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THE
DIGNITY
OF
HUMAN NATURE;

OR, A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF
THE CERTAIN AND ESTABLISHED MEANS
FOR ATTAINING
THE TRUE END OF OUR EXISTENCE.

IN FOUR BOOKS.

1. OF PRUDENCE, 3. OF VIRTUE,
2. OF KNOWLEDGE, 4. OF REVEALED RELIGION.

BY JAMES BURGH.

“ Qui se ipse norit, intelliget se habere aliquid Divinum, semperque
“ et sentiet et faciet aliquid tanto munere dignum.”

CICERO.

The third American, from the first London Edition.

New-York.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JAMES ORAM.

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCESS DOWAGER OF WALES.

May it please Your Royal Highness,

WERE the subject of the following sheets treated in a manner suitable to its importance, the work would make an offering worthy of a Princess, whose character and conduct exhibit so fair a pattern of the Dignity of Human Nature. The gracious condescension voluntarily shown to the Author of the following weak Essay, by YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, on various occasions (which he chooses to touch upon in the slightest manner possible, not from an unnatural and affected insensibility but to avoid imputations altogether contrary to his temper and intentions) encouraged him humbly to hope, that YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS would deign to patronise a work, which, however imperfectly executed, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS knows to be sincerely intended for the purpose, which You have above all things at heart; The general advancement of truth, virtue, and religion.

Were it suitable to the rank and abilities of the author, it would be very much so to the design of the following work, would make one of the noblest parts of it, and might, in happier times than ours, prove of advantage to those of the higher ranks in life, and, through them to a whole people; to labour to delineate a character, and hold forth an example, of which there is, in this part of the world, but one person, that ought not to esteem it an honour to be the imitator. But to say nothing of the disproportionate qualifications of the writer for so delicate an undertaking, there is but little reason, in this thoughtless and voluptuous age,

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to expect any very great and extensive good effects from proposing to general imitation the most amiable and perfect model. For, alas, to admire is one thing, and to emulate, another : And it is even to be doubted, whether YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS has influence enough to change the fashion in favour of virtue and religion. While a continual round of idle and expensive amusements fill up the bulk of our time, and is looked upon as the very Dignity of High Life ; while the rage of gaming is carried to an excess beyond example, so that even the sacred day of rest brings no rest from that endless drudgery, and children in their non-age, are, to the disgrace of common sense, initiated by masters hired for the purpose, and furnished with printed systems of the liberal science of card-playing ; while the grand study of people of rank is, How to drown thought : While such is the genius of the age, what hope is there, that the retired and unaffected virtues, which dazzle not the common eye, and appear in their true excellence only to Him, who sees not as man sees, should allure the unthinking to imitation ! But when the fluttering tribe, who form the crowd at routs and masquerades, are gone down to the silent grave, and have entered upon a state, where they will find, amusement was not the end of their creation ; then will the honours of the best of consorts, and of parents, shine conspicuous on the roll of fame, the delight of a wiser race, and have a place among the celebrated names of Arria, Cornelia, Porcia, Marcia, Attia, Aurelia, and others, the glory of the amiable sex, whose charms, other than of paint, or dress, or ostentation, will ever bloom with unfading splendour.

Proceed, ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCESS ! Continue Your pious cares in forming Your lovely Offspring to virtue and to glory. The same superior prudence, which has enabled You, in a country where licentiousness of speech is considered by the people as one of their most valuable privileges, to sustain a character of such dignity, that malice itself, struck silent, stands awed by native goodness and unaffected greatness of mind ; the same Divine support which has saved You from sinking under that affliction which to a delicate spirit, must have been beyond expression severe ; the same inspiring Grace, which has formed Your rising family so perfectly to Your wishes, that regularity and piety

are not only their practice, but their pleasure ; the same all-ruling Providence, whose peculiar care YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS has ever been, will bring Your worthy labours to a happy issue. There is not a virtue You can establish in the mind of any of Your numerous race, that may not hereafter give happiness to a kingdom. Every spark of goodness kindled by Your care, and nourished by the breath of Heaven, may shine a propitious star on Europe. And the concentrated glories of the whole, will, in the higher regions, shed such splendours on Your future elevation, that You will forget that ever there was a time when You was the most amiable and admired character in this obscure world.

To YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, who knows that the same Divine Authority which has given to those who turn many to righteousness, ground to hope, that they shall hereafter shine as stars for ever and ever, has also taught us, that they who have laboured the most for the general advancement of virtue, are still to consider themselves as unprofitable servants, having done only what they ought ; to YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, nothing that is here said will appear otherwise than as a set of thoughts naturally flowing from the artless pen of a writer, independent in temper, and happy in the prospect of passing his days in a private and useful station ; but warmed with the idea of uncommon excellence, and the hope of extensive advantage to mankind, from the pious labours of the best of Princesses.

That the mild and gentle reign of the most venerable of monarchs, the father of his people, may be long and prosperous, and that he may be blessed of the King of kings in his person and family ; that public and private virtue, and true religion, may yet again raise their drooping heads ; that luxury, infidelity, corruption, and perjury, may sink to the regions of darkness, whence they first arose ; and that heaven may again smile propitious on these once highly favoured nations ; that the inestimable life of YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS may be long preserved as a blessing to your family, and in them to mankind, and that your noble example may be more studied and imitated ; that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and the other branches of your illustrious house may be the peculiar care of heaven, a blessing to the world and a crown of glory to YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, are the unfeigned wishes of one, whom

ambition would never have prompted (though your gracious goodness has) to aspire to the honour of subscribing himself thus publicly,

(May it please YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS)

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'

Most devoted and

Most faithful humble servant,

JAMES BURGH.

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THE
DIGNITY
OF
HUMAN NATURE.

BOOK I.

OF PRUDENCE.

INTRODUCTION.

TO show what is truly great, ornamental, or useful, in life; to call the attention of mankind to objects worthy of their regard, as rational and immortal beings; to give a brief, but comprehensive account of the certain and established means for attaining the true end of our existence, happiness in the present and future states; is the design of the following essay.

The motives which engaged the author to attempt a task, confessedly too arduous for any single hand, were such as to him seemed sufficient to justify his aspiring, where even a failure, if not too shameful, must deserve praise; as encouragements from persons, for whom he joins with all mankind in having the most profound regard and veneration; the candor he has, in some more inconsiderable attempts, met with from the public; the hope of receiving improvement to himself from digesting and compiling such a work, and from the opinion of the judicious upon it: these several considerations had deservedly their respective influence. But what rendered the attempt more

proper and necessary, was a direct view to the advantage of some young persons, in other parts of the world, as well as England, with whom his connexions are such, as to give them a right to the fruit of his best abilities in the literary kind; and who will not probably fail to pay a peculiar regard to whatever comes from him.

To exhibit a comprehensive idea of the true Dignity of Human Nature, it will be necessary to consider what is fit for a being, who at present inhabits a perishing body, itself an immortal spirit; for a creature capable of action, of making himself and others happy in this world, and of being rewarded and punished hereafter according to his conduct; for a nature fitted for social virtue, and brought into existence to be prepared for glory and happiness.

It is necessary, in order to a man's filling properly his place in society, that he regulate his conduct by the laws of prudence and virtue. To answer the Divine intention in furnishing him with rational faculties, it is evidently proper, that he labour to improve those faculties with knowledge. And in order to his gaining the favour of the supreme Governor of the world, upon which alone the happiness of all created beings depends, it is plain, that obedience to his laws is indispensably necessary, which comprehends religion, natural and revealed. The Dignity of Human Nature may then be exhibited under the four following heads, *viz.*

- I. PRUDENCE, or such a conduct with respect to secular affairs, as is proper in itself, and suitable to respective circumstances, and naturally tends to make a man happy in himself, and useful in society.
- II. KNOWLEDGE, or the improvement and enlargement of the faculties of the mind, as understanding, memory, and imagination.
- III. VIRTUE, or a conformity of disposition and practice to rectitude in all respects, as to ourselves, our fellow-creatures, and our Maker.
- IV. REVEALED RELIGION, or a due inquiry into, and proper regard to, any express revelation, which the Supreme Being may have given to mankind.

The business of life is serious, not ludicrous. No order of beings (especially of rationals) was brought into existence wholly for pleasure and amusement; but to fill some useful place, and answer some important end in the extensive scheme of the beneficent Creator. It is therefore evidently the interest, the wisdom, and the perfection of every rational creature to look to it, that he perform properly the duty of his appointed station: and in that he will in the end find his glory and his happiness.

To give a brief view of what is principally necessary to the dignity of human nature, it seems most methodical to address the following directions chiefly to those readers, who have not yet gone far in life, but are at the same time arrived at an age capable of improving by proper helps, and a due attention to their own interest, when faithfully pointed out to them. Proceeding, from the first setting out in manly life, to the subjects of marriage and education of children, and to the conduct of more advanced age; all the stages of life may be taken in, and the true dignity of each pointed out.

That in the following essay there will of course be wanting a number of particulars, more or less conducive to the dignity of our nature, is no more than may be expected in a design so extensive. If it be found, that whoever conforms to these directions, and frames his character according to the following plan, will have attained the most considerable part of the perfection of human life; it will be acknowledged by the candid and ingenuous, that the throwing together into one view, such a number of particulars of principal importance, was attempting a service useful to the public.

As young people have a prospect (though a precarious one) of living to old age, it is of consequence, that they be early put upon such courses, as will be likely to render their passage through life, whether longer or shorter, easy and comfortable. A person's setting out with proper dignity, is of great importance toward his future prosperity; as, on the contrary, one false step at the first entrance into life may prove irretrievable. Mankind fix their attention upon the behaviour of a person just setting out, and according to the prudence or want of judgment,

they observe in the first steps he takes, pronounce (too precipitately indeed) upon the whole of his future conduct. Men, in active stations especially, ought to consider, that, at their first entrance into life, they will have the ill-will and envy of many rivals and competitors to encounter; and ought to remember, that it will require no ordinary degree of sagacity to defeat the designs of those, who think themselves interested to make a bad use of every miscarriage.

To this end there is nothing so indispensably necessary as prudence, or a turn of mind, which puts a person upon looking forward, and enables him to judge rightly of the consequences of his behaviour; so as to avoid the misfortunes into which rashness precipitates many, and to gain the ends which a wise and a virtuous man ought to pursue.

It is evident to the meanest understanding, that there is a fitness or unfitness, a suitableness or unsuitableness of things to one another, which is not to be changed, without some change pre-supposed in the things, or their circumstances. Prudence is the knowledge and observance of this propriety of behaviour to times and circumstances, and probable consequences, according to their several varieties.

A turn to prudence is, like all the other endowments of the mind, a natural gift, bestowed more or less liberally upon different persons. Some give promises of sagacity and coolness of judgment almost from their infancy; and others never arrive at the mature exercise of foresight or reflection, but, in spite of the experience of many years, seem children to the last. At the same time, this faculty, is capable of great improvements in almost the weakest heads; could they but be brought to bestow a little thought and attention, and to listen to reason, more than to passion.

Imprudent conduct may be owing to a person's want of opportunity for knowing the propriety of behaviour, which is the case of young and unexperienced persons, who have not been long enough in the world to know it; and of rustics, academics, and recluses, who, though they have lived long enough, have not lived among mankind, so as to acquire a due knowledge of them.

Imprudence is also often owing to some unhappy turn of mind, which gives a cast to people's behaviour contrary to their better knowledge. Of this kind are false modesty, indolence, and propensities to particular follies and vices.

Rashness is a great enemy to prudence. The natural vivacity and warmth of youth, and of people of sanguine tempers, makes this folly very conspicuous in them. It is remarkable, that in most points of decorum, the female sex have the advantage of us. This cannot be owing either to any difference in natural abilities, or to greater experience or knowledge of the world; but to the natural timidity of their tempers, joined with the delicacy of their education, which prevents their behaving in the forward and precipitate manner we often do, to the disparagement of our prudence, and the disappointment of our designs. The prejudices occasioned by evil habits, and by pride and passion, contribute greatly to the blinding of human reason, and misleading men into imprudent conduct. Of which in their respective places. To give one's self up to be led by popular prejudice, is as likely a way to be misled as any I know. The multitude judge almost constantly wrong on all subjects that lie in the least out of the common way. They follow one another like a flock of sheep; and not only go wrong themselves, but make those, who are wiser, ashamed to go right. And yet it is not prudent to be singular in matters of inferior consequence.

That a genius inferior only to a *Shakspear* or a *Milton*, should not be able to keep a coat to his back, to save himself from starving amidst his poetic fire, at the same time that an honest citizen whose utmost reach of thought only enables him to fix a reasonable profit upon a piece of linen or silk, according to its first cost and charges, should, from nothing, raise himself to a coach and six: to account for what in theory seems so strange, it is to be considered, of what consequence it is towards a proper behaviour, that a person apply a due attention to all the minute circumstances and seemingly inconsiderable particulars, in the conduct of life. Let a man have what sublime abilities he will, if he is above applying his understanding to find out, and his attention to pursue any scheme of life, it is as

little to be expected, that he should acquire the fortune of the thriving citizen, as that the plain shopkeeper, who never applied his mind to learning, should equal him in science. There is no natural incompatibility between wit, or learning, and prudence. Nor is the man of learning or genius, who is void of common prudence, to be considered in any other character, than that of a wrong-headed pedant, or of a man of narrow and defective abilities.



PART I.

OF PRUDENCE IN CONVERSATION.



SECTION I.

Of treating the Characters of absent Persons.

PRUDENCE may, in general, be divided into two parts : first, that which regards conversation. And, secondly, that which serves to regulate action.

