the above exceptions, heir to all his property.

His medical character, both as an author and a practitioner, is well known, and has been universally acknowledged. In the exercise of his profession, he was not rapacious, being ready on various occasions to give his advice without pecuniary views. The turn of his mind led him chiefly to the love of science, which he built on the firm basis of fact. With regard to philosophy in general, he was as averse to theory, unsupported by experiments, as he was with respect to medicine in particular. Lord Bacon was his favourite author, and to the method of investigation recommended by that great man, he steadily adhered. To metaphysical disquisitions he lost all regard, in the latter part of his life ; and though some of his most valued friends had engaged in discussions of this kind, with very different views of things, he did not choose to revert to the studies of his youth, but contented himself with the opinions he had then formed.

In early life he had not been neglectful of philological inquiries ; and though he had omitted them for a time, yet he resumed the subject again ; and at an advanced period of life turned his attention to the Greek, so far at least, as to endeavour to obtain a more exact knowledge of that language. He knew the French language accurately ; and it is said he was fond of Voltaire's critical writings. Among all his other pursuits, he never forgot the

study of the English language. This he regarded as a matter of so much consequence, that he took uncommon pains with respect to the style of his compositions; and it cannot be denied, that he excels in perspicuity, correctness, and propriety of expression. Though he slighted poetry, so far even as to feel but little impressed with the charms of the immortal Shakspeare, yet he was very partial to music, and sometimes performed on the violoncello, at a weekly concert given by a society of amateurs in Edinburgh.

His intellectual was not more amiable or excellent than his moral character, so far as an upright and honourable conduct is concerned. The predominant feature in it was integrity; and by this principle he was uniformly actuated in the whole of his behaviour. All his acquaintance with one voice agreed that there never was a man of stricter honour and veracity. He was equally remarkable for his sobriety, having, as he confessed, never in his life been intoxicated with liquor. In his external manners he was affable and polite; he paid a very respectful attention to those whom he esteemed, though he had a kind of reserve in his deportment, when he was not perfectly pleased with the persons who were introduced to him, or who happened to be in his company. His sense of integrity and dignity would not permit him to adopt that false and superficial politeness, which treats all men alike, however different in point of real estimation and merit. He was above assuming the forms or professions of respect, without its reality. In his friendships he was ardent and steady. The intimacies which he had formed in the early part of his life at Edinburgh, continued

unbroken to the last, and were sustained by a regular correspondence, and by all the good offices that lay in his power.

But the most important view in which he must here be contemplated, is, with regard to his religious character. In his youth he seems to have possessed every facility for acquiring the elements, both of a pious and a liberal education. Nurtured with the tenderest care, under the immediate eye of parental affection, and secluded by the vigilance of domestic tuition, from the example and contagion of vice, he must have enjoyed peculiar advantages both as to classical and moral instruction; and escaped many temptations, which in other circumstances might have counteracted the effect of these salutary precautions. The principles of virtue and piety which were thus early instilled into his mind, though they suffered a temporary relaxation, do not appear ever to have entirely lost their influence upon his general conduct.

When he travelled abroad, however, and witnessed scenes of reckless dissipation and hardened depravity, or perhaps, from his fondness for foreign literature, allowed his mind to be seduced by the libertine philosophy of the Continent, his belief in the Christian revelation was so far unsettled, that he became a sceptic on that subject, if not a professed Deist. One cause of this was, the wrong notions he had formed, concerning the peculiar doctrines of the New Testament; and it may easily be supposed, that he was encouraged in his scruples by the company he met with, both in England and in foreign parts. But it was not consistent with his candid and inquisitive disposition to rest satisfied in his doubts and difficul-

ties, with respect to a matter of such high importance. Indolent credulity or servile acquiescence, were no constituents of his character. He was too great a lover of truth not to make religion the object of his serious inquiry. As he scorned to be an implicit believer without a due knowledge and examination of the subject, he was equally averse to become an implicit unbeliever; which is generally the case with those who reject Christianity; and who adopt and maintain their objections with as much ignorance and prejudice, as the most determined bigots embrace their systems of folly and absurdity. He therefore set himself to study the Scriptures, and read books on divinity.

It was mentioned that Sir John had late in life turned his attention to Greek, and his motive for revising his knowledge of that language, was with a view to the better understanding the New Testament. He corresponded frequently with the distinguished foreigner Michaelis, on theological subjects; and that learned professor addressed to him some letters on "Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks," which Sir John thought worthy of being published in this country; which he did in 1773, with considerable pains, and at some expense. He was a diligent and frequent reader of sermons, and bestowed a critical attention on various other parts of sacred literature. Much of his time, during the latter part of his life, was devoted to this interesting and favourite pursuit. He read many Commentators on Scripture, especially on the New Testament, of which he was anxious to obtain an exact knowledge. The learned and judicious Bishop Pearce's Commentary and Notes, gave him particular pleasure. The pains

he took to obtain information on this important subject are highly praise-worthy, and such as are rarely to be met with among literary men; and it cannot but confer a more illustrious distinction on his character, that, while occupied with such intensity of application in the pursuits of medical and philosophical science, he did not permit questions of nobler aim and higher interest to pass unexamined or disregarded.

The result of his investigations was such as the reader must have already anticipated, and as have frequently been seen exemplified in similar instances,—a full conviction of the divine origin and authority of the gospel. The evidences of revelation appeared to him, after mature research and deliberation, to be solid and invincible; and the nature of it to be such as demanded the most grateful acceptance. In conformity with these discoveries, and with the religion which he found to be true, he regulated the whole tenor of his conduct. Whatever were his peculiar views of some of its doctrines, these had no effect in shaking his belief, or in leading him to neglect its duties. As he was thus firmly persuaded of the truth of the gospel, he lived habitually under its influence. He was animated with a strong sense of piety to the Supreme Being, which displayed itself in a regular attendance on public worship, in the exercise of private devotion, and in an endeavour to discharge all the obligations of Christian virtue. In him we have another instance of those illustrious philosophers, who have not been ashamed of religion, and who reckoned that his greatest glory, which many would impute to him as a weakness. Much of his time, especially after he had retired

from the dignities and duties of professional life, was spent in reading and studying works of theology; and there is every reason to conclude, that the consolations and hopes derived from these studies, would yield him greater encouragement at last, and appear more estimable in his eyes, than all the achievements he had performed, or the flattering honours he had won, during his long and splendid presidency over the arts and sciences.

GILBERT WEST.

GILBERT WEST, an amiable and elegant writer, was born at Winchester, in the year 1706. His father was the Rev. Dr West, of an ancient family, and eminent for his worth and learning; particularly for his classical attainments, of which he gave proof, by superintending an edition of Pindar in the original, published at Oxford in 1697. Bishop Burnet presented him with the living of Hundred in Berkshire; and, in the reign of Queen Anne, Lord Orford procured him a Prebendary's stall in the Cathedral of Winchester. At the accession of George I. he was appointed one of his first chaplains, and had a promise from his Majesty of one of the first vacant bishoprics,—a promotion which he did not live to obtain, having died in 1718. His mother was Maria Temple, sister of Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham, and of Lady Lyttelton, mother of the distinguished nobleman already mentioned. She was heir to her brother's estate, but lost the right of inheritance by marrying a man without property; her other sister succeeded to the forfeited claim. She was a lady of great piety and good sense, and in the careful discharge of parental duty, took pains early to imbue her son's mind with religious principles, and to enforce them by a consistent example.

Mr West received the elementary part of his edu-

cation at the schools of Winchester and Eton, where he attained the distinction of Captain. Thence he was removed to the University of Oxford, and entered at Christ-Church, where his studious habits and serious turn of mind inclined him to take orders,—a profession for which he was designed by both his parents. But losing his father when in his twelfth year, and falling under the protection and patronage of his uncle, Lord Cobham, his attention was diverted from the study of divinity to the more alluring profession of a military life; and it was amidst the gaieties and seductions of his unprincipled companions, especially of his uncle, that he first imbibed those doubts of the Christian religion, which afterwards, upon a more attentive examination of the subject, he found reason to retract. He continued for some time in the army, as Cornet of a troop of horse in his uncle's regiment, though it appears he neither sunk into the mere soldier, by renouncing his sobriety of manners; nor so far lost the love of study, as entirely to neglect literary pursuits.

For this mode of life, however, he had no great partiality, and was glad to take the first opportunity that offered of exchanging it for civil employment. Accordingly, he laid down his commission for an opening of another nature, which presented him with a more flattering prospect of future advancement in the world. A scheme being about this time projected, for training a certain number of individuals for public services, as ambassadors or envoys; several young gentlemen were chosen out of the universities, who were to be taught the foreign languages at the expense of government, and then sent to the office of the foreign secretary

to be initiated into business. Mr West having distinguished himself at Oxford, was one of the few recommended for this purpose.

Having engaged in business under the Secretary of State, Lord Townshend, he was treated by him with every mark of kindness and regard; and afterwards enlisted in his suite, when he accompanied his Majesty, George I. upon the occasion of visiting his Hanoverian dominions. Sir Robert Walpole had a high esteem for him, and testified the strongest inclination to serve him. These facilities for preferment, however, were rendered fruitless, by his uncle's systematic opposition to the measures of the Court; and he was candidly told by the ministry, that he was not to expect they were to promote his interest, as any favour conferred upon him would be considered as done to Lord Cobham. All he obtained, therefore, was merely a nomination, in 1729, to be clerk extraordinary to the Privy Council; which was procured him through the interest of the Duke of Devonshire, by one of his sons, with whom West had contracted a friendship at school. This, however, yielded no immediate profit; but only placed him in a state of expectation and right of succession, and it was long before a vacancy admitted him to the emoluments.