As to our words, we are to consider, first, whether what we are going to say had better be spoke, or kept in. And the only time for considering this is, before we speak : for it may be too late afterwards. Whatever may prove to the disadvantage of the speaker, the hearers, or of any absent person, is in prudence carefully to be suppressed. Of the first sort, is, whatever may prejudice the speaker, as, by exposing him to prosecution, by discovering his secrets, or, by getting him ill-will. Of the second, is whatever may tend to debauch the virtue of the hearers, or, by affronting, work them up to anger and misbehavior. And of the third, whatever tends to derogate from the character of any absent person. To treat of these without regard to order :

There is no imprudence more common or universal, than that of detraction. I speak of it at present only as an imprudence, reserving the immorality of that practice to another occasion. And what can be more imprudent,

than upon the mention of an absent person, with whom I am no way concerned, to break out into invectives and severities, which may bring me into disputes and trouble, but can answer no good end?

Did men but consider what opinion the judicious form of those they see delight in detraction, they would, for their own sakes, avoid a practice which exposes them to the contempt of all humane and considerate people. He who takes pleasure in speaking to the disadvantage of others, must appear to all wise men, either in the light of an envious person, who can brook nothing eminent in another; or of one whose mean abilities and improvements will furnish no better entertainment for those he converses with, than disadvantageous representations of others; or of one, who partakes of the temper of an evil spirit, and delights in mischief for mischief's sake. And no man can think it will tend to the forwarding of his interest among his neighbours, to procure himself any of these characters.

The mischiefs a person may bring upon himself, by evil-speaking, either by exposing himself to legal penalties, or to private resentment, and general hatred, are so great, that prudence will direct to speak of every man, as one would do, if he knew the person, whose character is mentioned, was in the next room, overhearing all that passed. For one can never be sure that he shall not be called upon to say the same things before the person's face, which he has taken the liberty of saying behind his back. And who would be put to the trouble of proving, or to the confusion of recanting his words?

Nor is it enough that what we say to an absent person's disadvantage, be but trifling, or of no great consequence in itself; since what is said in conversation lies wholly at the mercy of the hearers, to represent it as they please; and the mere repetition of what has been said without thought or design, makes it appear of consequence. It is evident therefore, that in touching upon what is so extremely delicate, as the characters of others, there is no safe method, but taking the good-natured side (where any thing can be said in vindication) or, if the character spoke of is wholly indefensible, total silence; neither of which is liable to misconstruction.

As to putting the easy and credulous upon their guard against the artful and designing, the usual pretence for obloquy; it may be done, without hazard, and without injustice, by anonymous letters in a disguised hand, to the persons we think in danger of being imposed upon, or in any other prudent way; taking care still to treat the character of others, with the same tenderness as one would wish his own to meet with.

It will ever be the wisdom of every person, not only to avoid the odious practice of evil-speaking; but to make a resolution to have no concern with those who are given to it. If I find a person takes a pleasure in misrepresenting others to me, I ought to conclude, he will use my character in the same manner, in the next company he goes into.

SECTION II.

Of venting singular Opinions. Of Modesty in Disputing. Of being satirical upon the Infirmities of others. Of Rallying, and receiving Raillery.

A WISE man will ever be cautious of venting singular opinions in science, in politics, and above all, in religion, where he does not perfectly know his company. He will consider, that he has ten chances for startling or displeasing his hearers, for one of informing or setting them right, in a single conversation; the bulk of mankind being much too fond of their own opinions and prejudices, to desire to come at truth with the hazard of being obliged to give up their beloved maxims.

A man of prudence is always modest in delivering his sentiments, even where he is absolutely certain that he is in the right, and that his opponent is totally ignorant of the subject in dispute. For he considers, that it is happiness enough to know himself to be in the right, and that he is not obliged to battle the narrowness and perverseness of mankind.

It is likewise proper to remember, that, in a dispute, the by-standers generally take it for granted, that he who

keeps his temper is in the right, and that what puts the other out of humour, is his finding himself in danger of being worsted.

A prudent person will carefully avoid touching upon the natural infirmity, whether of body or mind, of those he is in company with. The exposing a person's imperfections to the observation of others, can answer no end, but irritating. We find it hard enough to prevail with mankind to look into their deficiencies themselves; but to set a whole company a gazing at them, is what they will never bear at our hands. When there is a friendly hint to be given, for correcting some failing, if it be done in private, or by an anonymous letter, it may answer the end; whereas the rude exposing of a person's weakness, makes him think himself obliged in honour to defend, and consequently to hold fast his error.

A wise man will despise the conceited pleasure some hot-headed people take in what they call, speaking their minds; that is, in expressing their dislike of those they fall into company with, in a blunt and rude manner, without the least necessity or prospect of advantage, and with the certainty of affronting and disobliging. For he will consider, that though he may chance not to like the make of every face he meets in the street, or the humour of every person he falls in company with, he cannot expect either the one or the other should be altered immediately upon his expressing his dissatisfaction, and may expect to have his rude remarks retaliated upon him with interest. As nothing is more provoking to some tempers than raillery, a prudent person will not always be satirically witty where he can; but only where he may without offence. For he will consider that the finest stroke of raillery is but a witicism: and that there is hardly any person so mean, whose good-will is not preferable to the pleasure of a horse-laugh.

If you should by raillery make another ridiculous, (which is more than you can promise upon) remember, that the judicious part of the company will not think the better of you for your having a knack at drollery, or ribaldry.

Before you set up for a satirical wit, be sure that you

are properly furnished. If you be found to be a bad archer, they will set you up for a butt.

In the case of one's being exposed to the mirth of a company for something said or done sillily, the most effectual way of turning the edge of their ridicule, is by joining the laugh against one's self, and exposing and aggravating his own folly; for this will show, that he has the uncommon understanding to see his own fault.

SECTION III.

Of Secrecy. Of the Choice of Company, and of intimate Friends. Of Visiting where there is no Friendship. Of the Company of Ladies. Of Story-telling. Of Boasting, and Lying.

AS to his own private affairs, a prudent person will consider, that his secrets will always be safer in his own breast, than in that of the best and discreetest friend he has in the world. He will therefore be very cautious of imparting them; and will never let any one into the knowledge of them, but for the sake of profiting by his advice, or for some other useful end. There is not indeed a person among many hundreds, to whom a secret is not an unsupportable burden. And the bulk of people are so extremely curious, that they will fall upon a thousand stratagems to make the person, who they imagine is possessed of a secret, believe that they know most of it already, in order to draw him on to discover the whole: in which they often succeed.

A prudent person will always avoid diving into the secrets of others; for he will consider, that whoever is weak enough to blab his private affairs to him, is like to put the same confidence in others; the consequence of which may be, that he may come to be blamed for what was discovered by the indiscretion of another, though religiously concealed by himself.

If you cannot keep your own secrets, how do you think other people should? If you have such an opinion of a person, as to think he will be faithful to you, he has the like of another, and he again of another, and so your secret

goes round. You ought likewise to consider, that besides the chance of unfaithfulness in him to whom you trust a secret, or of a difference arising between you, the mere circumstance of his happening some time or other to forget himself, may be the occasion of his discovering and undoing you.

As to the choice of friends or companions, the number of which ought to be small, and the choice delicate, one general rule may be laid down, viz. That a man, who has neither knowledge nor virtue, is by no means a fit companion, let him have what other accomplishments he will. No advantage one can propose from keeping the company of an ignorant or a wicked man, can make up for the nuisance and disgust his folly will give; much less for the danger of having one's manners corrupted, and his mind debauched. Nothing can give a higher delight, than the conversation of a man of knowledge. There is in a mind, improved by study, conversation and travel, a kind of inexhaustible fund of entertainment, from which one may draw supplies for many years enjoyment, and at every conversation receive some new piece of information and improvement. On the contrary, the company of an ignorant person, must soon grow tiresome and insipid. For one will soon have heard all the tolerable things he can say: and then there is an end of improvement and entertainment both at once.

As for your buffoons, who are the delight of superficial people, and the fiddles of companies, they are, generally speaking, the most despicable people one can converse with. Their being caressed by the thoughtless part of mankind, on account of their pleasantry, gives their manners such a tincture of levity and foolery, that very few of them are good for any thing but to laugh at. And as a very extensive vein of wit is a great rarity, you will generally find the drolls, you meet in company, have a set of conceits which they play off at all times, like dancing dogs, or monkeys; and that what chiefly diverts, is rather some odd cast of countenance, or uncommon command of features, than any thing of real wit, that will bear repeating.

The only proper persons, therefore, to choose for inti-

mate friends, are men of a serious turn; for such are generally prudent, and fit to consult with; and of established characters: for such, having somewhat to lose, will be cautious of their behaviour. To which add another qualification, indispensably necessary in a friend, with whom one would expect to live agreeably, I mean, a good natural temper. Nothing more forcibly warms the mind to a love of goodness, or raises it more powerfully to all that is truly great and worthy, than the conversation of wise and virtuous men. There is a force in what is said *viva voce*, which nothing in writing can come up to. A grave remonstrance, mixed with humanity and compassion, will often awaken thought and reflection in a mind, which has stood proof against the finest moral lessons in books. And the approbation of a friend, whose judgment and sincerity one esteems, will encourage one to go lengths in every commendable disposition and practice, which he could not have thought himself capable of. As, on the contrary, a little smart raillery, or a smooth flow of words, put together with an appearance of reason, and delivered with an easy and assured air, may very quickly shake the virtue, or unhinge the principles, of a young person, who has neither had time nor opportunity for establishing himself sufficiently.

I do not mean, that young persons are to take upon trust all that is told them by pious people, (some of whom may be very weak and bigotted) without examining into the grounds and evidences of what they have taught them, and without allowing themselves an opportunity of hearing both sides of the question. This is more than religion requires; nay, it is directly contrary to what it requires: for it directs men to use their own reason, and not to take any thing of importance upon trust. Nor can any thing be more unsafe than to trust that to another, which I ought to make sure of for myself; which is my own concern infinitely more than any one's else, and where I alone must stand to the damage. My meaning, I say, is not to discourage young people from hearing all sides, and conversing among people of different ways of thinking; but to guard them against the crafty, and the vicious,

from whose conversation they will be sure to gain nothing, and may lose dreadfully.

As the slightest touch will defile a clean garment, which is not to be cleaned again without a great deal of trouble, so the conversation of the wicked and debauched, will, in a very short time, defile the mind of an innocent person, in a manner that will give him great trouble to recover his former purity. You may therefore more safely venture into company with a person infected with the plague, than with a vicious man: for the worst consequence of the first is death; but of the last, the hazard of a worse destruction. For vicious people generally have a peculiar ambition to draw in the innocent to their party; and many of them are furnished with artifices and allurements but too effectual for insnaring.

It is the advice of a great man to his son, to keep the company of his superiors, rather than his inferiors. This direction is to be followed with discretion. As on one hand, for a gentleman to associate constantly with mechanics, must prove the most effectual means of sinking him to the level of their manners and conversation; so on the other, for a young person, who is born to no great fortune, and must resolve to make his way in life by his own industry, to affect the company of the nobility and gentry, is the way to have his mind tinctured with the same love of idleness and expence, which even in people of fortune is highly blameable; but in those, who have no such prospects in life, is certain ruin. The supposed advantage arising from the friendship of the great, is of very little consequence. The surest way to ingratiate one's self with the bulk of them, is to serve their pleasures, or their ambitious views: A price infinitely too great for all that their favour can procure. It may therefore, I think, be concluded, that the most proper companions for every man, are those of his own rank in life.

It has been the misfortune of many in friendship, as in love, to form to themselves such romantic notions, of I know not what sublimities, as will not answer in real life, and to make themselves miserable upon meeting with disappointments. Whoever thinks to find an object of love or friendship, in whom, after long acquaintance and fami-

liarity, nothing faulty or defective shall appear, must go among superior orders of beings in search of what he wants: human nature will furnish no such characters. He who has found a friend, capable of keeping a secret, of giving sincere and judicious advice, of entertaining and instructing by his conversation, and ready to show his affection by actions as well as words; he who has found such a friend, and drops him for any weakness not inconsistent with these qualities, shows himself unworthy of such an inestimable treasure.

As a temper too reserved and suspicious, forbidding the approach of a stranger, is an indication of a crafty disposition, or at least of a timorous and narrow mind; so throwing open one's arms to every forward intruder, is a proof of egregious want of prudence and knowledge of the world. Those pert and insinuating people, who become, all of a sudden, and without any reason, the most zealous and sanguine friends, are ever to be suspected of some indirect design. The wisdom of behaviour therefore is, to communicate your knowledge to all, who seem willing to receive it; your private affairs only to persons of approved secrecy and judgment, and to them no more than is absolutely necessary; to have many acquaintance, but few intimates; to open your countenance to all, your heart to very few.

Never think of friendship with a covetous man: He loves his money better than his friend. Nor with a man of pleasure: He has not gravity enough to render his conversation improving. Nor with a wicked man: He will corrupt you. Nor with a silly fellow: His emptiness will disgust you. Nor with a drunkard: He will betray your secrets. A passionate fellow will affront you, A conceited man will expect you to submit to him in every thing. A mean-spirited creature will disgrace you. A bully will draw you into his quarrels. A spendthrift will borrow your money. A very poor fellow will make your life unhappy. A man of overgrown fortune will draw you into his expensive way of living.

There is no folly more common among young people than that of puffing or boasting; at which some are extremely awkward, putting their accounts of their pretend-

ed feats together in a manner so inconsistent and contradictory, that their hearers never fail to detect them for mere fictions.

Some will be ever ascribing to themselves witty sayings, which they have heard in company, or perhaps read in books. Some will pretend to have performed things, which if they be challenged to do again, they are obliged to own they cannot. Many, who have never had opportunity or capacity for study, endeavour to persuade those that converse with them, that they have gone through the whole circle of the sciences, and will pretend to have read every book you can name. Others will be stunning all companies with the great acquaintance they have, and talking of intimacies with eminent persons, whom perhaps in truth they hardly know by sight. And others are guilty of this vice to a degree still incomparably more wicked; I mean, those who delight in blasting the characters of ladies, whose favours they boast, when they have never been so much as in their company. This infamous practice has cost some of these vain and wicked boasters, all they were worth.

The most effectual means I know, for avoiding or getting rid of this foolish habit of boasting, is, to accustom one's self to speak as little as possible in the first person. The figure of Egotism is one of the most ungraceful that can enter into any man's conversation or writings, though it is to be met with in some of the most eminent both of ancient and modern times.

But if it gives a man a disadvantageous appearance to be himself the historian of the actions he has *really* done, what a contemptible light must he appear in, who, in order to set himself off, has recourse to *falsehood*? (To what a degree of baseness must that mind be sunk, which can descend so low as to invent a lie?) We see a sense of honour upon this point, often remains in the mind, when every thing else that relishes of virtue is gone. The town-rake, who will make no hesitation at murder or adultery, will yet take the imputation of a lie whether just or unjust, for an affront not to be expiated, but with blood. For he looks on other crimes as venial, or perhaps as acts of heroism; but falsehood is universally owned to imply

in it a peculiar degree of mean-spiritedness. / Nor will any man allow himself in this base practice, who considers (abstracting from the vice) the gross imprudence of exposing himself to the universal contempt, which always falls upon the character of a liar, who of course loses the confidence of mankind, even when he speaks truth. /

If one has given any just cause of disobligation, the proper part to act, is, frankly to own the offence, and ask the injured person's pardon; and it must only be from excessive pride and obstinacy, that one will refuse what is so reasonable. And how much more manly is such behaviour, than to have recourse to the base subterfuge of a lie, or equivocal evasion!

[Falsehood is indeed, on all accounts, inexcusable, and can never proceed but from some unworthy principle, as cowardice, malice, or a total contempt of virtue and honour. / And the difficulties it runs one into, are not to be numbered. One lie requires ten others to support it. And the failure of probability in one of them, ruins all. The pains necessary to patch up a plausible story, and the racking of the memory to keep always to the same circumstances in representing things, so as to avoid contradictions, is unsufferable. And after all, it is a thousand to one, but the artifice is detected; and then the unhappy man is questioned as much, when he is sincere, as when he dissembles; so that he finds himself at a full stop, and can neither gain his ends with mankind by truth nor falsehood.

As it is common and natural for young gentlemen to court the company of the ladies, it is proper to give them some directions upon that subject.

It is certain, that the elegance of behaviour, and that universally engaging accomplishment of complaisance, are no where to be learned but in the conversation of that delicate part of our species. And it is likewise certain, that in the company of ladies there is less to be met with that is likely either to shock, or to corrupt an innocent person, than in the conversation of even the tolerable sober part of our sex. But as on the other hand, it must be confessed, that their being deprived of the advantages we have for enlarging our knowledge, renders their conversation less improving, it must be allowed, that to spend the bulk

of one's leisure in their company is not to be justified; nor indeed do they expect it, but, on the contrary, heartily despise the effeminate tribe of dangles. A prudent man will therefore only seek the conversation of the ladies occasionally; and, where he does, he will not enter wholly into their manners, but will, by easy and engaging ways, endeavour to draw them into conversation that may be more entertaining to himself, and more improving to them, than the usual chit-chat of the tea-table. Nor is a man in any hazard of giving disgust by this proceeding, unless his manner of introducing such subjects be somewhat affected, or gloomy, or overbearing. On the contrary, the more sensible part of the sex always expect to hear from us something different from, and superior to the superficial stuff, of fashions, love affairs, and remarks on neighbours; and entertain but contemptible notions of a man, who is furnished with no better topics than these. There are many of that sex, who have made so good use of the mean advantages we allow them for improving themselves, that their judgment will be found preferable to that of many men, on prudentials and morals, (science they do not pretend to;) but these are chiefly such as have had the advantage of experience and conversation. The usual trash of compliment and flattery, with which that contemptible order of mortals, commonly called fops, are wont to entertain the ladies, is equally shameful to those who utter, and those who receive it. And none but the most superficial part of the sex are to be imposed upon by it; nor can any thing show a man in a more ridiculous light, than to be convicted of attempting to flatter, without sufficient address to conceal his design. The whole of it is mean and disingenuous, and unworthy of the open plainness and sincerity, so graceful in our sex. At the same time as the ladies are but little accustomed to hear the plain truth, much less disagreeable truths, a man of prudence will avoid contradicting or blaming them too bluntly, knowing, that by such behaviour there is nothing to be got but their ill-will. Toying or romping with handsome women, however distant it may be from any direct design upon them, being yet unsuitable to the delicacy of genteel behaviour, and tending naturally to promote levi-

ty, if not to excite irregular desires in young minds, is what I would wish wholly discouraged.

As there is no accomplishment more agreeable in a companion, when people want to relax, than a knack at telling a story; there is no part of conversation, in which men expose themselves more egregiously. The entertainment, and instruction, which companies receive from a well told story, of which history and lives furnish the best materials, naturally make people desirous of being thought to possess a talent so agreeable. And those whom nature has not fitted out with the proper abilities, cannot miss to execute what they undertake in an awkward manner. The chief of the errors in telling a story, are the following, viz. Tediousness in dwelling upon insignificant circumstances, which do not interest the company. And, on the other hand, curtailing too much, and leaving out such circumstances as tend to characterize the persons in the story, or are otherwise essential. Overrunning the proper conclusion, or catastrophe of the narration. Overacting the humorous or lively parts; or drawling on the narration in an unanimated manner.

The most witty and facetious companion in the world, may make himself as thoroughly disagreeable as the most insipid mortal that can go into company. Let such a one labour to be witty, and strain for fine things. Let him stun the company with noise and forward impertinence; or let him show a contempt for them, by a sullen silence; and he shall be as heartily despised as ever he was admired.

I do not think it would be easy to invent a sillier custom, than that which universally prevails at present, of visiting where there is no real regard or esteem. There is no keeping up a correspondence of this kind, without being guilty of infinite dissimulation. And they must set politeness at a high rate indeed, who will give up integrity for it.

But to consider this matter only in a prudential light, which is the business at present, I should be glad to know wherein appears the wisdom of throwing away time (which one may always apply in some manner agreeable to one's self) upon people, whom one heartily despises. Where interest obliges people in business to show civility to their customers, or those they have connexions with in life, there is some pretence of necessity for keeping up such a com-

mere. But why people in high and independent stations, should think it necessary to spend so many hours in visits, to themselves insipid and disagreeable, is to me wholly inconceivable. When there are so many noble employments, and elegant amusements to fill up the time of people of figure, it grieves one to see them make themselves useless to their country, and unhappy in themselves, by wasting their hours in the slavery of disagreeable visits, and the endless drudgery of the card-table. To see people of rank descend to such low foolery, as visiting those whom they hate or despise; denying themselves by their servants, when they are really at home, to avoid the visits of those themselves have invited, making pretended visits to those they know to be abroad, and even sending their empty coaches to perform those mock ceremonies; to observe all this hypocritical farce, carried on by people of high rank, how does it degrade them in the eyes of their inferiors!

SECTION IV.

Of Swearing and Obscenity. Of Complaisance. Of Overbearing. Of Passion. Of acknowledging Faults. Of wrangling in conversation. Of the Importance of Circumstantials in Behaviour.

ONE may lay down the following, as a maxim which will never fail, viz. That so long as his conversation is entertaining, and behaviour affable and modest, he will be sure to be treated with respect, though his discourse be quite sober and chaste.

Swearing and obscenity are offences not only against all that is sacred, but against all that is polite. They are sins without temptation, without alleviation, and without reward. Swearing is an affront to all sober and well-behaved people. It confounds and interrupts, instead of gracing conversation; as the continual repetition of any set of unmeaning words, from time to time, necessarily must.

As for obscenity, every one knows it must shock and startle every modest ear. It gives no real pleasure; but on the contrary, if it has any effect, must excite and irritate the passions, without gratifying them, which is pain

and torment. If obscenity is fit conversation only for public stews, it cannot be proper among genteel people; and no person deserves the appellation of a gentleman, who accustoms himself to the behaviour of whoremasters and prostitutes. For it is manners, and not dress, that form that character.

If the definition of true good manners be, 'That behaviour, which makes a man easy in himself, and easy to all about him; it can never be good manners to be troublesome by an excess of ceremony, by overpressing to eat or drink, or by forcing a favour of any kind, upon those we converse with. Nor can it be said to be consistent with good behaviour, to overdo the complimenting part, so as to border upon insipid flattery; nor does politeness by any means require that we exceed our inclination, or cross our particular taste, in eating and drinking what may be pressed upon us, to our own disgust; much less to the prejudice of our health or temperance.

No one can be long at a loss, as to behaviour, who observes the two following directions, and is in earnest resolved to regulate his conduct upon them, viz. first, That the way to be generally agreeable in conversation, is to show, that one has less at heart the humouring his own inclinations, than those of the company, and that he is not so full of himself as to overlook or despise others; and, secondly, That the grace of behaviour is to be learned only from the imitation of the judicious and polite.

But care must be taken, that your imitation be not so slavish as to strip you of your natural character and behaviour, and disguise you in those of another, which, being assumed, and artificial, will not become you. For nature in russet is more agreeable than affectation in embroidery.

There is nothing that costs less, and gains more friends, than an affable and courteous behaviour. One may always observe, that those, who have been accustomed to the best company, behave with the greatest freedom and good nature. People of figure and real worth, having reason to expect that others will treat them with suitable respect, do not find it necessary to assume any airs of superiority. Whereas, the vain and conceited, who fancy no submission whatever, is equal to their dignity, are ever endeavouring, by a haughty carriage, to keep up that respect in

others, which their want of real merit cannot. But how ill they succeed, is easy to observe, from the universal contempt and disgust such a behaviour meets with among all judicious people.

The truth of the matter is, that the differences between one person and another are, in respect to every circumstance, but that of virtue, so very inconsiderable, as to render any insolent superiority on the one hand, or mean submission on the other, extremely ridiculous; since, according to the elegant expression of Scripture, "Man is but a worm, and the son of man a worm."

Nothing shows a greater abjectness of spirit, than an overbearing temper, appearing in a person's behaviour to inferiors. To insult or abuse those who dare not answer again, is as sure a mark of cowardice, as it would be to attack with a drawn sword a woman or a child. And wherever you see a person given to insult his inferiors, you may assure yourself he will creep to his superiors; for the same baseness of mind will lead him to act the part of a bully to those who cannot resist, and of a coward to those who can. But though servants and other dependants may not have it in their power to retort, in the same style, the injurious usage they received from their superiors, they are sure to be even with them by the contempt they themselves have for them, and the character they spread abroad of them through the world. Upon the whole, the proper behaviour to inferiors is, to treat them with generosity and humanity; but by no means with familiarity on one hand, or insolence on the other.

And if a fiery temper and passionate behaviour are improper to inferiors, they are more so among equals, for this obvious reason, That the only effect of a choleric behaviour on your equals, is exposing you to the ridicule of those who have no dependence upon you, and have neither hopes nor fears from you.

There is indeed no greater happiness than an even natural temper, neither liable to be extremely eager and sanguine, nor stoically indifferent and insensible; neither apt to be worked up to a tempest with every trifle, nor yet buried in a continual lethargic stupidity; neither delighting in being always engaged in scenes of mirth and frolic, nor to be wrapped in the impenetrable gloom of a fixed melancholy.

And after all, what is there in life that may be justly reckoned of sufficient importance to move a person to a violent passion? What good grounds can there be for great expectations, for gloomy apprehensions, for immoderate triumph, or for deep dejection, in such a state as the present, in which we are sure of meeting with innumerable disappointments, even in the greatest success of our affairs, and in which we know that our afflictions and our pleasures must both be soon over? True wisdom will direct us to study moderation with respect to all worldly things; to indulge mirth but seldom, excessive grief never; but to keep up constantly an even cheerfulness of temper.

If it should happen through inadvertency, passion, or human frailty, that you expose yourself to be taken to task by any one, do not so much labour to justify the action, for that is doubling the fault, as your intention, which might be harmless. Besides, the action appears manifest to every one; so that people will judge for themselves, and not take your notion of it. But your intention, being known only to yourself, they will more readily allow you to be the most proper person to explain it. Above all, it is base and unjust to palliate your own fault, by laying the blame upon others.

Suppose you should fairly own you was in the wrong. It will be only confessing yourself a human creature. And is that so mortifying! If, on the contrary, you should stand it out, people will think you twice in the wrong—in committing a folly, and in persisting in it. Whereas, if you frankly own your mistake, they will allow your candour as an apology for half the fault.

It is generally pride and passion that engage people in quarrels and law-suits. It is the very character of a good man, that he will, upon occasion, recede from the utmost rigor of what he might, in justice, demand. If this character were a common one, there would be few law-suits; which, whoever loves, I heartily wish him, for his instruction, the full enjoyment of all its peculiar delights, as attendance, expence, waste of time, fear, and wrangling, with the hatred of all who know his character, and the diminution of his fortune, by every suit he engages in.

If you have reason to believe that your enemy has quitted his hatred to you, and his ill designs against you, do

not insist upon his making you a formal speech, acknowledging his fault and asking pardon; but forgive him frankly, without putting him to the pain of doing what may be more disagreeable to him than you can imagine: For men's natures are very different. If you already know that he is favourably disposed to you, you cannot know it better by his telling you so in a formal manner. At the same time it is not necessary that you trust yourself any more in the hands of one who has endeavoured to betray and ruin you. Christian forbearance and forgiveness are no way inconsistent with prudence.

There is no circumstance in life too trivial to be wholly unworthy of the regard of a person who would be generally agreeable, on which a man's usefulness in society depends much more than many people are aware of. It is great pity that many persons, eminently valuable for learning and piety, do not study the decorum of dress and behaviour more than they do. There is incomparably greater good to be gained by humouring mankind in a few of their trifling customs, and thereby winning their good will, than by startling or disgusting them by a singularity of behaviour in matters of no consequence. In dress, I would advise to keep the middle between foppery and shabbiness; neither being the first nor the last in a fashion. Every thing, which shows, what is commonly called, a taste in dress, is a proof of a vain and silly turn of mind, and never fails to prejudice the judicious against the wearer. A discreet and well-behaved person will never fail to meet with due respect from all the discerning part of society, (and the good opinion of the rest is not worth desiring) though his dress be ever so plain, so it be decent.