Disappointed in his political views, Mr West soon afterwards left the office of the Secretary of State, and retired to a pleasant residence at Wickham in Kent, where he devoted himself chiefly to literary and theological study. Here his income was but limited, and neither his own merits, nor the recommendation of his friends, could procure him any means of increasing it. It is said, indeed,

that the education of the young Prince of Wales afterwards George III. was offered him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendance than it was thought proper to allow him. Mr West married, about 1734, the daughter of a Mr Bartlett; and with the frugal management of his scanty income, he enjoyed, if not the luxuries, at least the comforts and conveniences of life; and with a companion, in whom all the amiable and virtuous qualities of the human character were happily united, he lived in great domestic comfort.

Though not rich, he had sufficient to enable him to entertain his friends with hospitality. He drew around him the society of a few select companions, and among his frequent visitors were Mr George Lyttelton, and Mr William Pitt. In this little circle he often enjoyed pleasant and instructive literary conversation, which was always supported upon the principles of virtue, sound reasoning, and solid friendship, and which rendered his rural asylum a peaceable retreat from the storms of political faction and debate.

Lyttelton has recorded in a few elegant lines, the pleasure he derived from these intellectual visits, and the eagerness with which he courted the solitude of this charming retirement.

Fair nature's sweet simplicity
 With elegance refined,
 Well in thy seat, my friend I see,
 But better in thy mind;
 To both, from Courts and all their state,
 Eager I fly, to prove
 Joys far above a courtier's fate,
 Tranquillity and love.

Hammond, author of the *Elegies*, was here a frequent visitor, and found in the same delightful conversations a temporary relief from the anxieties of love.

And you, O West, with her your partner dear,
Whom social worth, and useful sense commend,
With learning's feast my drooping mind shall cheer,
Glad to escape from love to such a friend.

And here it was, as we have already noticed, that Lyttelton, after an attentive examination of the doctrines and evidences of Christianity, together with the religious conversation of his friend and cousin, received that thorough conviction of its truth, which produced his *Dissertation on the Conversion of St Paul*. Mr West was likewise in the constant habit of corresponding with many pious and literary men, especially with Dr Doddridge, with whom he had contracted a very great intimacy, and whose *Family Expositor* was ushered into the world, under the auspices of his recommendation.

The first of Mr West's literary efforts, was a poem, entitled the "*Institution of the Order of the Garter*," published in 1742, which is distinguished for the knowledge it contains of the manners that prevailed in the age to which it referred; as well as for its splendid diction and elegant fancy. His next production was his *Translation of the Odes of Pindar*, with a *Dissertation on the Olympic Games*, which are executed with great labour and great ability, and shew him to have been eminent as a Greek scholar.

His imitations of Spencer are also happily executed; Dr Johnson, though perhaps he detracts too much from the merits of this kind of poetical

attainment, has observed, that, "both with respect to the metre, the language, and the fiction, they are very successfully performed; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the sentiments, and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amusements together. But such compositions," he adds, "are not to be reckoned among the great achievements of intellect, because their effect is local and temporary. Works of this kind may deserve praise, as proofs of great industry and great nicety of observation, but the highest praise, the praise of genius, they cannot claim." His other compositions are, Translations from the Argonautics of Apollonius Rhodius, and the Tragopodagra of Lucian; The Abuse of Travelling; and Education; together with Original Poems on various occasions: all which productions, though not distinguished by the same excellence, claim for their author a very respectable rank among the secondary class of British Poets. His whole poems and translations were published in a collected form, and inscribed to Pitt and Lyttelton.

But Mr West did not only cultivate an acquaintance with the muses, he also applied himself to study and to recommend the Sacred Oracles, an examination into which he was led, with a view either to confirm or to remove the sceptical opinions which he had unhappily contracted. In early life, as has been stated, before he was able to give a reason of the hope that was in him, and before he had narrowly considered the evidence upon which the Scriptures rested; the corrupt conversation of his uncle, Lord Cobham, had imbued him with sentiments hostile to revelation; more especially to the Christian religion.

But, like many other infidels, he wished to be an unbeliever in company rather than when alone. In the solitude of the closet he could not stifle those principles which maternal care had impressed on his youthful mind; they rose up before him, with their importance heightened by a recollection of all the tenderness and solicitude with which they were inculcated. They rebuked him, as it were, for the folly of his conduct, and rendered him unhappy. These early impressions and recollections not only prevented him from becoming hardened in infidelity, but they naturally led him to examine the truth of that religion from which they were derived,—to inquire into the foundation upon which it was built;—and his inquiry, as in all cases when conducted with candour and honesty, was rewarded with a full conviction of its truth and importance.

We cannot here omit inserting part of a letter to Dr Doddridge, relative to the present subject. “One thing,” says he, “I cannot help taking notice of to you upon this occasion, viz. your remarks upon the advantage of an early education in the principles of religion, because I have myself most happily experienced it; since I owe to the early care of a most excellent woman, my mother, (whose character I dare say you are no stranger to), that bent and bias to religion, which, with the co-operating grace of God, hath at length brought me back to those paths of peace, from which I might have otherwise been in danger of deviating for ever. The parallel betwixt me and Col. Gardiner was, in this instance, too striking not to affect me exceedingly.”

Thus confirmed in the truth of the Christian religion, Mr West conceived that he could not be a

consistent believer in it, unless his life corresponded with its pure dictates, and hence the piety which marked the whole tenor of his conduct, of the sincerity of which he has given us the strongest proof, by his defence of that fundamental article of Christianity, *the Resurrection of Christ from the dead*. This work is regarded as an able performance, displaying much patient investigation, and acute reasoning. It has been translated into several foreign languages, and in various well-attested instances, has been prescribed with the happiest success, as an antidote against the poison of infidelity. It stands conspicuous among these impregnable bulwarks of Christianity, which serve at once for beauty and for strength, and against which no weapon forged by the ingenuity of its enemies, has ever yet been found to prevail. As a masterly defence of the faith, it placed its author in the first ranks of controversial divinity.

In consideration of its intrinsic excellence, and as the tribute of a layman to the cause of our common religion, it was rewarded by the University of Oxford with the degree of Doctor of Laws conferred on the writer. Many of his former friends, unaware of the revolution of the author's sentiments, bought his work, in expectation of new objections against revealed religion; and when they found the case otherwise, with the characteristic malignity of infidels, against whom he had declared open hostility, they revenged their disappointment by calling him Methodist, which, in their eyes, appeared sufficiently opprobrious.

About five years after the publication of the work in question, and after his name had been upwards of twenty years upon the list for preferment,

Mr. West obtained one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council; and Mr Pitt, who had been his frequent visitor at Wickham, becoming Pay-Master General, had it now in his power to confer a favour on his early friend, by appointing him to the office of Treasurer of Chelsea Hospital. His income was now sufficiently large, but the augmentation of wealth could neither prolong life, nor increase its enjoyments. Shortly after his appointments, he was visited with a severe affliction, in the death of his only son, in the twentieth year of his age; and the year after, (March 1756), in consequence of a paralytic stroke, he was himself brought to the grave, at the premature age of fifty.

Mr. West's character was truly amiable and excellent. In him the Christian, the scholar, and the gentleman were happily united. His private virtues and social qualities were such as justly endeared him to his friends. All his contemporaries are lavish in their praises of his piety, probity, and amiable benevolence. Pope, in testimony of his esteem, left him by his will, £5, to be laid out in a ring, or any other memorial; besides £200, which were to revert to him on the death of another annuitant. His manners and conversation, though serious, were at the same time agreeable and lively. He was regular and exemplary in his habits of life, attentive to the public ordinances of religion, as well as to the performance of personal and family devotion,—duties which he conceived to be binding on all who profess Christianity, and which he felt to be connected with his own present and future happiness; with domestic peace and tranquillity, as well as the good order and welfare of so

ciety. His various works exhibit sufficient evidence of his learning and his religion; and from universal excellence of his character, he may be regarded as one of those to whom the grave be without its terrors, and a rare instance of the votaries of the muses, who could claim justice the two venerable names of Poe Saint.

This short account of Mr West, of whom to be regretted, that biography has so little record, we shall close, with some remarks on his story and habits, published from the manuscript of Mr Jones, Vicar of Hitchin, one of his intimate friends, and well known for the active share he took in the "Free and Candid Disquisitions." West was a person of great discernment, and a very quick apprehension, and readily saw men and things. He was lively and agreeable in conversation, and very much of a gentleman in all his behaviour. I have heard him say in his younger days, he had gone over into the quarters of infidelity. His uncle, the late Cobham, did all in his power to instil such principles into his mind, and that of his cousin Felton, when they paid their visits to him. The latter, he said, happily stood his ground, and made little or no progress in these perverse principles. His uncle, even after his Treatise of Resurrection, left him a legacy of £1000.

He was very regular and exemplary in his religion; offered up prayers, (those of the Morning Liturgy) every day, when well, at eleven in the morning; and then when the weather was favourable rode out for his health. On Sundays he went to church, (not to that of his own parish, but to

of St James's, Dr Clarke's church,) and at evening ordered his servants to come into the parlour, when he read to them the late Dr Clarke's Sermons, and then went to prayers. He read them always himself. One thing was somewhat singular, he always said grace himself at his table, though a clergyman was present. He gave me his reasons of his own accord, and I did not disapprove them.

He bore his last illness in a very exemplary manner; very patient, and entirely resigned to the Divine will. He had formed an excellent design of proving the authenticity of the New Testament, from many observations that had occurred to him from time to time, which he had begun to note down; and I remember he shewed me some valuable hints, that had been communicated to him by Dr Doddridge, particularly drawn from the concessions of Celsus and others, amongst the more early opposers of Christianity. He seemed to delight in that subject, and to be fully resolved to pursue it, if God should give him opportunities. I have heard him expatiate upon it in conversation, with great clearness of judgment, and strength of argument. What became of his preparatory papers upon it since his decease, I know not, but have reason to believe, from what I have heard, that they were soon after destroyed, with many others; and perhaps all that he had left remaining upon any topics of theology. Let his memory be ever dear to me, and sacred to the friends of Christianity in all succeeding ages."