SECTION V.

Miscellaneous Thoughts on Prudence in Conversation.

AS order or method are of very little consequence in treating of such subjects, I will add here a set of miscellaneous thoughts upon the art of conversation, couched in a few words, from which, with what has been already observed, the young reader may furnish himself with a competent knowledge of what is to be studied, and what to be

avoided in conversation. If the reader should find the same thought twice, it is hoped his candour will overlook a fault, not easy to be avoided in putting together such a variety of unconnected matter. There are few of the following sentences that will not furnish a good deal of thought, or that are to be understood to their full extent without some consideration.

He who knows the world will not be too bashful. He who knows himself will not be impudent.

Do not endeavour to shine in all companies. Leave room for your hearers to imagine something within you beyond all you have said. And remember, the more you are praised, the more you will be envied.

If you would add a lustre to all your accomplishments, study a modest behaviour. To excel in any thing valuable is great; but to be above conceit, on account of one's accomplishments, is greater. Consider, if you have rich natural gifts, you owe them to the Divine bounty. If you have improved your understanding, and studied virtue, you have only done your duty. And thus there seems little ground left for vanity.

You need not tell all the truth, unless to those who have a right to know it all. But let all you tell be truth.

Insult not another for his want of a talent you possess: He may have others which you want.

Praise your friends, and let your friends praise you.

If you treat your inferiors with familiarity, expect the same from them.

If you give a jest, take one.

Let all your jokes be truly jokes. Jestings sometimes ends in sad earnest.

If a favour is asked of you, grant it if you can. If not, refuse it in such a manner as that one denial may be sufficient.

Wit without humanity degenerates into bitterness. Learning without prudence into pedantry.

In the midst of mirth, reflect that many of your fellow creatures round the world are expiring; and that your turn will come shortly. So will you keep your life uniform and free from excess.

Love your fellow creature, though vicious. Hate vice in the friend you love the most.

Whether is the laughter or the morose, the most disagreeable companion?

Reproof is a medicine like mercury or opium; if it be improperly administered, it will do harm instead of good.

Nothing is more unmannerly than to reflect on any man's profession, sect, or natural infirmity. He who stirs up against himself another's self-love, provokes the strongest passion in human nature.

Be careful of your word, even in keeping the most trifling appointment. But do not blame another for a failure of that kind, till you have heard his excuse.

Never offer advice, but where there is some probability of its being followed.

If a great person has omitted rewarding your services, do not talk of it. Perhaps he may not yet have had an opportunity. For they have always on hand expectants innumerable; and the clamorous are too generally gratified before the deserving. Besides, it is the way to draw his displeasure upon you, which can do you no good, but make bad worse. If the services you did, were voluntary, you ought not to expect any return, because you made a present of them unasked. And a free gift is not to be turned into a loan, to draw the person you have served into debt. If you have served a great person merely with a view to self-interest, perhaps he is aware of that, and rewards you accordingly. Nor can you justly complain: He owes you nothing; it was not him you meant to serve.

Fools pretend to foretel what will be the issue of things, and are laughed at for their awkward conjectures. Wise men, being aware of the uncertainty of human affairs, and having observed how small a matter often produces a great change, are modest in their conjectures.

He who talks too fast, outruns his hearers thoughts. He who speaks too slow, gives his hearer pain by hindering his thoughts, as a rider who frets his horse by reining him too much.

Never think to entertain people with what lies out of their way, be it ever so curious in its kind. Who would think of regaling a circle of ladies with the beauties of Homer's Greek, or a company of country squires with Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries?

Never fish for praise: It is not worth the bait.

Do well ; but do not boast of it. For that will lessen the commendation you might otherwise have deserved.

He who is guilty of flattery, declares himself to be sunk from every noble and manly sentiment, and shows, that he thinks the person he presumes upon, void of modesty and discernment. Though flattery is so common in courts, it is the very insolence of rudeness.

To offer advice to an angry man, is like blowing against a tempest.

Too much preciseness and solemnity in pronouncing what one says in common conversation, as if one was preaching, is generally taken for an indication of self-conceit.

Make your company a rarity, and people will value it. Men despise what they can easily have.

Value truth, however you come by it. Who would not pick up a jewel that lay on a dunghill ?

The beauty of behaviour consists in the manner, more than the matter of your discourse.

If your superior treats you with familiarity, it will not therefore become you to treat him in the same manner.

Men of many words are generally men of many puffs.

A good way to avoid impertinent and pumping inquiries, is by answering with another question. An evasion may also serve the purpose. But a lie is inexcusable on any occasion, especially, when used to conceal the truth, from one who has no authority to demand it.

To reprove with success, the following circumstances are necessary, viz. mildness, secrecy, intimacy, and the esteem of the person you would reprove.

If you be nettled with severe raillery, take care never to show that you are stung, unless you choose to provoke more.

The way to avoid being made a butt, is not to set up for an archer.

To set up for a general critic, is bullying mankind.

Reflect upon the different appearances things make to you from what they did some years ago ; and do not imagine that your opinion will never alter, because you are positive at present. Let the remembrance of your past changes of sentiment make you more flexible.

If ever you was in a passion, did you not find reason af-

terwards to be sorry for it? And will you again allow yourself to be guilty of a weakness, which will certainly be in the same manner followed by repentance, besides being attended with pain?

Never argue with any but men of sense and temper.

It is ill manners to trouble people with talking too much either of yourself, or your affairs. If you are full of yourself, consider, that you, and your affairs, are not so interesting to other people as to you.

Keep silence, sometimes, upon subjects which you are known to be a judge of. So your silence, where you are ignorant, will not discover you.

Some ladies will forgive silliness; but none ill manners. And there are but few capable of judging of your learning or genius; but all of your behaviour.

Do not judge by a view of one person or thing.

Think like the wise, but talk like ordinary people. Never go out of the common road but for somewhat.

Do not dispute against facts well established, merely because there is somewhat unaccountable in them. That the world should be created of nothing, is to us inconceivable; but not therefore to be doubted.

There is no occasion to trample upon the meanest reptile, nor to sneak to the greatest prince. Insolence and baseness are equally unmanly.

As you are going to a party of mirth, think of the hazard you run of misbehaving. While you are engaged, do not wholly forget yourself. And after all is over, reflect how you have behaved. If well, be thankful: It is more than you could have promised. If otherwise, be more careful for the future.

Do not sit dumb in company. It will be ascribed either to pride, cunning, or stupidity. Give your opinion modestly, but freely; hear that of others with candor; and ever endeavour to find out, and to communicate truth.

If you have seen a man misbehave once, do not from thence conclude him a fool. If you find he has been in a mistake in one particular, do not at once conclude him void of understanding. By that way of judging, you can entertain a favourable opinion of no man upon earth, nor even of yourself.

In mixed company, be readier to hear than to speak,

and put people upon talking of what is in their own way. For then you will both oblige them, and be most likely to improve by their conversation.

Humanity will direct to be particularly cautious of treating, with the least appearance of neglect, those who have lately met with misfortunes, and are sunk in life. Such persons are apt to think themselves slighted, when no such thing is intended. Their minds, being already sore, feel the least rub very severely. And who would be so cruel as to add affliction to the afflicted?

Too much company is worse than none.

To smother the generosity of those, who have obliged you, is imprudent, as well as ungrateful. The mention of kindnesses received may excite those who hear it to deserve your good word, by imitating the example which they see does others so much honour.

Learning is like bank-notes. Prudence and good behaviour are like silver, useful upon all occasions.

If you have been once in company with an idle person, it is enough. You need never go again. You have heard all he knows. And he has had no opportunity of learning any thing new. For idle people make no improvements.

Deep learning will make you acceptable to the learned; but it is only an obliging and easy behaviour, and entertaining conversation, that will make you agreeable to all companies.

Men repent speaking ten times, for once that they repent keeping silence.

It is an advantage to have concealed one's opinion. For by that means you may change your judgment of things (which every wise man finds reason to do) and not be accused of fickleness.

There is hardly any bodily blemish, which a winning behaviour will not conceal, or make tolerable; and there is no external grace, which ill-nature or affectation will not deform.

If you mean to make your side of the argument appear plausible, do not prejudice the people against what you think truth, by your passionate manner of defending it.

There is an affected humility more unsufferable than downright pride, as hypocrisy is more abominable than

libertinism. Take care that your virtues be genuine and unsophisticated.

If you put on a proud carriage, people will want to know what there is in you to be proud of. It is ten to one whether they value your accomplishments at the same rate as you. And the higher you aspire, they will be the more desirous to mortify you.

Nothing is more nauseous than apparent self-sufficiency. For it shows the company two things, which are extremely disagreeable; that you have a high opinion of yourself; and, that you have comparatively a mean opinion of them.

It is the concurrence of passions, that produces a storm. Let an angry man alone, and he will cool of himself.

It is but seldom, that very remarkable occurrences fall out in life. The evenness of your temper will be in most danger of being troubled by trifles which take you by surprise.

It is as obliging in company, especially of superiors, to listen attentively, as to talk entertainingly.

Do not think of knocking out another person's brains, because he differs in opinion from you. It will be as rational to knock yourself on the head, because you differ from yourself ten years ago.

If you want to gain any man's good opinion, take particular care how you behave, the first time you are in company with him. The light you appear in at first, to one who is neither inclinable to think well nor ill of you, will strongly prejudice him either for or against you.

Good humour is the only shield to keep off the darts of the satirical railer. If you have a quiver well stored, and are sure of hitting him between the joints of the harness, do not spare him. But you had better not bend your bow than miss your aim.

The modest man is seldom the object of envy.

In the company of ladies, do not labour to establish learned points by long-winded arguments. They do not care to take much pains about finding out truth.

Talkativeness, in some men, proceeds from what is extremely amiable, I mean, an open, communicative temper. Nor is it an universal rule, that whoever talks much, must say a great deal not worth hearing. I have known men who talked freely, because they had a great deal to say,

and delighted in communicating for their own advantage, and that of the company; and I have known others, who commonly sat dumb, because they could find nothing to say. In *England*, we blame every one who talks freely, let his conversation be ever so entertaining and improving. In *France*, they look upon every man as a gloomy mortal, whose tongue does not make an uninterrupted noise. Both these judgments are unjust.

If you talk sentences, do not at the same time give yourself a magisterial air in doing it. An easy conversation is the only agreeable one, especially in mixed company.

Be sure of the fact, before you lose time in searching for a cause.

If you have a friend that will reprove your faults and foibles, consider you enjoy a blessing, which the king upon the throne cannot have.

In disputes upon moral or scientific points, ever let your aim be to come at truth, not to conquer your opponent. So you never shall be at a loss, in losing the argument, and gaining a new discovery.

What may be very entertaining in company with ignorant people, may be tiresome to those who know more of the matter.

There is no method more likely to cure passion and rashness, than the frequent and attentive consideration of one's own weaknesses. This will work into the mind an habitual sense of the need one has of being pardoned, and will bring down the swelling pride and obstinacy of heart, which are the cause of hasty passion.

If you happen into company where the talk runs into party, obscenity, scandal, folly, or vice of any kind, you had better pass for morose or unsocial, among people whose good opinion is not worth having, than shock your own conscience, by joining in conversation which you must disapprove of.

If you would have a right to account of things from illiterate people, let them tell their story in their own way. If you put them upon talking according to logical rules, you will confound them.

I was much pleased with the saying of a gentleman, who was engaged in a friendly argument with another upon a point in morals, "You and I (says he to his antagonist)

seem as far as I hitherto understand, to differ considerably in our opinions. Let us, if you please, try wherein we can agree." The scheme in most disputes is to try who shall conquer, or confound the other. It is therefore no wonder that so little light is struck out in conversation, where a candid inquiry after truth is often the least thing thought of.

If a man complains to you of his wife, a woman of her husband, a parent of a child, or a child of a parent, be very cautious how you meddle between such near relations, to blame the behaviour of one to the other. You will only have the hatred of both parties, and do no good with either. But this does not hinder your giving both parties, or either, your best advice in a prudent manner.

Be prudently secret. But do not affect to make a secret of what all the world may know; nor give yourself airs of being as close as a conspirator. You will better disappoint idle curiosity by seeming to have nothing to conceal.

Never blame a friend, without joining some commendation to make reproof go down.

It is by giving a loose to folly, in conversation and action, that people expose themselves to contempt and ridicule. The modest man may deprive himself of some part of the applause of some sort of people in conversation, by not shining altogether so much as he might have done. Or he may deprive himself of some lesser advantages in life by his reluctancy in putting himself forward. But it is only the rash and impetuous talker, or actor, that effectually exposes himself in company, or ruins himself in life. It is therefore easy to determine which is the safest side to err on.

It is a base temper in mankind, that they will not take the smallest slight at the hand of those who have done them the greatest kindness.

If you fall into the greatest company, in a natural and unforced way, look upon yourself as one of them; and do not sneak, nor suffer any one to treat you unworthy, without just showing, that you know behaviour. But if you see them disposed to be rude, over-bearing, or purse-proud, it will be more decent and less troublesome to retire, than to wrangle with them.

If at any time you chance, in conversation, to get on a

side of an argument which you find not to be tenable, or any other way over shoot yourself, turn off the subject in as easy and good humoured a way as you can. If you proceed still, and endeavour, right or wrong, to make your first point good, you will only entangle yourself the more, and in the end expose yourself.

Never over-praise any absent person : especially ladies, in company of ladies. It is the way to bring envy and hatred upon those whom you wish well to.

To try, whether your conversation is likely to be acceptable to people of sense, imagine what you say writ down, or printed, and consider how it would read ; whether it would appear natural, improving, and entertaining ; or affected, unmeaning, or mischievous.

It is better in conversation, with positive men to turn off the subject in dispute with some merry conceit, than keep up the contention to the disturbance of the company.

Do not give your advice upon any extraordinary emergency, nor your opinion upon any difficult point, especially in company of eminent persons, without first taking time to deliberate. If you say nothing, it may not be known whether your silence was owing to ignorance of the subject, or to modesty. If you give a rash and crude opinion, you are effectually and irrecoverably exposed.