Mr West's "Observations on the History of the Resurrection," was occasioned, or at least first begun, partly with the view of obtaining satisfaction for

himself, upon some difficulties in the evangelical narratives of that event, which had perplexed his own mind, and which he had not seen fully or clearly explained by any other writer on the subject. As it appeared to him unreasonable to reject Christianity as a superstitious fable, or a mere political scheme, without taking the pains to consider, fairly and impartially, its proofs and doctrines; so he thought whoever neglected or refused to make this examination, could have no right to pass his judgment upon the subject; and should, for the same reason, be cautious of censuring others who acknowledged it to be a divine institution; especially as there were to be found in the list of Christians, the great and venerable names of Bacon, Milton, Boyle, Locke, and Newton,—names to whose authority every thing should bow but truth,—to which they themselves thought it not beneath their superior talents to submit, though she required them to believe the gospel.

But the chief occasion of his treatise was in answer to a Pamphlet, entitled “The Resurrection of Jesus Considered;” the author of which, endeavoured to overthrow the accounts that are given of this fact, by the evangelists. As the resurrection of Christ is an article of vast importance, and lies at the very foundation of his religion, being the most illustrious attestation that could possibly have been given to it; the enemies of Christianity, have from the beginning bent their utmost efforts, and pointed their engines against this miracle. Celsus employed his wit and malice to make it ridiculous. Woolston, Chubb, and a host of anonymous adventurers signalised themselves in the same warfare.

The writer of the Pamphlet in question, took up the subject, and collected with great diligence, all that a lively mind, animated with the most determined hostility, could invent or suggest for misrepresenting the historical truth of the gospel. The main assertions he undertook to prove, were,

1. That Christ did not foretel his death and resurrection at all, even to his own disciples; and that all said on this head by the evangelists, is mere fiction and forgery.
2. That the whole story of the Jewish priests and rulers, setting a watch at the sepulchre, and sealing the stone, is false and incredible.
3. That the accounts given by the evangelists, are in every part inconsistent, and self-contradictory; and carry plain marks of fraud and imposture. These objections, some of them too absurd to require confutation, were ably repelled in two very learned and ingenious answers, one by Dr Samuel Chandler, and the other by an anonymous author. In these, the fallacy of the reasonings and exceptions against the resurrection was ably exposed; and solutions of the difficulties offered, sufficient to obviate the charge of contradiction brought against the sacred historians, although some of them were judged not to be so clear and natural, as those adduced by Mr West.

It was this persuasion, that the subject was capable of a more satisfactory explanation, that suggested to our author the design of his excellent Observations. "This," says he, "set me upon reading and examining with attention the Scriptures themselves, and with no other bias than what arose from the astonishment I was under, at finding writers, who, for above these sixteen hundred years, have been reputed holy and inspired, charged with

such a contrariety in their accounts as ill agreed with either of those epithets. Of the truth of this charge, therefore, I acknowledge I had great difficulty to persuade myself; and indeed it was not long before I discovered, as I imagined, the vanity and weakness of such an imputation.—What I have offered in defence of the evangelists, is built upon the sacred text itself, whose true meaning I have endeavoured to investigate and prove, by comparing the several accounts with each other, and noting the agreement and disagreement of the circumstances.”

This inquiry he conducted with great exactness and discrimination. He began with laying down the order in which the several incidents related by the evangelists, appear to have happened; and then he makes some observations upon the manner in which the proofs of this astonishing event were laid before the apostles who were appointed to witness it; and, from a candid and rigorous examination of the whole, he has endeavoured to shew that the resurrection of Christ was most fully and fairly proved to the apostles and disciples, the first converts and preachers of Christianity. This method he has followed out with complete success. By comparing the several accounts together, the passages recorded by one, and omitted by the rest, and those circumstances in which they all agree, or where they appear to contradict each other; he has totally removed the difficulties and inconsistencies charged upon the inspired narrative; and taken away the very foundation of the principal objections that have been so often repeated, almost since the very commencement of Christianity.

In investigating the particulars of this controverted history, he has made it distinctly appear, that the visitors of the sepulchre went at different times, and for different purposes, and not all at once, as many have supposed; and from this separating of themselves into distinct companies, arose a sub-division of their story into different reports. These several conclusions being proved, it became no difficult matter to defend the evangelists against the imputation of contradicting each other, in the accounts they have given of the resurrection. For unless authors who relate different and independent parts of the same history, can be said, for that reason, to contradict each other, the sacred penmen must stand acquitted of this charge, as much as any, even the most accurate historians, either ancient or modern.

That some of the evangelists record facts which others have omitted, is quite accountable, from the views and motives they had in compiling their respective gospels. St Matthew wrote within a few years after the ascension, and at the request of the Jewish converts, who having lived in the country where the scene of this great event was laid, were, doubtless, acquainted with many particulars, which, for that reason, it was not necessary to mention. This easily accounts for his conciseness and omissions, in some parts of his narrative, as well as for his noticing certain facts of which the other historians make no mention, such as the guarding the sepulchre by the Roman soldiers, and the appearing of Christ to the eleven disciples in Galilee; the former of which was necessary, to furnish the Jewish Christians with an answer to the absurd story of the disciples having

stolen the body by night while the guards slept, which was so industriously propagated among their unbelieving brethren, and supported by the authority of the chief priests and elders; the other was one of the best arguments he could offer to his countrymen, and a confirmation of the whole transaction, by referring them to the positive evidence of witnesses who had seen and conversed with Jesus after he was risen from the dead, and by confronting their testimony with that of some hundreds of their fellow-citizens, against the fabricated tale of the Roman soldiers.

St Mark, on the other hand, who wrote his Treatise for Gentile Christians, who were strangers to the Jewish customs and religion, omits several particulars mentioned by his predecessor, and records others not noticed by him. The condition of his converts, who had not the same opportunities of information as their brethren in Judea, made it necessary for him to use such notes and comments as might enable them to understand the subject, and to insert those particulars that seemed best calculated to avouch and elucidate the general fact. The same may be said of St Luke, whose relation differs from both the preceding evangelists, but contains such marks of distinction, as are sufficient to keep any one from confounding the incidents he relates, with those already recorded by his brethren.

It was by leaving these distinctions out of view, that infidels had succeeded in fastening the charge of inconsistency and contradiction upon the sacred writers; while Christians themselves, seduced and dazzled by some few points of resemblance, have allowed these different facts to be the same, and

thus giving great advantage to the unbeliever; for, by admitting his premises, and denying his conclusions, they have reduced themselves to the dilemma of reconciling inconsistencies; which they have laboured to do by rules and methods of interpretation, which, being over-strained and unnatural, tended only to discover their own embarrassment. Whereas, had they rightly distinguished the several events, all objections against this part of the gospel history would have entirely vanished; and they would have found that the evangelists relate different, but not inconsistent facts; and that instead of clashing and disagreeing, they mutually confirm, illustrate, and support each other's evidence.

In arriving at these conclusions, Mr West has made use of no far-fetched or arbitrary suppositions. They are such as seem clearly to arise out of the accounts themselves, when diligently considered and compared. "Their having now received an answer," says he, with his characteristic modesty, "is a clear proof that it was always possible to answer them (even with a very moderate share of common sense and learning.) The nature of the answer itself, which is founded upon the usual, obvious, plain sense of the words, without putting any force either upon the particular expression, or the general construction of the several passages, is an evidence of what I now say: So that I must needs acknowledge, that its having been so long missed, is a matter of far greater surprise than its having been hit upon now."

This proof of the harmony and mutual illustration of facts, in the relations of the evangelists, is followed up by some very excellent and judicious

reflections upon the various incidents in the history of the resurrection ; and upon the order in which they happened, and in which the several proofs of the events were laid before the apostles. He shews that the discovery of it which was made to them, was wisely ordered to be gradual ; thus making it manifest, that as Christ required of them a reasonable and well-grounded faith, so did he pursue the most proper and effectual means for attaining that end ; and for this purpose, instead of bearing down their reason, and dazzling their understanding by a full manifestation of himself all at once, he let in the light upon them by little and little, preparing their minds by the gradual dawning of truth, that they might be able to bear the full lustre of the Sun of Righteousness rising from the grave.

In these progressive steps there was the greatest propriety, since, as they were to be the chosen witnesses of his resurrection to all the world, they might thus have full time to consider, and examine, and satisfy themselves, that it was impossible they could be deceived. And most assuredly never was there evidence more fairly offered to the consideration of mankind ; never was any inquiry put upon a more rational method, as indeed there never were any facts that could better abide the test. There is a train of witnesses, a succession of miraculous events, mutually strengthening and confirming each other ; all equally and jointly concurring to prove one and the same transaction.

As to the doubts and disbelief of some, mentioned by the evangelists, these seem chiefly to have sprung from the uncertainty whether Christ's bodily appearance was real ; and although they

might have believed the report of those who declared they had seen him, yet, in condescension to their infirmity, he removed even these scruples, by giving them personal evidence of his reality,

The proofs of the resurrection laid before the apostles, Mr West has digested under four heads ;

1. The testimony of those that had seen him after he was risen.
2. The evidence of their own senses.
3. The accomplishment of the words Christ had spoken to them, while he was yet with them.
4. The fulfilling of the things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him. Of all these he has given a very compact and judicious summary, and concludes after a long and scrupulous examination of the several particulars, that there never was any fact more fully proved, than the resurrection of Jesus Christ; and that those who were appointed to be the witnesses of it, had every kind of evidence that, in the like circumstances, the most scrupulous could demand, or the most incredulous imagine.