If you fill your fancy, while you are in company, with suspicions of their thinking meanly of you : if you puff yourself up with imaginations of appearing to them a very witty or profound person : if you discompose yourself with fears of misbehaving before them ; or any way put yourself out of yourself ; you will not appear in your natural colour ; but in that of an affected, personated character, which is always disagreeable.

It may be useful to study, at leisure, a variety of proper phrases for such occasions as are most frequent in life, as civilities to superiors, expressions of kindness to inferiors ; congratulations, condolence, expressions of gratitude, acknowledgement of faults, asking or denying of favours, &c. I prescribe no particular phrases, because, the language of conversation continually fluctuating, they must soon become obsolete. The best method of acquiring the accomplishment of a graceful and easy manner of expression for the common occasions of life, is attention,

and imitation of well-bred people. Nothing makes a man appear more contemptible than barrenness, pedantry, or impropriety of expression.

If you would be employed in serious business, do not set up for a buffoon.

Flattery is a compound of falsehood, selfishness, servility, and ill manners. Any one of these qualities is enough to make a character thoroughly odious. Who then would be the person, or have any concern with him, whose mind is deformed by four such vices?

If you must speak upon a difficult point, be the last speaker if you can.

You will not be agreeable to company, if you strive to bring in, or keep up a subject unsuitable to their capacities or humour.

You will never convince a man of ordinary sense, by overbearing his understanding. If you dispute with him in such a manner, as to show a due deference for his judgment, your complaisance may win him, though your saucy arguments could not.

Avoid disputes altogether, if possible; especially in mixed companies, and with ladies. You will hardly convince any one, and may disoblige or startle them, and get yourself the character of a conceited pragmatist person. Whereas, that of an agreeable companion, which you may have without giving yourself any great air of learning or depth, may be more advantageous to you in life, and will make you welcome in all companies.

The frequent use of the name of God, or the devil: allusions to passages of Scripture; mocking at any thing serious and devout; oaths, vulgar bye-words, cant phrases, affected hard words, when familiar terms will do as well; scraps of *Latin*, *Greek* or *French*; quotations from plays, spoke in a theatrical manner; all these much used in conversation render a person very contemptible to grave and wise men.

If you send people away from your company well-pleased with themselves, you need not fear but they will be well enough pleased with you, whether they have received any instruction from you or not. Most people had rather be pleased than instructed.

Do not tell unlikely or silly stories, if you know them to be true.

There is no greater rudeness to company, than entertaining them with scolding your servants.

Avoid little oddities in behaviour. But do not despise a man of worth, for his being somewhat awkward, or less agreeable, in his manner.

I hardly know any company more disagreeable than that of those, who are ever straining to hook in some quirk of wit or drollery, whatever be the subject of conversation. Reflect in yourself, after you have passed some hours in such company; and observe whether it leaves any thing in your mind but emptiness, levity, or disgust. Again observe, after you have passed some time in the conversation of men of wisdom and learning, if you do not find your mind filled with judicious reflections, and worthy resolutions. If you do not, it is because you have not a mind capable of them.

If you can express yourself to be perfectly understood in ten words, never use a dozen. Go not about to prove, by a long series of reasoning, what all the world is ready to own.

If any one takes the trouble of finding fault with you, you ought in reason to suppose he has some regard for you, else he would not run the hazard of disobliging you, and drawing upon himself your hatred.

Do not ruffle or provoke any man: Why should any one be the worse for coming into company with you? Be not yourself provoked: Why should you give any man the advantage over you?

To say that one has opinions very different from those commonly received, is saying that he either loves singularity, or that he thinks for himself. Which of the two is the case, can only be found by examining the grounds of his opinions.

Do not appear to the public too sure, or too eager upon any project. If it should miscarry, which it is a chance but it does, you will be laughed at. The surest way to prevent which, is not to tell your designs or prospects in life.

If you give yourself a loose in mixed company, you may almost depend on being pulled to pieces as soon as

your back is turned, however they may seem entertained with your conversation.

For common conversation, men of ordinary abilities will upon occasions do well enough. And you may always pick something out of any man's discourse, by which you may profit. For an intimate friend to improve by, you must search half a county over, and be glad if you can find him at last.

Do not give your time to every superficial acquaintance; it is bestowing what is to you of inestimable worth, upon one, who is not likely to be better for it.

If a person has behaved to you in an unaccountable manner, do not at once conclude him a bad man, unless you find his character given up by all who know him; nor then, unless the facts alleged against him be undoubtedly proved, and wholly inexcusable. But this is not advising you to trust a person, whose character you have any reason to suspect. Nothing can be more absurd than the common way of fixing people's characters. Such a one has disoblged me; therefore he is a villain. Such another has done me a kindness; therefore he is a saint.

Never contend about small matters with superiors, nor with inferiors. If you get the better of the first; you provoke their formidable resentment: if you engage with the latter you debase yourself.

If you act a part truly great, you may expect that men of mean spirits, who can not reach you, will endeavour, by detraction, to pull you down to their level. But posterity will do you justice; for the envy raised against you, will die with you.

Superficial people are more agreeable the first time you are in their company, than ever afterwards. Men of judgment improve every succeeding conversation: beware therefore of judging by one interview.

You will not anger a man so much by showing him that you hate him, as by expressing a contempt of him.

Most young women had rather have any of their good qualities slighted, than their beauty. Yet that is the most inconsiderable accomplishment of a woman of real merit.

You will be always reckoned by the world nearly of the same character with those whose company you keep.

You will please so much the less, if you go into com-

pany determined to shine. Let your conversation appear to rise out of thoughts suggested by the occasion, not strained, or premeditated : nature always pleases : affectation is always odious.



PART II.

OF PRUDENCE IN ACTION.



SECTION I.

Of following Advice. Of Submission to Superiors.

PRUDENCE in action is the conducting of one's affairs in such a manner as is necessary and proper, all circumstances duly considered and balanced ; and avoiding whatever may be likely to produce inconvenience with respect to secular concerns. Imprudence is seen as much in neglecting what ought to be done, and at the proper time for doing it, as in taking rash and inconsiderate steps.

There is not a more promising sign in a young person, than a readiness to hear the advice of those whose age and experience qualify them for judging maturely. The knowledge of the world, and of the arts of life, can only be attained by experience and action. Therefore if a young person, who, through obstinacy, rejects the advice of experienced people, succeeds in his designs, it is owing to some strange interposition of Providence, or concurrence of circumstances. For such a one, entering into life, wholly unacquainted with the difficulties and dangers of it, and resolutely bent against advice, runs the same hazard as a person, wholly ignorant of sailing, who should, against the judgment of experienced pilots, undertake to steer a ship through the most dangerous sea, in a tempest.

It seems at first view, a very odd turn in human nature, that young people are generally much more conceited of their own judgments, than those who are come to maturity. One would wonder how they should miss reflecting, that persons more advanced in age than themselves, have of course the advantage of so many years experience beyond themselves ; and that, if all other things were equal,

the single circumstance of having seen more of the world, must necessarily enable them to judge better of it.

Life is a journey; and they only who have travelled a considerable way in it, are fit to direct those who are setting out.

Let me therefore advise my young readers, to pay the utmost deference to the advices or commands of those, who are their superiors in age and experience. Old people, it must be owned, will sometimes obtrude their advice in a manner not very engaging. Their infirmities, the usual attendants of age, together with their concern for the wrong steps they see their young relations and acquaintance taking, will sometimes occasion their treating them with what may be taken for ill-nature; whereas, it may be in reality their love for the persons of their young friends, and their zeal for their interests which warm them. Do not therefore attend to the manner of the advice; but only to the matter of it. It would be of very little consequence to you, if you was going towards a precipice in a dark night, whether you were warned of your danger by a rude clown, or by a polite gentleman, so you escaped it. In the same manner, if a remonstrance is made upon any part of one's conduct, in the roughest manner; the only thing to be considered, is, whether we can profit by it, and the rudeness of the person, who made it, should go for nothing; as one would swallow a medicine, not for its gratefulness to the taste, but for its effect on the constitution.

As to the submission a young man owes to his superiors, as parents, masters, &c. if it were not a duty, prudence alone would lead him to yield it readily and cheerfully in all cases that are lawful. For it is to be considered, that the consequences of refusing are incomparably worse than those of submission; the world being always ready to lay the blame upon the young person, in case of a rupture between them, and not upon the old; and nothing being more to the disadvantage of a young person's character, than the reproach of an obstinate or unsettled turn of mind. It would indeed be impossible to carry on the affairs of the world, if children, apprentices, servants, and other dependants, were to spend time in disputing the commands of their superiors; it being in many cases

hard to give an account of the fitness or unfitness of things prescribed, and in many altogether improper. Nor is it less commendable nor less graceful to obey cheerfully, than to direct prudently. No person is likely to command well, who has never learnt to obey.

It will be very imprudent in a young person to take any material step in life, without consulting the aged, and experienced especially, if possible, such as have had experience in his way of life. In one's choice of a friend, for such occasions, smoothness of speech or complaisance is not to be regarded. On the contrary, the most valuable friend is he, who joins to a thorough knowledge of men and things, matured by age and experience, an open, blunt, and honest behaviour; who will rather magnify, than palliate, the faults and imprudences of his friend, to his face, however he may defend him behind his back; and will not, on account of the trifling hazard of disobliging, suffer him to take a wrong step, without making an open and honest remonstrance upon it.

There is one particular consideration, that makes asking the advice of one's friends prudent and judicious. It is—That, if it should so happen, as it often must, in spite of one's utmost precaution, that his affairs should take a wrong turn, he will not only have the less reason to reflect upon himself; but the mouths of others will generally be stopped: as he may for the most part have his advisers at least, from mere self-conceit, to stand up for the prudence of his conduct, which was the consequence of their advice.

You will often find, that in the very proposing to your friend your difficulty, you yourself shall hit upon the means of getting over it, before he has time to give you his opinion upon it. And you will likewise find, that in advising with a friend, a word dropt by him shall furnish you a valuable hint for your conduct, which you shall wonder how you yourself came to miss.

It must be owned, however that there are cases in which no man can judge so well what steps should be taken as the person concerned; because he himself may know several important particulars in his own affairs, which would make it highly improper for him to follow the directions another person might give, who was not aware

of those circumstances. Whoever, therefore, gives up his judgment, and acts contrary to his own better knowledge, in compliance with the advice of his acquaintance, or with common custom, is guilty of a weakness, the consequences of which may prove fatal.

SECTION II.

*Of Method, Application, and proper Times for Business.
Of trusting to others.*

THERE is nothing that contributes more to the ready and advantageous dispatch, as well as to the safety and success of business, than method and regularity. Let a man set down in his memorandum-book, every morning the several articles of business he has to do through the day; and beginning with the first person he is to call upon, or the first place he is to go to, finish that affair (if it is to be done at all) before he begins another; and so on to the rest. A man of business, who observes this method, will hardly ever find himself hurried or disconcerted by forgetfulness: And he who sets down all his transactions in writing, and keeps his accounts, and the whole state of his affairs, in a distinct and accurate order, so that he can at any time, by looking into his books, presently see in what condition his business is, and whether he is in a thriving or declining way; such a one, I say, deserves properly the character of a man of business, and has a fair prospect of carrying his schemes to an happy issue. But such exactness as this will by no means suit the man of pleasure, who has other things in his head.

The way to transact a great deal of business in a little time, and with great certainty, is to observe these rules. To speak to the point. To use no more words than are necessary fully to express your meaning; and to study beforehand, and set down in writing afterwards, a sketch of the transaction.

There is one piece of prudence, above all others, absolutely necessary to those who expect to raise themselves in the world by an employment of any kind; I mean a constant and unwearied application to the main pursuit. By means of indefatigable diligence, joined with frugali-

ty, we see many people in the lowest and most laborious stations in life, raise themselves to such circumstances, as will allow them, in their old age, that ease from labour of body and anxiety of mind, which is necessary to make the decline of life supportable. I have heard of a tradesman who, at his first setting out, opened and shut his shop every day, for several weeks together, without selling goods to the value of one penny; who, by the force of application for a course of years, raised at last a handsome fortune: And I have known many who have had a variety of opportunities for settling themselves comfortably in the world, and who for want of steadiness to carry any one scheme to perfection, have sunk from one degree of wretchedness to another for many years together, without all hopes of ever getting above distress and pinching want.

There is hardly an employment in life so mean that will not afford a subsistence, if constantly applied to: And it is only by dint of indefatigable diligence, that a fortune is to be acquired in business. An estate got by what is commonly called a lucky hit, is a rare instance; and he who expects to have his fortune made in that way, is much about as rational as he who should neglect all probable means of living, on the hopes that he should some time or other find a treasure. The misfortune of indolence is, That there is no such thing as continuing in the same condition without an income of one kind or other. If a man does not bestir himself, poverty must overtake him at last. If he continues to give out for the necessary charges of life, and will not take the pains to gain somewhat to supply his outgivings, his funds must at length come to an end, and misery come upon him at a period of life when he is least able to grapple with it, I mean in old age, if not before.

The character of a sluggard must, I think, be owned to be one of the most contemptible. In proportion to a person's activity for his own good and that of his fellow-creatures, he is to be reckoned a more or less valuable member of society: And if all the idle people in a nation were to die in one year, the loss would be inconsiderable, in comparison of what the community must suffer by being deprived of a very few of the active and industrious. Every moment of time ought to be put to its proper use,

either in business, in improving the mind, in the innocent and necessary relaxations and entertainments of life, or in the care of our souls.