Having proved that to the apostles at least, and first Christians, these arguments must have been unexceptionable and irresistible, he then proceeds to consider some of the proofs that may induce us who live remote, and at such a distance of time from the miracle, to believe that Christ rose from the dead. These he reduces to two principal heads, *viz.* The testimony of the witnesses themselves transmitted in their writings; and the existence of the Christian religion. With regard to the former, he shews that the apostles and evangelists had the two main qualities necessary to establish the credit of a witness, a perfect knowledge

of the facts they gave testimony to, and a fair blemished character; and that this testimony still preserved in the books which were penned by themselves, or authorised by their inspection and approbation.

He offers several considerations to prove genuineness of these writings; and takes in both of the internal marks of veracity in the writers, observable in the Scriptures, and of external proofs of their authenticity and integrity, especially the exact accomplishment of prophecies recorded in these Scriptures. He appeals to the impossibility of any books, forged in the names of the apostles, escaping detection; to their integrity in stating the times, the season, the actors, and the witnesses of most of the facts mentioned by them; and above all, to what they tell us about the low condition, the infirmities, the sufferings, and the death of the great Author and Finisher of their faith.

With regard to the prophetic evidences, he instances those relating to the different state of Jews and Gentiles; different not only from each other but from that in which they both were at the time when those prophecies were written. He mentions that there are several particulars relating to the condition of the Jewish nation, which were expressly foretold; as the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem, and the signs preceding that destruction; the miseries of the Jews before, at, and after the famous siege of that city; the general dispersion of that people, the duration of their calamity, and their wonderful preservation under it; and finally, their restoration; whereas since the other parts of these predictions have

exactly accomplished, there is every reason to think will be so too in the proper season.

The learned and elaborate review of this miraculous event Mr West concludes, with the argument drawn from the present existence of the Christian religion. He shews that without supposing the truth of Christ's resurrection, there is no accounting for the propagation and present existence of Christianity, in so many regions of the world. To set this in a proper light, he represents in an elegant and striking manner, the great difficulties this religion had to struggle with, at its first appearance; and the inabilities of its first preachers, humanly speaking, to oppose and overcome those obstacles. They had the superstition and prejudices of the Jews to encounter; who, divided as they were into different sects, jealous and intolerant of each other, yet all agreed with the same rancour to stop the progress of Christianity.

In the heathen world, the impediments were not less formidable. They had to contend against the religions, customs, laws, interests, vices, pride, policy, and philosophy of the different nations, among whom they attempted to plant the gospel. And while its heralds were weak, artless, illiterate, and contemptible, its opposers were possessed of all the wisdom, power, and authority of the world. The ambitious, the luxurious and debauched, the miser, the extortioner, the unjust, the oppressor, the proud and revengeful, the fraudulent and rapacious, were all its leagued and sworn adversaries.

According to the natural course of human affairs, it was not difficult to pronounce which of the two parties should have prevailed; the one being animated by a combination of interests and

passions, and armed with all the power and engines of tyrannical authority ; the other repressed by all kinds of civil discouragements, by the prospect of chains and torments, and the terrors of martyrdom: Yet Christianity triumphed over this opposition, and made its way in spite of these difficulties ; and at length prevailed so far as to change the whole face of things. It overturned the temples and altars of the gods, silenced the oracles, humbled the impious pride of emperors, confounded the presumptuous wisdom of philosophers, and introduced new principles and improved habits, into the greatest part of the known world.

This stupendous and astonishing revolution, it is evident, could not have been brought about by mere human means ; though all the accomplishments of eloquence, all the insinuating and persuasive arts of human nature, and long experience in the ways of the world, had all met in the apostles. That this could never have been effected but by the interposition of Divine power, must be obvious : and a manifest demonstration of the truth of the extraordinary facts by which it was accomplished, the principal of which is the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.

The infidel who grounds his rejection of the gospel on the incredible and miraculous nature of this event, will here find that his main argument will be of no service to him, since his faith will still encounter a miracle in its way, in the amazing birth, growth, and increase of the Christian religion,—facts which he cannot deny, however unaccountable they may appear to him.

CHARLES GILDON.

CHARLES GILDON, an author of some genius and of various literature, has obtained considerable notoriety among the writers who flourished about the beginning of the last century. The only part of his chequered life that can here give any interest or importance to his history, is the circumstance of his being a reclaimed Deist, one who after entangling himself in the labyrinth of infidelity, denying the fundamental principles of religion, and writing panegyrics on suicide; came at last to be convinced of his errors, and made a public recantation of them, by vindicating the great doctrines of Natural Theology, which the party he had abandoned, either denied, or represented as doubtful, and unsupported by proper evidence. His testimony, therefore, well deserves to be recorded, as being given after deliberate conviction, and with a perfect knowledge of the erroneous tenets he undertook to refute.

Mr GILDON was born, in 1666, at Gillingham, near Shaftesbury, in Dorsetshire. His parents and family were Roman Catholics, and consequently endeavoured to instil the same principles into their son. His father was a member of the Society of Gray's Inn; and a man of considerable property, which was greatly reduced during the

parliamentary wars, by his adherence to the r cause. Mr Gildon received the first rudim of his education in his native place, but as he designed for the priesthood, he was sent, at tw years of age, to the English College at Douv Flanders, where the youthful disciples of the pical church, were nurtured in the infallible f under the superintendence of the Jesuits. B appears the ghostly efforts of these zealous fat proved here unsuccessful ; for during a progre five years' study, Mr Gildon could not be broug embrace the monstrous absurdities of the Catl creed ; and only found his inclination more stro confirmed for a quite different course of life.

After quitting the tuition of the secular pri he returned to England ; and as soon as he can age, he entered into possession of his paternal tune, which, though not opulent, was respecta and rendered him capable of enjoying the gai and pleasures of fashionable life. He immedi repaired to London, as the place most likel afford him happiness, adequate to the means which he was furnished. But as men of ge and vivacity are too often deficient in the ar of economy, his expenditure proved too much his income, and in a short time, he spent the part of his inheritance. To crown his imprude he married about the age of twenty-three, a yc lady without any fortune ; adding to his othea cumbrances, that of a growing family ; and no pect of improving his exhausted finances.

During the reign of James II., when reli became a matter of state policy, and was agit with great keenness, Mr Gildon studied the troverted points of theology. He never had g

credit to the tenets of the Romish Church, and could not admit the ridiculous doctrine of infallibility; yet as he had been taught an early reverence for the priesthood, and a submissive obedience to their authority, it was long before he could muster courage to think freely for himself, or declare honestly what he thought. In some of his writings he mentions, that it cost him above seven years' study, before he could overcome the prejudices of his education. This emancipation, however, he at length effected; and, as a transition from the extreme of bigotry to that of scepticism, is a circumstance neither uncommon nor surprising, in liberating himself from the dominion of superstition, Mr Gildon shook off the reverence and belief of all religion, and ended his researches in becoming a confirmed infidel.

The first proofs he gave to the world of his attachment to infidelity was by publishing a book with a very plausible title, called the "Oracles of Reason," written chiefly by his friend Mr Charles Blount; the avowed purpose of which, was to promote the cause of Deism. Blount was a zealous advocate of unbelief, and had previously distinguished himself in the controversy. In 1680, he published a translation of the two first books of Philostratus's Life of Apollonius Tyanaeus, with large notes; which were manifestly intended to invalidate the proofs of revelation. Apollonius was a Pythagorean philosopher, who lived in the first century, and whose character and miracles were opposed by the Pagans to those of Jesus Christ. The account of him, by Philostratus, and of the signs and wonders he pretended to have wrought, are little else than absurd and romantic fables, set

off with rhetorical flourishes, and a vain ostentation of learning. The evidence for the miracle recorded by the evangelists is so infinitely superior as not to deserve a comparison; although they have flattered themselves, that, by running parallel, they struck a mortal blow at one of the fundamental proofs of Christianity. Blount put another deistical book, entitled, "Religio Laici," which is little more than a translation of Leibniz's Treatise of the same name, with a few additions and improvements.

The Oracles of Reason, which is merely a collection of different pieces, consisting chiefly of letters between the author and his friends, intermixes fragments and translations from the classics not live to publish; having shortened his work by his own hand, in order to free himself from the easiness of a passion which proved too violent him. His friend Mr Gildon ushered this enormous volume into the world, with a commendatory preface in vindication of self-murder. Part of the work is designed to prove the reasonableness and sufficiency of natural religion, as opposed to revealed religion; but the arguments are founded altogether on a misapprehension of the scheme of mediation covered in the gospel, which, instead of deriving its authority from the goodness and wisdom of God, is the most signal instances of his gracious interposition towards the human race,—a kind and wise interposition for exercising his mercy towards guilt, in such a way as is most becoming his glorious government and perfections, most calculated to remove the jealousies and fears of offenders, and most conducive to their peace and comfort. The parts of these pretended "Oracles," adopted

nion of the origin of good and evil, from two different, eternal, and independent principles.

As to the article of future rewards and punishments, and the soul's immortality, though they are admitted as necessary parts of natural religion, yet it is stated as a probability, that the soul of man is not of an entirely distinct nature from the body, but only a purer material composition; an opinion quite inconsistent with the doctrine of its immortality. There are, besides, many objections levelled against the sacred Scriptures, particularly against the writings of Moses, with a design to subvert his authority. Most of the arguments offered on this point, are borrowed from ancient authors, several pages together being literally translated, without the least acknowledgment, or any notice taken of the answers which have been repeatedly returned. The exceptions which have frequently been taken at the Mosaic writings, from the irreconcilableness of the accounts there given, with the antiquities pretended to by the most learned heathen nations, particularly the Chaldeans and Egyptians; and which have been so clearly shewn to be unfounded, by the laborious Stillingfleet, in his "*Origines Sæcæ*," are here again advanced with as much confidence and effrontery as if they had never been refuted.

These principles, which Mr Gildon had espoused and recommended to the world in strains of pompous eulogy, and with the burning zeal of a devoted proselyte, he afterwards, upon more deliberate consideration, publicly retracted. Meantime, having dissipated his patrimony by thoughtlessness and extravagance, he found it necessary to have recourse to some method for retrieving his fortune,

or rather for the means of subsistence. Not the grand incentive of authorship, was, as self candidly acknowledges in his *Essays*, inducement for venturing to appear in print success in this way, however, was but ind His productions gained him little reputation it appears, never raised him above the contingency; a circumstance with which he ten upbraided by his literary antagonists, w his distresses a handle for their wit, and him with rancour rather than reproof. His attempt was as a dramatic writer, in a Play he published in 1697, called the "Roman Revenge." This effort gained him little e profit or popularity. The drama was not the best road to fame or fortune; and poets first-rate ability and diligence, found it may with all their industry, to set penury at d Besides, Dryden and Davenant, with thei and admirers, had long kept possession of th and their theatrical reputation was then at zenith.

The obscure reception of his first performance did not however discourage him, and next produced his "Phaeton, or the Fatal Day." This was followed by several others in c two or three years, viz. "Measure for Measure, or Beauty the best Advocate;" "Love's Victory, or the Queen of Wales;" "The Patriot, or the Conspiracy." These pieces, though all unful, were by no means destitute of merit; too strong an emulation of the style of whom he was a great admirer, but without possessing the brilliancy of poetic imaginations frequently atones for the mad flights of t

made writer, his verses ran into a perpetual strain of bombast and rant.

Mr Gildon cultivated other departments of the Belles Lettres, besides the drama. He wrote *Essays, Letters, Poems, &c.* an *English Grammar*, a *Life of Betterton*, and *The Complete Art of Poetry*,—an art which he had practised so unsuccessfully himself. He was author of several pieces on *Criticism*, which he affected above all things, and for which he certainly possessed considerable talents. The work upon which he valued himself most, and seemed to build his chief hopes of reputation, was his *Critical Commentary on the Laws of Poetry*, as laid down by the Duke of Buckingham, in his *Essay on Poetry*; by the Earl of Roscommon, in his *Essay on Translated Verse*; and by Lord Lansdown, *On Unnatural Flights in Poetry, Illustrated and Explained*. This work was well received, and highly applauded by the ablest judges.

Though not a man of first-rate genius himself, he was rather a severe critic on the writings of others; and is well known as one of the revilers of Pope, especially for the freedom he took in his animadversions on the *Rape of the Lock*, in a work of his, entitled the "*New Rehearsal, or Bayes the Younger*." He had made repeated attacks on the character and writings of that great poet, which nothing could have provoked, but the heat of party zeal; calling him a postaster,—a pretender to wit and poetry,—a creature that reconciled all contradictions, &c. "Certain it is," (says he) "his original is not from Adam, but the devil; and that he wanted nothing but horns and a tail, to be the exact resemblance of his infernal ancestor." The

severity of these abusive reflections drew upon him the just resentment of the irritable poet, who was never remarkable for any great dexterity to forgive injuries. In the Prologue to *Satires*, he has complimented him with a sarcasm couplet, in allusion to his poverty, and making subsistence by authorship.

Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill;
I wished the man a dinner, and sate still.

He has likewise thought proper to immortalise his name, together with that of the snarling Imitator, in his poem of the *Dunciad*.

Ah Dennis! Gildon ah! what ill-starred rage
Divides a friendship long confirmed by age?
Blockheads with reason, wicked wits abhor,
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war, &c.

From his thirty-second year, when he commenced writing for the stage, Mr Gildon seems to have been chiefly engaged in the bustle and ferment of literary controversy, the importance of which long since departed, and sunk with the heroes of the *Dunciad*, into comparative oblivion. He died the 12th of January, 1724, at the age of fifty-eight. Boyer, in his "Political State," vol. xii mentions him as "a person of great literature, mean genius, who attempted several kinds of writing, but never gained much reputation in any."

The most interesting and remarkable of his works is that which contains the recantation of his deistical opinions, published in 1705, under the title the *Deist's Manual*; intended as a plain and compendious defence of religion on the principles of reason. The motives for changing his creed well as for composing his *Manual*, he has stated in his dedication addressed to the Archbishop

Canterbury. "The errors I had too hastily entertained, when I began to find them out, made me examine into the reason of their prevailing so far in the world; which, besides their flattery of the passions, and corporeal impressions, I found to proceed from the difficulty of the conviction, which was the defect of the method of the defenders of the Christian religion; at least of those, whom I had the fortune to meet with, who appealed to arguments which required more learning and application, than most of the persons affected with the evil were masters of, or could bestow.— I therefore considered that what was necessary to the good and happiness of mankind, must be attainable with more ease; and concluded that God had given us certain means of arriving at the knowledge of what he required us to believe. The only way to find this out, I concluded, must be reason. This method having brought me to a possession of the truth, I began to reflect that it might be as serviceable to others, who had wandered like myself after a false *ignis fatuus*; and this was the motive of my publishing this volume."

In attaining to these convictions Mr Gildon acknowledges himself indebted to an excellent little treatise on the subject, Leslie's Short Method with the Deists, wherein the brevity of the arguments is amply compensated by their force and perspicuity. This Tract was published in 1697, and has proved useful, not only in establishing the verity of the Christian religion against the assaults of infidels, but in reclaiming some of the most zealous and able advocates of unbelief. The author of the Manual, it appears, was acquainted with Leslie and profited by his conversation;

and on reading this Short Method,* his Oracles became dumb for ever, and himself a convert to the truth of Divine revelation. To communicate to others the remedy which had benefited himself, seemed the best atonement he could make for his folly and impiety, in opposing Christianity; the most certain evidence of the sincerity of his conversion, and his unfeigned regard for the interest of religion; as well as a proof of the compassion he entertained for those who had been his deistical associates, or who were in danger of being misled by the same delusions.

Accordingly, the author, after devoting a preface to the refutation of the arguments he had formerly advanced in defence of suicide, some of which he owned were so absurd, that he felt ashamed at having urged them, proceeds in a series of discourses, by way of dialogue, to vindicate the great principles of Natural Theology, preparatory to a rational inquiry into the Christian religion. The

* There is appended to the Manual a letter from Leslie to the author, giving a favourable opinion and review of the work, which, it appears, he had examined before it was published. "Sir, I have read over your papers with great satisfaction; and I heartily bless God, with you, and for you; that he has had mercy upon you, and opened your eyes, to see the wonderful things of his law, to convince you of those irrefragable proofs he has afforded for the truth and authority of the Holy Scriptures, such as no other writing upon earth can pretend to, and which are incompatible with any forgery or deceit. He has given you likewise that true spirit of repentance to bring forth the fruits thereof; that is, to make what satisfaction you can for the injuries you have done to religion, by answering what has been published formerly by yourself against it; and being converted, you endeavour to strengthen your brethren."

reason of this was, as he himself intimates, that many of the Deists, with whom he was well acquainted, either doubted or denied these preliminary doctrines, which are essential to all religion; and from these objections chiefly arose their enmity and aversion to the Christian revelation.

Of the arguments for the existence of a Deity, he has given a summary in his first discourse; because he had found that some of the abettors of infidelity expunged this fundamental article from their creed, if not expressly, at least in effect, as they divested it by their speculations of any practical influence. The proofs of an intelligent First Cause he mainly insists upon, are those derived from the works of creation, which he shews, could not have existed from eternity, nor have been produced by chance,—from the stupendous wonders of the planetary system, which exhibit so many shining demonstrations of Infinite Power,—from the immense variety of animated beings,—the organization of animal-bodies,—the curious mechanism of the human frame, and the no less astonishing phenomena of the human mind.

The attributes of God, both physical and moral, are next brought under review, and shewn to be essential to his character, and a necessary consequence of his nature. The doctrine of Providence, and of the Divine agency in human affairs, is ingeniously defended against the atheistical assertions of Hobbs, and Spinoza, who reduce all our knowledge of the Deity to the mere fact of his existence; and leave man to invent for himself laws and regulations for his moral government. The objections and apparent inconsistencies, arising from the disorders and irregularities in human affairs, the misfortune of

the good, and the success of the bad, are explained and justified, and shewn to be conducive to the harmony and advantage of the whole. The spiritual nature of the human soul, and its immortality, are also vindicated, in express opposition to the opinions on this subject delivered in the Oracles of Reason.

The sixth and last discourse treats of the certainty, and reasonableness of the Christian religion; the proofs of which he had endeavoured to render more easy and obvious, by expelling those doubts and prejudices which constituted an insuperable barrier to its reception. In opposition to the statements formerly published under his sanction, which degraded, and confounded the miracles of the New Testament with the absurd, and legendary wonders ascribed to heathen impostors, he makes it appear that the miracles of Christ and his apostles had all the indubitable marks of veracity; that they were beyond the power and operation of natural causes, and must have been the immediate effect of Divine agency. The truth of these being sufficiently well attested, laid a solid foundation for the doctrines of Christianity, which contained also in themselves unequivocal marks of a supernatural origin; so that the one furnished a test and a confirmation of the other. An additional demonstration of their truth, he remarks, was afforded in the evidence of prophecy, which was a kind of perpetual miracle; and as the incredulity of the Jews was rendered inexcusable, by the mighty works performed before their eyes, so the completion of predictions which required the fulness of time to accomplish, and could not be regarded as infallible proofs during the Saviour's life, as well as the extraordinary

propagation of the gospel, furnished a succession of kindred testimonies to all generations, which must make their rejection and unbelief equally criminal. "The Holy Bible," (he concludes) "as it is the most ancient and most authentic of all books, so it is the only book that gives us the idea of true religion,—Christianity is the only religion that possesses all the marks of verity. It answers all the necessities of human nature, prescribes remedies for its misfortunes and frailties, and proposes to its observation happiness here and hereafter. Its precepts are plain, and founded on justice and reason, on the nature of God and the condition of man; and they relate either to this world or the next. Every one is capable of understanding them; and cannot plead ignorance if he transgress them. Thus the whole Christian duty being so very obvious and easy, the man who forsakes it has no plea against punishment for breaking those laws, which ought to be the security, as they are the happiness, of human society."