And as we ought to be much more frugal of our time than our money, the one being infinitely more valuable than the other, so ought we to be particularly watchful of opportunities. There are times and seasons proper for every purpose of life: and a very material part of prudence is to judge rightly of them, and make the best of them. If you have, for example a favour to ask of a phlegmatic gloomy man, take him, if you can, over his bottle. If you want to deal with a covetous man, by no means propose your business to him immediately after he has been paying away money, but rather after he has been receiving. If you know a person, for whose interest you have occasion, is unhappy in his family, put yourself in his way abroad, rather than wait on him at his own house. A statesman will not be likely to give you a favourable audience immediately after meeting with a disappointment in any of his schemes. There are even many people who are always sour and ill-humoured from their rising till they have dined. And as in persons, so in things, opportunity is of the utmost consequence. The thorough knowledge of the probable rise and fall of merchandize, the favourable seasons of importing and exporting, a quick eye to see, and, a nimble hand to seize advantages as they turn up; these are the talents which raise men from low to affluent circumstances.

It would be greatly for the advantage of men of business, if they made it a rule, never to trust any thing of consequence to another, which they can by any means do themselves. Let another have my interest ever so much at heart, I am sure I have it more myself: And no substitute one can employ, can understand one's business so well as the principal, which gives him great advantage for doing things in the best way, as he can change his measures according to circumstances, which another has not authority to do. As for dependants of all kinds, it is to be remembered, always, that their master's interest possesses, at most, only the second place in their minds. Self-love will ever be the ruling principle, and no fidelity whatever will prevent a person from bestowing a good deal of thought upon his

own concerns, which must break in, less or more, upon his diligence in consulting the interest of his constituent. How men of business can venture, as they do, to trust the great concerns some of them have, for one half of every week in the year, which is half the year, to servants, and they expect others to take care of their business, when they will not be at the trouble of minding it themselves, is to me inconceivable. Nor does the detection, from time to time, of the frauds of such people, seem at all to deter our men of business from trusting to them.

There is indeed nothing more difficult than to know the characters of those we confide in. How should we imagine we can know those of others, when we are so uncertain about our own? What man can say of himself, I never shall be capable of such a vice or weakness? And if not of himself, much less of another. Who would then needlessly trust to another, when he can hardly be sure of himself?

SECTION III.

Of Frugality and Economy. Of Projects. Of Diversions.

NEXT to diligence and assiduity in business, frugality and economy are the most necessary for him who would raise himself in the world by his own industry. Simple nature is contented with a little, and there is hardly any employment which, if pursued with prudence and attention, will not yield an income sufficient for the necessary uses of life: as, on the other hand, no revenue is so great as to be proof against extravagance. Witness the emperor Caligula, who in a few years spent the riches of the world, at least of the Roman world; I mean the immense treasures his avaricious predecessor Tiberius had been amassing for twenty-two years, besides the current revenues of the empire; and found himself reduced to straits, from the most exorbitant riches. Every person's experience confirms this truth, That those pleasures of life which cost the most are the least satisfactory and contrariwise. The noise of balls, plays, and masquerades, is tiresome; the parade of gilt coaches, of powdered footmen, and of state-visits, is fulsome; while the conversation of a wise and virtuous friend,

the endearments of a faithful wife and innocent children, charity to the indigent, which none but a good economist can bestow, the pursuit of useful and ornamental knowledge, the study of virtue and religion, these are entertainments ever new and ever delightful. And if a wise man may thus be satisfied from himself; if the noblest pleasures and truest enjoyments are only to be had in our own hearts and in our own houses, how great is the folly of mankind, who fly from the genuine, the rational, the cheap, and easy attainable enjoyments of life, in a mad pursuit after the imaginary, expensive, and tiresome vanities of show and ostentation! Were the enjoyments which pomp and grandeur yield (supposing them unimbittered with reflections on their fatal consequences, which will ever be crowding into the mind) infinitely more exquisite than those of virtue and sobriety, which is the very contrary of the truth, a prudent man would take care, in consideration of the shortness of life, how he indulged them to the neglect of the serious business of life, or to the ruin of his fortune. None but a madman would lavish away his whole patrimony in one season, with the prospect of poverty and misery for the remainder of his days: For he would consider, that a life languished out in wretchedness, or in dependence, would immensely overbalance the pleasure of reflecting, that he had spent one year in hearing the finest music, in seeing the politest company, in eating the rarest food, and in drinking the richest wines the world could afford: Nay, he would foresee that the reflection upon past pleasures and gaieties would only render his misery so much the more intolerable. There is not, indeed, a more deplorable case than that of a person, who, by his own folly, has reduced himself to beggary: For, besides the other distresses he must struggle with, he has the cruel stings of his own reflections to torture him, and is deprived of the poor consolation of the sympathy and compassion of his acquaintance.

Every person who happens by any means whatever, though wholly out of his own power either to foresee or prevent, to sink in the world, may lay his account with meeting no little contempt and ill usage from the bulk of his acquaintance, and even from those for whom he has in his prosperity done the greatest kindnesses. But when

it is known that a man's misfortunes are owing to his own extravagance, people have too good a pretence for withholding their compassion or assistance, and for treating him with neglect and contempt. It will therefore be a young person's wisdom, before he goes too far, to make such reflections as these; " Shall I lavish away in youthful pleasure and folly the patrimony that must support me my whole life? Shall I indulge myself in rioting and drunkenness, till I have not a morsel of bread? Shall I revel in plays, balls, and music-gardens, till I bring myself to a goal? Shall I waste my substance in regaling a set of wretches, who will turn their backs upon me whenever they have undone me? Shall I pass my youth like a lord, and be a beggar in my old age?"

There is nothing more unaccountable than the common practice in our times, among that part of the people who ought to be the examples of frugality as well as of industry, the citizens of London; I mean the usual way of setting out in life. It seems, generally speaking, as if our traders thought themselves in duty bound to go to the utmost stretch of expense, which their circumstances will afford, and even beyond, the very first year of their setting up. That a young shop-keeper, and his new married wife, whose joint fortunes would not make up five thousand pounds, should begin with sitting in state to receive company, keeping footmen, carriages, and country-houses, and awkwardly mimicking the extravagances of the other end of the town, before they know how trade may turn out, or how numerous a family of children they may have to provide for; what can be more preposterous? As if the public had so little discernment, as to conclude that people's circumstances were always according to the show they made. How easy is it for any man to increase his expense, if he finds his income increase? And how hard is it to be obliged, after setting out in a grand manner, to retrench, and lower the sails: It is not indeed to be done in trade, without affecting a person's credit, which accordingly obliges many traders to go on in the exorbitant way they first set out in, to their own ruin, and that of others who have been engaged with them. In some countries, insolvency, where a good account of the causes which brought it on cannot be given, is punished with

death. If the law of England were as severe, what the fate of many of the bankrupt citizens of London must have been, every one may judge.

The great consumption of private fortunes is owing chiefly to those expenses which are constant, and run on, day after day, the whole year round. People do not seem to attend sufficiently to the consequences of the expense of one dish, or one bottle of wine more than enough in their daily economy. Yet the saving of three or four shillings a-day, will amount to sixty or eighty pounds in a year; which sum, saved up yearly for thirty years, the ordinary time a man carries on business, would amount to near five thousand pounds, reckoning interest; and still more, if you suppose it laid out in an advantageous trade.

If any young gentleman of fortune imagines the largeness of his income sufficient to render frugality and economy useless, a little experience will show him to his cost, that no error can be greater. The charge of maintaining a number of servants, who are to be supported not only in necessaries, but in all the waste and destruction they please to make; the expense of coachmen, footmen, horses and hounds, a town-house and country-seat, is enormous. But if to these there be added the charge of a mistress, that alone will surmount all the rest; and the expense of a steward will exceed all the others put together: For, as none of the other dependants upon a great man have it in their power to do more than run away with a little of his cash, or the provisions of his house from time to time, they cannot utterly ruin him without his own knowledge: But the steward, having the receiving and paying of all, in his own hands, may very easily, in a short time, if his accounts are not looked into, appropriate to himself the bulk of the estate, and ruin his master before he has any suspicion of his affairs being out of order.

It seems to me very unaccountable, that men of fortune should think it necessary to go to the utmost stretch of their incomes, and generally beyond them; when they must find, that a crowd of servants and dependants is but a disturbance to happiness, which requires peace and tranquility, and flies from noise and ostentation. Is it necessary for popularity? By no means. Half the money laid

out for the service of the public, or in judicious charities, would procure a gentleman the real esteem and affection of his neighbours; whereas, the greatest expense laid out upon those bloodsuckers, which generally feed upon the great, does but expose him to their contempt, who laugh in their sleeve to find they can so grossly gull him out of his money.

The employing a number of working people in improving barren grounds, in laying out plantations, in raising buildings for a continual increase of tenants upon a thriving estate, with the acquisition of new inhabitants, the encouragement of manufactures, and providing for the poor; these are the arts that will gain a country gentleman more popularity, than keeping open house the whole year round.

Let me advise young people to be particularly cautious of new schemes or projects. There is not one of a hundred that ever succeeds at all; nor one of many hundreds that brings their inventors any thing but disappointment and ruin. The reason is pretty plain. It requires a great expense to set any new scheme on foot. The bulk of mankind are prejudiced against novelties, and consequently are apt to oppose them. The generality of people are likewise jealous of every scheme that may any way affect their interest; and many from pure envy, take a pleasure in opposing and depreciating every new proposal. The contriver himself is greatly at a loss, being obliged to try various methods to bring his designs to bear, and to lay out a certain expense for an uncertain profit. So that we observe, accordingly, whoever projects any thing new in science, in mechanics, or in trade, seldom does more than open the way for others to profit by his ingenuity.

What shall be said upon the subject of pleasures and diversions in an age, in which all ranks, sexes, and ages, run to excess in this respect? And yet to make the amusements of life, the business of life, is absurd in any rational being who has ever heard of a judgment to come, and who is not absolutely certain (which I believe hardly any one will pretend) that he never shall be called to give an account of the use he has made of his time. But if there be any absurdity greater than another, it is, that a man of business should set up for a man of taste and plea-

sures : Yet we see the public diversions of this great city crowded and supported chiefly by the citizens. We see those whose business is in town, outvying one another in the elegance of their country-houses ; plays, balls, operas, music-gardens, concerts, resorted to by the lowest mechanics—the consequences of which extravagances are bankruptcies innumerable :—not to mention frauds, robberies, forgeries, and so forth. It is no easy matter to support a family in the most frugal way ; but when to the ordinary conveniences of life, the above extravagances are to be added, there is no end of it ; and the covetousness of a spendthrift is incomparably more mischievous than that of a miser. The latter will, at worst, only grind the face of the poor, and take the advantage of all that are less cunning than himself ; but the former will not stick at forgery, robbery, or murder.

At the same time, that it is hardly possible to say too much against the inordinate pursuit of diversions, which even defeats its own end, becoming, through excess, a burden and fatigue, instead of a relaxation ; after all, I say, that may be urged against this reigning folly of our times, I know no just reason why a man of business should deny himself the moderate use of such innocent amusements as his fortune or leisure will allow ; his fortune, in a consistency with supporting his family, and contributing to the relief of the indigent, and his leisure, in a consistency with the thorough knowledge of the state of his own affairs, and doing offices of kindness to those about him. Some of the most innocent amusements I know, are reading, viz. history, lives, geography, and natural philosophy, with a very little choice poetry : the conversation of a few agreeable friends, and drawing, where there is a genius for it. To these may be added, riding on horseback once or twice in a week, where it can be done conveniently.

Music is never safely indulged, where there is too great a desire to excel in it ; for that generally draws people into an expense of time and money, above what the accomplishment, carried to the greatest length, is worth.

As for cards, and all other ways of gaming, they are the ruin of rational conversation, the bane of society, and the curse of the nation.

SECTION IV.

Of Over-trading. Of Integrity, prudentially considered. Of Credulity. Of prudent Conduct in case of a reverse of Fortune. Of the different Characters of Men, and how to apply them.

THERE is one error in the conduct of the industrious part of mankind, whose effects prove as fatal to their fortunes as those of some of the first vices, though it is generally the most active and the ablest men who run into it: I mean over-trading. Profusion itself is not more dangerous; nor does idleness bring more people to ruin, than launching out into trade beyond their abilities. The exuberant credit given in trade, though it is sometimes of advantage, especially to people whose capitals are small, is yet perhaps, upon the whole, more detrimental than a general diffidence would be. For a young trader to take the utmost credit he can have, is only running the utmost risk he can run. And if he would consider, that as others trust him to a great extent, he must lay his account with trusting those he deals with to a great value likewise; and that consequently, he must run a great many hazards of his own payments falling short, and that the failure or disappointment of two or three considerable sums at the same time, may disable him from making his payments regularly, which is utter ruin to his credit; if, I say, a young trader were to consider in this manner the consequence of things, he would not think the offer of large credit so much a favour, as a snare; especially if he likewise reflected, that whoever offers him large credit, and for a long time, without sufficient security, will think he has a right to charge a very considerable profit upon the commodities he sells him; and consequently the advantage he can gain by them, must be too inconsiderable to make up for the risk he must run. The trader who gives and takes large credit, especially if he has large concerns in foreign parts, and is not possessed of a very considerable fortune, must be liable to such hazards, and such terror and anxiety, that I should think a very moderate profit arising from trading safely, and within a reasonable compass, much the most eligible. I know but one sort

of trade in which large credit might be safely taken, viz. where one could quickly make sales of large quantities of goods for ready money; and in such a trade, to take credit when one might buy to greater advantage for ready money, would be very absurd.

There is no subject which men of business ought to have oftener in their view, than the precariousness of human affairs. In order to the success of any scheme, it is necessary that every material circumstance take place; as, in order to the right going of a watch or clock, it is necessary that every one of the wheels be in order. To succeed in trade, it is necessary that a man be possessed of a large capital; that he be well qualified; (which alone comprehends a great many particulars,) that his integrity be unsuspected; that he have no enemies to blast his credit; that foreign and home markets keep nearly according to his expectations; that those he deals with, and credits to any great extent, be both as honest and sufficient as he believes them to be; that his funds never fail him when he depends on them; and that, in short, every thing turn out to his expectation. But surely it must require a very great degree of that sanguine temper, so common in youth, to make a man persuade himself that there is no manner of hazard of his finding himself deceived, or disappointed in some one, among so many particulars. Yet we commonly see instances of bankruptcies, where a trader shall have gone to the extent of perhaps ten times the value of his capital; and by means of large credit, and raising money with one hand, to pay with the other, has supported himself upon the effects of other people, till at length, some one or other of his last shifts failing him, down he sinks with his own weight, and brings hundreds to ruin with him.

Upon the head of over trading, and hastening to be rich, I cannot help making a remark on the conduct of many traders of large capitals, who, for the sake of adding to a heap, already too great, monopolize the market, or trade for a profit which they know dealers of smaller fortunes cannot possibly live by. If such men really think, that their raising themselves thus on the ruin of others is justifiable, and that riches got in this manner are fairly gained, they must either have neglected properly inform-

ing their consciences, or must have stifled their remonstrances.

Whoever would thrive in trade, let him take care, above all things, to keep up to strict integrity. If a trader is once known to be guilty of taking exorbitant profits; or other unfair advantages of those he deals with, there is an end of his character: And unless a man can get a fortune by one transaction, it is madness in prudentials to hazard his whole reputation at once: And even if he could, giving his soul for an estate, would be but a losing trade. But of this, more hereafter.

When it happens that one is solicited to lend money, or interpose his credit for any person in difficulties, the right way is, to make sure either that the sum furnished or engaged for, be such as he can lay his account with losing, without any material detriment to his affairs, or that he have an unexceptionable security in his hands. The consequences of lending money, or being security for others, generally prove the loss of both money and friend: For people are commonly at the last pinch when they come to borrowing, and it is not an inconsiderable sum that will keep them from sinking: And the demand of payment seldom fails to occasion disgust between friends. The best method I know for supporting a man of merit in distress, is, for a set of three or four, or more, according to the occasion, to contribute conjunctly, so that the loss being divided, if it should prove a loss, may not prove fatal to any one concerned. And if in this, or any other prudent way, one can do a service, in a time of need, to a person of merit, one ought always to rejoice in the opportunity; and he will be highly to blame who neglects it. But as there is infinite craft and knavery among mankind, let me advise young people, to beware of the common weakness that period of life is generally subject to, I mean credulity. The most openhearted are the most liable to be imposed upon by the designing; though one would think a man's knowing his own intentions to be sincere and honest, should be no reason for his concluding every one he meets to be of the same character.

There is no certain method of avoiding the snares of the crafty: But it would be a good custom if men of business made it their usual practice, in all their dealings,

where it is practicable, to draw up in writing, a minute or memorial of every transaction, subscribed by both, with a clause signifying, that, in case of any difference, they should both agree to submit the matter to arbitration ; For it is very common for a designing person, in making an agreement, to take no notice of the reasonable and natural consequences of an advantageous concession, but to put off the person he wants to take an advantage of, with a general phrase, as, *We shan't fall out ; I assure you I mean you well, I won't wrong you :* and such like : And when accounts come to be settled, and the party who thinks himself aggrieved declares, that he made the bargain altogether with the prospect of having such and such advantages allowed him ; *No,* says the sharper, *I never told you I would :* Though it is the very same to all intents and purposes of deceiving, as if he had expressly consented to it ; yet the unhappy sufferer must sit down with the loss, because he can only say he was deceived by insinuations, and not by a direct fraud within the reach of the law. One cannot therefore be too exact in making contracts ; nor is there indeed, any safety in dealing with deceitful and avaricious people, though one thinks he uses the utmost precaution.

It will, I believe, generally be found of good use, in order to understand the real sentiments of mankind, and to discover when they have any indirect design, to observe carefully their looks. There is something in knavery that will hardly bear the inspection of a piercing eye : And you will generally observe, in a sharper, an unsteady and confused look. And if a person is persuaded of the uncommon sagacity of one he is to appear before, he will hardly be able to muster up enough of impudence and artifice to bear him through without faltering. It will therefore be a good way to try one whom you suspect of a design upon you, by fixing your eyes upon his, and by bringing up a supposition of your having to do with one whose integrity you suspected, and what you would do in such a case. If the person you are talking with, be really what you suspect, he will hardly be capable of keeping his countenance.

One ought always to suspect men remarkably avaricious. Great love of money is a great enemy to honesty,

The aged are more dangerous than young people. They are more desirous of gain, and know more indirect ways of coming at it, and of outwitting others, than the young. It will be your wisdom to be cautious of all such; and of those, who in an affected manner bring in religion on all occasions, in season and out of season; of all smooth and fawning people; of those who are very talkative, and who, in dealing with you, endeavour to draw off your attention from the point in hand, by a number of incoherent reflections introduced at random, and of the extremely suspicious; for it is generally owing to a consciousness of a designing temper, that people are apt to suspect others. If ever you hear a person boast of his having got any exorbitant advantage in his dealings, you may, generally speaking, conclude such a one not too rigorously honest. It is seldom that a great advantage is to be got, but there must be great disadvantage on the other side. And whoever triumphs in his having got by another's loss, you may easily judge of his character.

There is a sort of people in the world, of whom the young and unexperienced stand much in need to be warned. They are the sanguine promisers. They may be divided into two sorts. The first are those, who, from a foolish custom of fawning upon all those they come into company with, have learned a habit of promising to do great kindnesses, which they have no thought of performing. The other are a sort of warm people, who, while they are lavishing away their promises, have really some thoughts of doing what they engage for. But afterwards, when the time of performance comes, the sanguine fit being gone off, the trouble or expense appears in another light; the promiser cools, and the expectant is bubbled, and perhaps greatly injured by the disappointment.

When it so happens, as it will often unavoidably, in spite of the greatest wisdom, and the strictest integrity of conduct, that a man of business has reason to think he cannot long stand it, but must make a stop of payments, it will be his wisdom to call together his creditors, to let them know the state of his affairs before they come to the worst; and gain, by an honest and full surrender of all, that forbearance and favour, which are always readily granted on such occasions. The longer a bad affair of that kind goes on,

it grows the worse ; the constant expense of living, diminishes the funds ; the accounts become the more involved, and more and more bad debts sink the value of the unfortunate man's estate. Nor is such a misfortune so extremely formidable, where a trader can make it appear, that neither gross mismanagement, nor indirect conduct have occasioned it. On the contrary, it has often happened, that a trader has, by showing a singular degree of honesty and disinterestedness on such an occasion, so won the compassion and esteem of his creditors, that they have not only allowed him time to make up his affairs, but have even given him such encouragement, and done him such kindnesses, as have enabled him to raise himself, by his industry, to circumstances he was not likely ever to have arrived at. If a trader will flounder on, from misfortune to misfortune, in hopes of getting clear by some lucky hit, he must be content to take the consequences ; but prudence will direct to build no expectations on any scheme, for the success of which one has not many different probabilities, in case of the failure of one or two.

In case of bankruptcy, or otherwise, when an unfortunate trader, through the lenity of his creditors, is discharged, on giving up his effects, and paying as far as they will go, there is not the least pretence for questioning, whether he is obliged to make up the deficiency, if ever it should be in his power. If every man is in justice obliged to make full payment of all he owes, there is no doubt but in this case there is the same obligation, or rather indeed a stronger ; because the creditors have quitted part of what they had a legal claim to, and have thereby laid him under an obligation to do them justice, if ever it should be in his power.

The success of business being so extremely precarious, it is a very considerable part of prudence to take care what sort of people one is concerned with. One would not choose to take credit of an avaricious and cruel man, lest it should happen, by an unlucky run of trade, that one's affairs should go into confusion, and one should fall under the power of such a person ; because one could expect nothing from such a creditor but the most rigorous treatment the law would allow.

The knowledge of human nature, the connection be-

tween men's general characters and their respective behaviour, and the prudence of using mankind according to their dispositions and circumstances, so as to gain one's laudable designs by them, is a very important part of conduct.

A miser, for example, is by no means a proper person to apply to for a favour that will cost him any thing. But if he be a man of any principle, he will make an excellent partner in trade, or arbitrator in a dispute about property : For he will condescend to little things, and stickle for trifles, which a generous man would scorn.

A passionate man will fly into a rage at a trifling affront ; but he will, generally speaking, soon forget the disobligation, and will be glad to do any service in his power to make it up with you. It is not therefore, by far, so dangerous to disoblige such a one, as the gloomy, sullen mortal, who hardly seems displeased, and yet will wait seven years for an opportunity of doing you a mischief. Again, a cool slow man is, generally speaking, the fittest to advise with : but for dispatch of business, make use of the warm, sanguine temper.

An old man will generally give you the best advice ; but the young is the fittest for bustling for your interest. There are some men of no character at all ; but take a new tincture from the last company they were in. It is not safe to have any thing to do with such.

Some men are wholly ruled by their wives, and most men a good deal influenced by them ; as in matters of the economy and decorum of life it is fit they should. It will therefore be prudent, generally speaking, to accommodate one's schemes to the humour of both parties, when one is to enter into important concerns with a married man.

It is in vain to look for any thing very valuable in the mind of a covetous man. Avarice is generally the vice of abject spirits ; as extravagance often, not always, of generous minds. Men, who have a great talent at getting of money, most commonly have no other ; and you may for the most part, take it for granted, that the man, who has raised exorbitant wealth from nothing, has been too much engaged in the pursuit of riches, to mind his own improvement, or any thing besides money.

A bully is generally a coward. When, therefore, one

happens unluckily to have to do with such a one, the best way is to make up to him boldly, and answer him with firmness; if you show the least sign of submission, he will take the advantage of it to use you ill.

A boaster is to be suspected in all he says. Such men have a natural infirmity, which makes them forget what they are about, and run into a thousand extravagances, which have no connection with truth. Their assertions, their professions of friendship, their promises, and their threatenings, go for nothing with men of understanding and knowledge of the world. They are by no means to be trusted with a secret. If they do not discover it from vanity, they will through levity. There is the same danger in trusting the man who loves his bottle, and is often disordered with liquor.

A meek tempered man is not the proper person to solicit business for you: his modesty will be easily confounded. Nor is the man of passion, nor the talkative man: the first will be apt to be put out of temper, and the other to forget himself, and blunder out somewhat that may be to the prejudice of the negotiation. The fittest character to be concerned with, is that in which are united an inviolable integrity, founded upon rational principles of virtue and religion, a cool but daring temper, a friendly heart, a ready hand, long experience, and extensive knowledge of the world, with a solid reputation of many years standing, and easy circumstances.

A man's ruling passion is the key by which you may let yourself into his character, and may pretty nearly guess at his future conduct, if he be not a wit or a fool; for they act chiefly from caprice. There are likewise connections between the different parts of men's characters, which it will be useful for you to study. If you find a man to be cowardly, for example, you may suspect him to be cruel, deceitful, and sordid. If you know another to be hasty and passionate, you may generally take it for granted, he is open and artless; and so on. But these rules admit of exceptions.

There are six sorts of people, at whose hands you need not expect much kindness. The sordid and narrow minded, think of nobody but their noble selves. The lazy will not take the trouble to serve you. The busy have not

time to think of you. The overgrown rich man is above minding any one who needs his assistance. The poor and unhappy, has neither spirit nor ability. The good natured fool, however willing, is not capable of serving you.

In negotiating, there are a number of circumstances to be considered, the neglect of any of which may defeat your whole scheme. First, the sex. Women, generally speaking, are naturally diffident and timorous; not admirers of plain undisguised truth, apt to be shocked at the least defect of delicacy in the address of those who approach them; fond of new schemes; if frugal, apt to deviate into sordid narrowness; almost universally given to show and finery; easily influenced by inconsiderable motives, if suitable to their humour; and not to be convinced of the propriety of your proposal, so much by solid reasoning, as by some witty or lively manner of offering it; once displeased and always cold; if wicked enough to be revengeful, will stick at nothing to accomplish it. But this last is an uncommon character.

The age of the person you are to deal with is also to be considered. Young people are easily drawn into any scheme, merely for its being new, especially if any circumstance in it suits their vanity or love of pleasure. They are as easily put out of conceit with a proposal by the next person they converse with. They are not good counsellors: but are very fit for action, where you prescribe them a track, from which they know they are not to vary, which ought always to be done. For youth is generally precipitate and thoughtless. Old age, on the contrary, is slow, but sure; cautious, generally, to a degree of suspiciousness; averse to new schemes and ways of life; generally inclining towards covetousness; fitter to consult with, than to act for you; not to be won by fair speeches, or convinced by long reasonings; tenacious of old opinions, customs, and formalities; apt to be disobliged with those, especially younger people, who pretend to question their judgment; fond of deference, and of being listened to. Young people in their anger mean less than they say; old people more. You may make it up with most young men; old people are generally slow in forgiving.

The proper time of addressing a person, upon an affair

of any consequence, is to be carefully considered. Wait on a courtier, when he, or any friend, whose interest he espouses, is candidate for some place of preferment. He will not then venture to give you a flat denial (however he may gull you with promises) for fear you should have it in your power to traverse his design. Or when he has just had success in some of his schemes; for, being then in good humour, he may give you a more favourable reception. Do business with a phlegmatic, slow man, after he has drank his bottle; for then his heart is open. Treat with a gay man in the morning; for then, if ever, his head is clear.

SECTION. V.

Of the Regard due to the Opinion of others. Of Quarrels.

THERE is a weakness very common among the best sort of people, which is very prejudicial, to wit; letting their happiness depend too much upon the opinion of others. It is certain there is nothing more contemptible than the good or bad opinion of the multitude. Other people lie under such disadvantages for coming at our true characters, and are so often misled by prejudice for or against us, that it is of very little consequence whether they approve our conduct, if our own conscience condemns us, or whether they find fault, if we are sure we acted from honest motives, and with a view to worthy ends. But indeed, if it were worth while to endeavour to please mankind, it is naturally impracticable; for the most part are so much governed by fancy, that what will win their hearts to-day, will disgust them to-morrow; and the humours and prejudices, which rule them, are so various, and so opposite, that what will please one sect or party, will thoroughly dissatisfy the contrary.