REV. RICHARD CECIL.

THE life of Mr Cecil affords a farther proof unbelief is not the offspring of reasoning, or and unprejudiced discussion; but springs from inattention to religion, and a moral depravation of heart, which is impatient of restraint and subordination to its rules; and that if men were to become virtuous, and inquire seriously into the nature of Christianity, they would find abundant evidence of its divine original. Mr Cecil became an avowed convert to licentiousness, notwithstanding the parental example and instruction; and to ex- his wickedness, he took shelter behind infidelity. But no sooner had he begun to feel the little and unsatisfying nature of worldly pleasures, his prejudices declined, and he not only became a proselyte to the faith of the cross, but one of the most devoted and intrepid advocates.

RICHARD CECIL was born in London, 8th November, 1748. His father and grand-father were Scarlet Dyers to the East India Company. His mother was the only child of Mr Grovesnor, a merchant in London, and brother to the Rev Grovesnor, author of the "Mourner." The father of her husband was a member of the Establishment Church, she was herself a Dissenter; and not less eminent for her piety and benevolence, than for

domestic virtues. As soon as her son was capable of instruction, she took delight to rear his tender mind, and to impress it with religious principles. At six years of age, she bought him Janeway's Token for Children, Watts' Hymns, and other books calculated to arrest the attention of children. At that early period, she judged correctly that arguments addressed to the heart, were likely to be more forcible and effectual than those addressed to the head, and that simple stories adapted to their comprehension, will often make way for abstract and disagreeable truths. The benefits he derived from those little presents he always remembered, and spoke of with gratitude: "When I was a child," says he, "and a very wicked one too, one of Dr Watts' Hymns sent me to weep in a corner. The Lives in Janeway's Token had the same effect. I felt the influence of faith in suffering Christians. The character of young Samuel came home to me, when nothing else had any hold of my mind."

As Mr Cecil's father was in easy circumstances, and a man of considerable literary attainments, he bestowed upon his son a very liberal education, though he only intended him for a profession similar to his own. As soon as his age permitted, he was placed in a considerable house in the city, from which he was soon removed to another, where he remained till bad health compelled him to retire to his father's roof. As he was always averse to the business in which he had been engaged, he did not resume it when he had recovered from his illness; he was more devoted to the study of literature and the fine arts; and instead of the shop and the counting-house, his mind was in the continual pursuit of objects more congenial to its native powers and prepossessions.

At this early age, he discovered a wonderful grasp of intellect and versatility of talent, which would have gained him distinction in whatever avocation he had embarked. To the arts he was particularly addicted, especially to poetry and painting, and even then, the productions of his muse, and of his pencil, were honoured with the public approbation. Several of his fugitive and poetical effusions were inserted anonymously, in the periodical publications of the day. This talent however, it appears, he cultivated unknown to his father; who happening, accidentally, to meet with some verses which he greatly admired, was astonished to find his son affirm himself to be the author. This he looked upon as incredible; but to convince him, the youthful poet retired with a subject of his choosing, and in a short time produced a piece which satisfied him of the fact in question.

Painting, however, was the art which he pursued with insatiable ardour. He not only practised at home, but frequented all picture-sales throughout the metropolis; and even unknown to his parents, he travelled into France, to see the works of the most eminent masters of the art; and his enthusiasm would have carried him to Rome, had he not been exhausted of the means of travelling. He had also a strong passion for music, which continued with him through life. At first, his taste was for Italian music; but in his latter years, he became partial to the German style, or rather the softer Moravian.

Upon his return from the continent, his father, finding his ruling passion unabated, resolved to send him to an acquaintance in Rome, to follow the pro-

profession of an artist ; but he was prevented by some unrecorded circumstance from accomplishing this design. Mr Cecil was destined however, by providence, to a more important work in his native land ; and to direct the innate ardour and energy of his mind to a worthier subject, in promoting the cause of pure and evangelical religion.

In the meantime, he remained under his father's roof, in the ardent pursuit of his favourite studies ; but unfortunately, whilst advancing in his intellectual career, he was contracting principles and habits, which exhibit his character in a more unpromising point of view. The religious impressions of his childhood by degrees wore away, and he launched with heedless steps, into all the vices and extravagances which are incident to youth ; and as he found it impossible to reconcile immorality with the pure precepts of that religion in which he had been educated,—as Christianity stood so much in the way which he felt inclined to pursue, he listened to the seductive reasonings of infidelity, till he openly avowed himself an unbeliever.

To confirm himself in his new creed, and get quit of his old scruples, he read the works of sceptical authors ; though, as he afterwards confessed, he was often astonished at the poverty of their reasoning ; and felt that his own perverted imagination could suggest arguments against revelation, more weighty than he ever found in the most learned and acute infidel writers. In these delusions he proceeded the greater length, as the natural daring of his mind allowed him to do nothing by halves. Into whatever society he enrolled himself, he aspired to become its leader. Nor was he satisfied with thus framing and inventing ex-

causes for his own guilty conduct ; he inlisted himself as the apostle of Infidelity, and laboured with all the natural boldness of his mind, to banish the salutary scruples of his more cautious companions, and to gain converts to his libertine opinions. With many he succeeded to the full height of his wishes, who, in after life, ridiculed his earnest and affectionate endeavours to reclaim them, and to undo that fabric of delusion which he now strove so zealously to rear.

But though Mr Cecil openly professed himself an unbeliever, and laboured to disseminate his principles, it appears that he was never altogether sincere in his infidelity. He confessed that he could not wholly divest himself of his early religious impressions ; that some remains of maternal advices still adhered to his recollection, by which he was preserved from becoming, at heart, that unprincipled scoffer which he professed to be before the world. Nor would conscience, that inward monitor, suffer him, by her rebukes and remonstrances, to place implicit confidence in those principles which his perverse inclinations had framed. In vain did he attempt to shut his ear against her still small voice, or shake off entirely the yoke of her authority.

Of the salutary effects of that care and anxiety with which his childhood had been trained, he frequently spoke in very impressive terms. "Where parental influence does not convert," says he, "it hampers. It hangs on the wheels of evil. I had a pious mother, who dropped things in my way. I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed infidel ; but then I liked to be an infidel in company, rather than when alone. I was wretched when by myself. These principles, and maxims,

and data spoiled my jollity. With my companions I could sometimes stifle them : like embers we kept one another warm. Besides, I was here a sort of hero. I had beguiled several of my associates into my own opinions, and I had to maintain a character before them. But I could not divest myself of my better principles. Parental influence thus cleaves to a man ; it harasses him ; it throws itself continually in his way."

Of the arts and evasions he employed to ward off the impressions of conscience and convictions, he has given us the following instances. "When I was sunk in the depths of infidelity, I was afraid to read any author who treated Christianity in a dispassionate, wise, and searching manner. He made me uneasy. Conscience would gather strength. I found it more difficult to stifle her remonstrances. He would recal early instructions and impressions, while my happiness could only consist with their obliteration." "My father," (says he on another occasion), "had a religious servant. I frequently cursed and reviled him. He would only smile on me.—That went to my heart. I felt that he looked on me as a deluded creature ; I felt that he thought he had something which I knew not how to value, and that he was therefore greatly my superior. I felt there was a real dignity in his conduct. It made me appear little in my own eyes. If he had condescended to argue with me, I would have cut some figure ; at least by comparison, wretched as it would have been. He drew me once to hear Mr Whitfield, when I was seventeen or eighteen years old. It had no sort of religious effect upon me, nor had the preaching of any man, in my unconverted state."

In such a state of mind Mr Cecil arrived at his twentieth year, when it pleased God to prepare him for a full and hearty reception of the doctrines of Christianity. Having gone all the rounds of a licentious life, and tasted every pleasure which the world can afford, he found that they could not confer anticipated happiness; and he thus began to feel the meanness, and degrading nature of every object which engages the attention of vicious men. In this manner was the wandering prodigal brought to himself, more from a sense of his wants and his wretchedness, than any relish or right apprehension he had yet acquired for higher objects, and purer pleasures. His mind opened gradually to the truth of the gospel; and the process through which he was led, is a striking evidence of the imminence of his past danger. "My feelings," (said he), "when I was first beginning to recover from infidelity, proved that I had been suffered to go great lengths; and in a very awful degree to believe my own lie. My mind revolted from Christianity. God did not bring me to himself by any of the peculiar motives of the gospel I became utterly sick of the vanity, and disgusted with the folly of the world, but I had no thought of Jesus Christ, or of redemption. I could not endure a system so degrading. I thought there might possibly be a Supreme Being, and if there was such a Being, he might hear me when I prayed. To worship the Supreme Being seemed somewhat dignified. There was something grand and elevating in the idea. But the whole scheme and plan of redemption appeared mean, and degrading, and dishonourable to men. The New Testament, in its sentiments and institutions, re-

pelled me; and seemed impossible to be believed, as a religion suitable to rational beings."

The sensations which thus began in disgust with the pleasures and vanities of the world, made way for farther communications of divine grace. He was led to consider where true happiness, and satisfying pleasures were to be found, since he had sought them in vain from sensual gratifications and unrestrained indulgences. And in this inquiry he felt the advantages of his connection with sincere and pious Christians.—He saw that whilst they were devoted to religion, they were also happy. "It was one of the first things," (says he) "which struck my mind in a profligate state, that, in spite of all the folly, and hypocrisy, and fanaticism, which may be seen among religious professors, there was a mind after Christ, a holiness, a heavenliness, among real Christians. My first convictions on the subject of religion, were confirmed from observing that really religious persons had some solid happiness among them; which I felt that the vanities of the world could not give."

The situation of his pious mother while under affliction, happening to become the subject of his contemplations, his thoughts began to ponder on the source of her surprising tranquillity and contentment of mind; and he saw before him two indisputable facts; *first*, that though his mother's life was chequered with many ills and distresses, he observed her cheerfully bear up under them, by means of the consolation and support which she derived, from constantly retiring to her closet and her Bible. *Secondly*, That she had a secret source of comfort to which he was a total stranger; and which he who gave an unbounded loose to his ex-

petites, and sought pleasure by every means, seldom or never could find. "If, however," (he concluded) "there be any such secret in religion, why may not I attain it as well as my mother? I will immediately seek it of God." Upon this he started from his sleepless bed, and began to invoke by prayer the searcher of hearts, whose name for many years had never been reverently in his lips.

Being made sensible that a life of communion with God, in conformity to the Bible, could only secure him that happiness which was satisfying to his rational nature, but which had as yet eluded his grasp, he now as sincerely wished Christianity to be true, as he had formerly hoped it to be a cunningly devised fable. He began to listen again to the voice of parental instruction, to attend the preaching of the word, to consult those able divines who had written upon the evidences of Christianity, that his doubts might be removed; and they gradually gave way before the irresistible influence of divine truth. "Grotius, Bishop Butler, and many others," says he, "helped me to see, that he who is acquainted with the evidence which God has annexed to his word, has not only every thing he can reasonably require; but that, as Mr Jenyns has remarked, he will find it requires more faith to be a consistent infidel than to be a Christian." Thus did Divine grace triumph over all opposition. A heavenly light broke in upon that mind which was darkened by the clouds of error, and Mr Cecil, from an enemy and a disbeliever, became a sincere convert to the truth, and a zealous preacher of that gospel he once endeavoured to destroy. His heart and views underwent a total revolution, and he now became as re-

markable for his pious and sober deportment, as he had formerly been for his profligacy and licentiousness.

Speaking afterwards of his infidelity in a letter to a friend, he observes, " I myself was one who, carried away first by the love of sin, hoped the Bible might not be true. I then listened to such as were hardened enough to assert that it was not true, till at length I believed my own lie ; and the vanity of appearing something like a philosopher, who had thrown off the traditions of the nursery, set me on propagating that lie. But when, like the prodigal, I came to myself, I had many painful steps to tread back, and many difficult and intricate steps to retrace. I now wished that the Bible might be true, and was glad to receive help from any able guide who had written on its evidences."

In the meantime his father, who was firmly attached to the Established Church, observing his son's religious turn of mind, and attachment to Dissenters, told him that if he persisted in maintaining such a connection, he would withdraw both his countenance and support ; but assuring him at the same time, that if he inclined to go regularly into the church, he would not only defray the expense of a university education, but purchase him a living when he entered into orders. Upon consideration, Mr Cecil complied with the wishes of his father, and entered Queen's College, Oxford, in his twenty-fourth year, 10th May, 1773. In September, 1776, he was ordained Deacon, on the title of the Rev. Mr Pugh of Rauceby, in Lincolnshire. In spring following, with much applause, he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and in February, 1777, he was admitted to priest's orders.

After a short stay at Rauceby, Mr Cecil, at the request of Mr Pugh, went to Leicestershire to supply the churches of Thornton, Bagworth, and Markfield, till the son of the late Vicar should be ready to succeed his father. Here he laboured with unremitting zeal, and had the happiness of seeing, under his ministry, a revival of religion, where it had lamentably declined; and was the means of impressing the mind of Mr Abbot, who was to succeed him, with such views of the nature and importance of the clerical office, that he became a faithful and exemplary minister.

Soon after this, he was presented, through the interest of some friends, to two small livings at Lewes in Sussex, of which he took almost immediate possession. Here he remained for several years, in the conscientious discharge of his ministerial duties. But the local situation of his residence proved injurious to his health, and he became afflicted with a rheumatic disorder in his head. This dispensation rendered it necessary for him to employ a curate, whose salary absorbed the whole emolument of both livings. Whilst here, in June, 1777, he was deprived of his excellent mother, whose death made a deep impression upon his mind, and was the means of confirming more and more that serious and devotional feeling which characterized his subsequent life. In two years after he lost his father.

Mr Cecil's rheumatic complaints nothing abating at Lewes, he returned to the suburbs of London for the recovery of his health; and from this time, the metropolis became the sphere of his most important ministerial labours; and the disinterested and indefatigable manner in which he per-

formed his numerous and difficult duties, was the most convincing proof of the pure spirit with which he was actuated,—that the interests of his fellow-men, and the advancement of genuine Christianity, were dearest to his heart.

His most important charge, to which he seemed peculiarly raised and prepared by Providence, was that of St John's Chapel, Bedford-Row, at that time the largest belonging to the Established Church of England in the city. It was part of the estate of the Rugby Charity, the management of which was chiefly left to Sir Eardly Wilmot, to whom Mr Cecil was recommended by Archbishop Cornwallis. He had already officiated, for some time, at different churches and chapels in London. For several years, he preached the morning lecture at Lothbury, the evening lecture at Orange-Street Chapel, Leicester Fields; and after that was relinquished, he was engaged, in conjunction with his friend the Rev. Henry Foster, to perform the same service at the chapel in Long-Acre. He undertook also the Sunday evening lecture at Christ's Church, Spitalfields, where vast congregations assembled. From these diversified engagements he reaped little or no pecuniary advantages. Some of them were a positive loss, as from the inconvenient distance, he was obliged to be at the expense of a coach.

He entered upon the discharge of his ministerial duties in St John's Chapel, in March 1780. For three years he received no emolument, as the hearers were few, and the expenses, and interest of money expended on repairs were very considerable. His whole income at this time was only £ 80, per annum, but it was not gain or pecuniary considera-

rations that stimulated his exertions, or occupied his thoughts. Upon this small pittance he supported, for several years, himself, his wife, whom he had married from Lewes, and a servant. His ministry at this chapel, was attended with difficulties which could only be surmounted by that energy and independence of mind, which were peculiar to Mr Cecil. He had to preach, on the one hand, to men of business, and of the world, whose proud and haughty spirits were at enmity with the genius of the gospel. "When I was sent thither," (says he) "I considered that I was sent to the people of that place and neighbourhood. I thought it my duty, therefore, to adopt a system and style of preaching, which should have a tendency to meet their case. I began, accordingly, with principles. I preached on the divine authority of the Scriptures. I set myself to explain terms and phrases; my chief object was under-ground work." On the other hand, he had to contend with the religious prejudices of his audience, who, unaware of his particular object, raised an outcry against him, that at other places he continued to preach the truth, but that at St John's he shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. Mr Cecil, notwithstanding these clamorous accusations, persevered in the cause he had begun, to deliver the truth according to the circumstances of his hearers, and as they were able to bear it; and his efforts were crowned with abundant success,—as he established at St John's not only a numerous, but a serious and devoted congregation.

He continued in the discharge of his various avocations, generally preaching four times every Sunday, and several times during the week, till the

year 1798, when he experienced the consequences of his too great exertions, being attacked with a complaint supposed to be sciatica. Upon a consultation of the Faculty, he was prohibited from preaching, so long as his existing symptoms continued. When he was so far recovered, next year, as to be able to resume his usual duties, it was evident from his discourses, that his affliction had been sanctified for the better enabling him to see the true nature of earthly things, and to shew to mankind their poverty and emptiness. His bodily health was much impaired; and the effects of the disease remained like a worm at the root of his constitution. Frequently after suffering greatly all the preceding night, he would go forth to his public duties, so feeble and emaciated, that his friends were led to apprehend the worst consequences. Still, however, he persevered, animated by love and zeal, without any outward appearance of suffering, or any other perceptible effects, save that feeling and unction which it produced.

In the year 1800, Mr Cecil was presented by Samuel Thornton Esq. to the livings of Chobham and Bisley, in Surrey. He expressed himself highly sensible of such an act of kindness and attention, but returned several refusals to accept of them. At length, however, he consented to refer the matter to the trustees and a few select friends, who were unanimous in recommending him, in the present state of his health and circumstances, to accept of the livings. Mr Cecil, in compliance with such a recommendation, took possession of the livings, and engaged a curate to supply, during winter, his absence at St John's. By this means,

a considerable addition was made to his income. The whole of his emoluments now amounted to £235, yearly. But his curate's salary, and other deductions which were necessary, reduced it to the scanty sum of £150.

Mr Cecil found these parishes lamentably immersed in ignorance and vice. Some idea of their moral condition may be formed from his own statements. "Bisley is a rectory. It is completely out of the world. The farmers are all so perfectly untaught, that when they met to settle the business of their tythes, there was not one of them able to write. In these parts they are mostly occupiers of their own lands." The duty of attending church was almost totally neglected, and the sacred day was devoted to business or amusement. His heart was deeply affected with the scene that presented itself: and his impression, on first going among them, deserves to be recorded in his own words. "When I first came to Chobham," (says he), "as I was sitting in the vestry,—on hearing the noise and uproar of the boys, and the people in the gallery talking aloud to each other,—I burst into tears; and felt with the prophet when he said, Can these dry bones live?" But he did not despair; and though his enfeebled constitution required respite from fatigue or exertion, he began, with his usual ardour and diligence, to cultivate the moral wilderness around him.

He entered under many very discouraging circumstances; and found that there also, as well as in other places whither he had been called by providence, it was necessary to begin at the very foundation. His labours however were attended with

the happiest effects. The soil which had formerly been barren and unprofitable, soon began to exhibit the effects of a careful cultivation. The duties of the Sabbath were punctually observed, and a spirit of piety and religion became more generally prevalent.*

Mr Cecil continued to discharge his clerical duties with the same diligence, till the year 1807, when he was disabled for some time by a slight paralytic affection; although he afterwards recovered so far as to be able to resume his ministerial functions. In February 1808, he experienced another paralytic attack, which, depriving him of the use of his right side, unfitted him for further usefulness in a public capacity. By the advice of his medical attendants, electricity was applied, but without effect; and he experienced the mournful truth, that neither the power of medicine, nor the affectionate solicitude of friends, nor the advantage of the finest situations can avail, contrary to the

* He occasionally found it difficult to arrest the attention of his audience, and in order to awaken and fix their minds, he sometimes had recourse to rather unusual expedients. "I was once preaching," he said, "a Charity Sermon, where the congregation was very large, and chiefly of the lower orders. I found it impossible, by my usual method of preaching, to gain their attention. It was in the afternoon; and my hearers seemed to meet nothing in my preaching, that was capable of rousing them out of the stupefaction of a full dinner. Some lounged, and some turned their backs on me. 'I must have attention,' I said to myself, 'I will be heard.' The case was desperate; and, in despair, I sought a desperate remedy. I exclaimed aloud, 'Last Monday morning a man was hanged at Tyburn.' Instantly the face of things was changed! All was silence and expectation! I caught their ear, and retained it through the sermon."

divine appointment. After lingering nearly three years, without deriving any benefit from change of air, or his visits to Bath and Tunbridge waters, he was relieved from his afflictions by a fit of apoplexy, August 15, 1810, in the 61st year of his age.

During the whole period of his last illness, the effects of his distressing malady were visible on his mind, as well as his body. The view of his character under this dark and melancholy visitation, is well drawn by his friend the Rev. Daniel Wilson, who preached at St John's on the occasion of his death. "The energy and decision and grandeur of his natural powers gradually gave way, and a morbid feebleness succeeded. Yet, even in this afflicting state, with his body on one side almost lifeless, his organs of speech impaired, and his judgment weakened, the spiritual dispositions of his heart displayed themselves in a very remarkable manner. He appeared great in the ruins of nature; and his eminently religious character manifested itself, in a manner which surprised all who were acquainted with the ordinary effects of paralytic complaints. The actings of hope were of course impeded, but the habit of grace, which had been forming for thirty or forty years, shone through the cloud.

"Throughout his illness, his whole mind, instead of being fixed on some mean and insignificant concern, was riveted on spiritual objects. Every other topic was so uninteresting to him, and even burdensome, that he could with reluctance allow it to be introduced. He spent his whole time in reading the Scriptures, and one or two old divines, particularly Archbishop Leighton. All he said

and did, was as a man on the brink of an eternal state. His faith never failed ; and he would speak of the great foundations of Christianity with the fullest confidence. The interest likewise, which he took in the success of the gospel, was prominent, when his disease at all remitted.

“ About a year before his death, when his powers of mind had been for a long time debilitated, but still retained some remnants of their former vigour, his religious feelings were at times truly desirable. Even when his disease had made still further progress, as often as the slightest alleviation was afforded him, his judgment became more distinct, his morbid depression lessened, and he was moderately composed. It was only a few weeks before his dissolution, that such an interval was vouchsafed to him. He then spoke with great feeling from the Scriptures, in family worship, for about half an hour ; and dwelt on the love, and grace, and power of Christ, with particular composure of mind.”

Mr Cecil's character, both personal and ministerial, has been pourtrayed by several of his friends at considerable length, and with every advantage of minute and accurate information. The review of his life is not without interest ; and suggests some useful and important reflections. The pains taken to instruct him in religion ; the unexpected revolt he made from these early impressions ; the daring and decided tone of his infidelity ; the occasional checks of conscience he received in his career of profligacy ; the process by which he was reclaimed from his unbelief, and led to abandon the vices and follies into which he had recklessly plunged ; and the whole course of moral discipline employed to

train and prepare him for eminent usefulness in the church;—are subjects instructive in themselves, and affording matter of profitable contemplation.

While under the control of bad principles, he yielded to every species of licentiousness, following the bent of his own bold and impetuous spirit; except that then active generosity or pride of his mind, taught him to despise whatever he thought mean and dishonourable. But the force of conviction triumphed over all opposition. That religion which had begun in disgust with the world, and dislike to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, by degrees gained strength, and made rapid advances towards maturity. The seed sown in infancy, and watered with maternal tears, though long buried, burst at length into life, and shot forth with vigour. The faculties and dispositions of his mind received a new direction. Those strong natural powers, which fitted him for becoming an instrument of extensive evil or eminent good, regulated by the principles, and consecrated to the service of religion, qualified him in a particular manner, for a successful discharge of the arduous office to which he devoted himself.

In the performance of his ministerial duties, he was zealous and indefatigable, disregarding fatigues and inconveniences, and even his own bodily infirmities. Wherever he went, or whatever was his employment, he never forgot that he was a Christian minister. He was constantly on the watch to do the work of an Evangelist; and to approve himself a faithful steward in his Master's service. His views of the sacred function, are striking and appropriate. "A minister," (says he) "is a Levite. In general he has, and he is to

have, no inheritance among his brethren, whose affairs are the little transactions of this world. But a minister is called, and set apart for a high and sublime business. His transactions are to be between the living and the dead; between heaven and earth; and he must stand as with wings on his shoulders.—He must be an eagle, towering toward heaven on strong pinions.”

By these maxims he strictly regulated his conduct; manifesting a parental solicitude for the welfare of the churches over which he was called to preside. There was nothing which he would not have made a willing sacrifice to this primary object; and he may be said to have shortened his days by his multiplied and incessant labours; but he died with firm and unshaken confidence in those truths which he had so long exemplified in his own life, and endeavoured, in his public capacity, to impress on the minds of his audience.

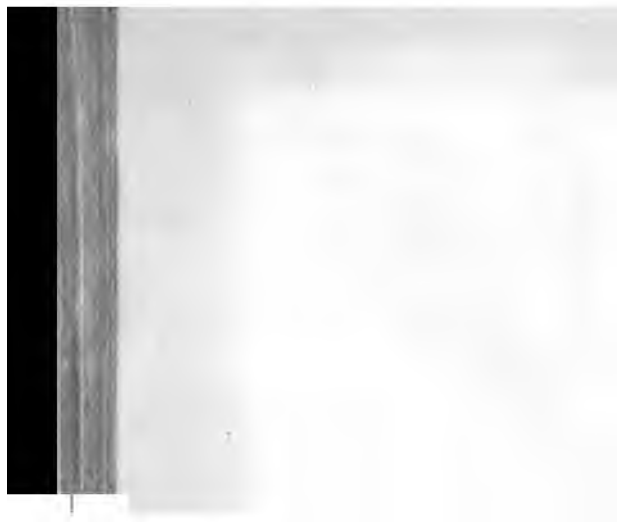
Of his ministerial usefulness he had many witnesses. His labours were successful wherever he was called to reside, and met with general acceptance; although his popularity was uniformly accompanied with a large share of humility. The qualifications he had received both from nature and education, his various acquirements and matured experience, raised him to a high rank among the preachers of his time. In the more private exercise of his pastoral office, as a counsellor and friend, he manifested great faithfulness, tenderness, and prudence.

His attainments, both as a man and a Christian, were above mediocrity. He possessed great dignity of mind and conduct, firmness, energy, and originality. His learning was solid and extensive;

and there were no important points in morals or religion, on which he had not read the best authors; nor could any topic be started in history or philosophy, on subjects of art or science, with which he was not generally conversant. Besides his extensive acquaintance with books, he was a master in the learning which is more peculiarly appropriate to his own profession. All the other departments of knowledge he laid under contribution to this single object. With the works of our elder divines he was familiar, and was so much in the habit of reading the Scriptures in the original, that he went daily to this task, as it were naturally and insensibly.

Mr Cecil published several works, consisting of Sermons, Tracts, and Biographical Sketches. The latter contain, Memoirs of his three friends, the Hon. and Rev. W. B. Cadogan, Rector of St Luke's, Chelsea; John Bacon, Esq. a distinguished sculptor; and the Rev. John Newton. His Sermons are written in an easy and conversational style, short and nervous, and sometimes interspersed with abrupt and shining thoughts. He excelled rather in strong intuitive sense, than in a train of argument; and more in the liveliness of his images than in their arrangement. His discourses, however, bear the stamp of a mind capable of vigorous conception, and an imagination rapid and inventive; and they display throughout, an earnestness of purpose, and a felicity of illustration, which must have come home to the heart, more than laboured expression, or the studied artifices of eloquence.

3







the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased in the UK (Mental Health Act 1983, 1990).

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. The UK Government has set out a strategy for mental health care (Department of Health 1999). The strategy is based on the following principles:

- (1) People with mental health problems should be treated as individuals.
- (2) People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions about their care.
- (3) People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in their own homes.
- (4) People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to work and to contribute to society.

The strategy also states that people with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in their own homes.

The strategy also states that people with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to work and to contribute to society. This is the focus of the current research.

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