A wise man, when he hears of reflections made upon him, will consider if they are just or not. If they are, he will correct the faults taken notice of publicly by an enemy, as carefully as if they had been hinted to him in private by a friend. He, who has in himself wherewith to correct his errors, has no reason to be uneasy at finding them out; but the contrary.

When one has had information of his being ill used by another behind his back, it is first of all, necessary to know with the utmost certainty, the exact truth of what was said, and the manner and probable design of the speaker. Otherwise the consequence may be, that, after you have expressed your resentment, you may find the whole was false, or not worth your notice, which last is generally the case. And then you are obliged to own you went too far, so that the other then thinks himself the offended person. And very few of mankind know what it is sincerely and from the heart to forgive, even after the most abject submission.

He who sets up for forgiving all injuries, will have nothing else to do. He who appears to be weak, will be often imposed on. And he who pretends to extraordinary shrewdness, invites deceivers to try their talent upon him. Therefore, a little spirit, as well as much sagacity, is necessary, to be upon even terms with the world.

If you can bring yourself either not to listen to slanders against yourself; not to believe that they were uttered; to persuade yourself that the person who uttered them, was out of humour at the time, or was drunk, or that he did not so much mean to prejudice you, as to divert the company; that he was imposed upon with respect to your character; or that he is to be pitied and forgiven; if you can bring yourself to any of these, you may make yourself easy, and rise above scandal and malice. And if you should make a matter of law, or of life and death, of every idle surmise against you, you will not be a whit the more secure from scandal; but the contrary. Nothing will so effectually keep you under cover from the strife of tongues, as a peaceable disposition, loving retirement and obscurity, and averse to meddling with the affairs of others.

It is very difficult to interfere in other people's quarrels or concerns of any kind, without suffering from it, one way or other. The wisest men are always the most cautious of such interpositions: well knowing how little good is to be done, and what a risk one runs. Even when advice is asked, it is very often without any intention of following it. And the only consequence of giving one's sentiments freely, is disobliging.

The proper temper of mind for accommodating a differ-

ence, if one has any regard either to prudence or humanity, is by no means a spiteful, a revengeful, or a sour humour. For such a behaviour will only widen the breach, and inflame the quarrel.

At the same time, will it not be prudent to appear disposed to put up with any terms, or drop the affair in dispute at any rate, though that is often the best that is to be done.

When one has to do with a bad man he may think himself well off, if he suffers but a little by him, and be thankful that he has got clear of him. For such a one will go lengths against a conscientious person, which he dares not to go in his own defence.

It is vain to think of doing any thing by letters towards clearing up a point in dispute. One hour's conversation will do more than twenty letters. They are ticklish weapons, and require to be handled with the greatest caution.

On the present head of differences and quarrels, it may not be amiss just to touch upon the subject of duels, arising from a false notion of the point of honour. True honour does not consist in a waspish temper, or a disposition to make a matter of bloodshed of every trifle; but in an invincible attachment to truth and virtue, in spite of fear, shame, or death itself. And if it be better to flatter a fool, than fight him; if it be wisdom, of two evils to choose the least; and if the consideration of the atrocious wickedness of throwing away life, and rushing into the presence of our Almighty Judge in the very act of insulting him, without opportunity for repentance, had its due weight with people, one would think they would contrive any way of settling disputes, rather than with the sword. If a person has committed a slight injury against me, where lies the prudence, or the common sense, of giving him an opportunity of injuring me still worse; I mean by taking my life.

I greatly approve the conduct of an English officer in Flanders, whose example may serve as an universal model. That gentleman, having received a challenge from another, refused to be the cause of the shedding of either his own, or another's blood, cold. The challenger posted him for a coward: He posted the other for a liar. The challenger threatened to cane him. He told him he would

stand on his own defence. The challenger attacked him. He received him with a blow of a cudgel on the head, which laid him sprawling. He recovered, drew, and made an ill-directed pass at the pacific gentleman, who received him on the point of his sword; which ended the quarrel. The gentleman's courage being well known, and the whole affair being public, it was brought in man-slaughter.

SECTION VI.

Of Marriage.

IT is one of the greatest unhappinesses of our times that matrimony is so much discountenanced: That in London, and in other great cities, so many never marry at all, and that the greatest part have got into the unhappy and unnatural way of wasting the best years of their lives, in pursuit of a giddy round of vain amusements and criminal pleasures, (if any thing criminal can be called a pleasure;) looking upon the married state as the end of all the happiness of life, whereas it is in truth, when entered into with prudence, only the beginning. How do we accordingly see our youth go on to thirty or forty years of age, without ever thinking of settling in life, as becomes christians and members of society, till at last, being sated and cloyed with lawless love, avarice drives them to seek the alliance of a wealthy family, or dotage puts them upon misapplying that sacred institution to the most sordid purposes.

The advantage of early marriage, both to the community and to particulars, and the mischiefs which might thereby be prevented, are not to be expressed. It is therefore my advice to all my young readers, that they enter into the marriage state as soon as they find themselves settled in a likely way of supporting a family. And I can promise them, upon the general experience of all prudent and good-natured men, that, if they make a judicious choice, the only thing they will have occasion to repent of, will be, that they did not enter into that state sooner; and that they will find it as much beyond the happiest single life, as ease and affluence are beyond the narrowest circumstances. Indeed, what can be conceived more perfect in

an imperfect state, than an inseparable union of interests between two persons, who love one another with sincerity and tenderness; who mutually desire to oblige one another; and who can, with the utmost freedom, unbosom to one another all their joys, and all their griefs, whereby the one may be double and the other divided? If friendship has afforded matter for so many commendations, worked up with innumerable figures of rhetoric, what may not be said of that most perfect of all friendships, which subsists between married persons?

I do not deny, that there are women, whose natural tempers are so unhappy, that it is not easy to live with them; nor that the ladies of our times give themselves up, too generally to an idle and expensive manner of life, to the great detriment of economy, and the vexation of prudent masters of families: but it must be owned, at the same time, that the greatest number of unhappy husbands have themselves chiefly to thank for what they suffer. If a man will be so weak, as for the sake of either beauty or fortune, to run the desperate hazard of taking to his bosom a fury, or an idiot; or if he will suffer a woman, who might by gentle and prudent ways, be reclaimed from her follies, to run on to ruin, without having the spirit to warn her of the consequences; or if, instead of endeavouring by the humane methods of remonstrance and persuasion, joined with the endearments of conjugal affection, which a woman must be a monster to resist; I say, if instead of endeavouring, by mild and affectionate methods, to show her the error and bad consequences of her manner of life, a man will resolve to carry things with a high hand, and to use a woman of natural sense, birth, and fortune, every way equal to himself, as a slave, or a fool, it is no wonder that his remonstrances are ineffectual, and that domestic peace is interrupted and economy subverted.

It is not the most exquisite beauty, the most sprightly wit, or the largest fortune, nor all three together, nor an hundred other accomplishments, if such there were, that will make a man happy in a partner for life, who is not endowed with the two principal accomplishments, of good sense and good nature. If a woman has not common sense, she can be in no respect a fit companion for a reasonable man. On the contrary, the whole behaviour of a

fool must be disgusting and tiresome to every one that knows her, especially to a husband, who is obliged to be more in her company than any one else, who must therefore see more of her folly than any one else, and must suffer more from the shame of it, as being more nearly connected with her than any person. If a woman has not some small share of sense, what means can a husband use to set her right in any error of conduct, into many of which she will naturally run? Not reason or argument, for a fool is proof against that. And if she has not a little good nature, to attempt to advise her, will be only arguing with a tempest, or rousing a fury.

If, between the two married persons, there be, upon the whole enough for a comfortable subsistence according to their station and temper of mind, it signifies very little whether it comes by one side, or the other, or both. Nothing is more absurd, than that it should seem of such importance in the judgment of many people, that a gentleman make a match suitable to himself, as they often very improperly call it; by which they mean, that he is in duty bound to find out a lady possessed of a fortune equal to his own, though what he has already, may be more than sufficient for supporting the rank he is born in. The consequences of this mercenary way of proceeding, are only the accumulating more and more materials for luxury, vanity, and ostentation, the perversion of the institution of marriage, which was for the mutual support and comfort of the parties, into a mere affair of bargain and sale; the alienating, or cooling the affections of the parties for one another, by showing each of them, that the union was not entered into by the other on account of any personal regards, but from mercenary motives only; and the separation, instead of the union of interests. It is no wonder, that such marriages prove unhappy; and that each should look upon the other as a clog annexed to the fortune, which was the principal object each aimed at, and should therefore mutually wish one another well out of the way.

I do not here mean to insinuate, that every woman of fortune must of course be good for nothing. But, that a man in affluent circumstances is much to blame, who, for the sake of adding to an heap, already too large, enters into an engagement, to which inclination does not lead him,

and deprives himself of an opportunity of gaining and fixing the affections of a virtuous and amiable person, raised by him to a rank above her expectations, and thereby inspired, if she is not wholly void of goodness, with such a sense of gratitude to her benefactor, as must influence all her actions.

On the other hand, nothing is more dreadful than the prospect those people have, who from romantic love, run precipitately into an engagement, that must hold for life, without considering or providing for the consequences. Two young persons, who hurry into marriage, without a reasonable prospect of an income to support them and their family, are in a condition as wretched as any I know of, where a guilty conscience is out of the question. Let a man consider a little, when he views the object of his passion, to whom he longs to be united by a sacred and indissoluble bond, how he will bear to see those eyes, every glance of which makes his heart bound with joy, drowned in tears, at the thought of misery and poverty coming upon her; how he will bear to see that face, whose smile rejoices his soul, grown pale and haggard through anguish of mind; or how he will bear to think that the offspring, she is going to bring forth, is to be born to beggary and misery. If young people consider maturely the fearful consequences of marriage, where there is no prospect of a proper provision, and where the anguish of poverty will be the more intolerable, the more sincere their affections are; they would not run headlong, as we often see them, into misery irretrievable.

It may often happen, that the family and connexions with which a woman is engaged, may alone be of more advantage to a man than a fortune; as on the other hand, it may happen, that a woman of fortune, may be so given to expense, or may bring with her such a tribe of poor relations, as thrice the income of her fortune would not be sufficient to maintain. In either of these cases, a man's prudence is to direct him to make that choice which will be the best upon the whole.

It is a fatal error in the conduct of many young people in the lower ranks of life, to make choice of young women, who have been brought up in indolence and gaiety, and are not possessed of fortunes suitable to the manner of life they have been accustomed to. The probable consequence of such matches, is great and remediless misery.

For such women, having never been practised in the economy of families, are incapable of applying themselves with that attention and assiduity, much less condescension, to the meaner parts of household affairs which is absolutely necessary, where the income is but moderate. If a young trader's gains are but small, and his help-mate neither brings in any thing to the common stock, nor knows how to make the most of a little, and at the same time there is a prospect of a numerous family of children coming on, with the casualties of sickness, a decay of trade, and so forth, the man, who finds himself involved in such a scene of troubles, may justly be looked upon, as among the most wretched of mortals.

Those marriages, in short, are likely to be crowned with all the happiness this state admits of, where a due regard is had to the qualities of the mind, to personal endowments as an agreeable appearance, and a suitable age, and to prudential considerations; and where either the one or the other is neglected, misery is the consequence to be looked for.

There is no care or diligence too much to use, nor any inquiry too curious to be made, before one engages for life. In an unhappy marriage every little occurrence, every trifling circumstance calls to remembrance the wretchedness of the state, and the happiness one has missed by making an injudicious choice; as, on the contrary, in an happy union, no accident is too trifling to pass without furnishing somewhat to give pleasure or entertainment, which must be heightened by being mutual. Let young people, therefore, be advised, above all things, to be careful what choice they make. And, that they may be effectually divested of all prejudices and attachments in favour of any person, whose outward appearance, fortune, birth, or any other circumstance, separate from the endowments of the mind, may be apt to mislead them, let them consider the character of the object, abstractly from the glare of beauty, or the lustre of fortune, and then be true to themselves, and act the part which the judicious and impartial approve of.

Let a young gentleman observe, before he allows his affection to fix upon a particular object, what figure and character she bears in the world; whether others admire

her, as well as himself; especially, whether the cool and judicious, and elderly people approve her character, conduct, and all circumstances, as well as the young, the thoughtless, and passionate. The bloom of beauty will soon wither; the glitter of riches, and the farce of grandeur, will quickly become insipid; nor will any thing earthly give peace to the wretch who has taken a serpent into his bosom, whose sting he feels every moment in his heart.

During the time of courtship, though a man must resolve to put on a smooth and engaging behaviour, there is no necessity, nor is it expected by the reasonable part of womankind, that the dignity of the nobler sex should be laid aside, and the lover debase himself, from a man of spirit, to a slave or a sycophant. On the contrary, it is absolutely necessary, if people are resolved to consult the happiness of the marriage state, to behave to one another in courtship, in such a manner, that neither may have reason to reproach the other with having acted a deceitful and unworthy part. For, if mutual love and esteem be the very cement of matrimonial happiness, and if it be impossible to love and esteem a person, who has deceived and imposed upon one, how cautious ought both parties to be, before entering into so close an union, of doing what may tend to lessen their mutual love and esteem for one another?

Nor is there less prudence requisite for preserving the happiness of the marriage state, than for establishing it at first. When it happens, as it will unavoidably at times, that the husband, or wife, is a little out of humour, it will be highly imprudent for the other to insist upon reasoning the matter out, or deciding the point in question, at that time. The dispute ought to be let alone, at least, till some time afterwards, or, if possible, dropped entirely. It may even be proper often to give up a point, and agree, (contrary to one's own judgment) to what is advanced by the other; which will show, that one does not oppose from mere perverseness; but on good grounds.

Again, if one happens to be in a thoughtful, or serious mood, it must be very injudicious in the other to put on a very gay behaviour; and contrariwise. Married people ought to think nothing trifling, or of small consequence,

that may please or disgust one another. They ought to watch one another's looks; to study one another's tempers; to fly to oblige one another; and to be afraid of the blowing of a feather, if it has the least chance to displease. For, while the husband consults his wife's satisfaction, he is studying to promote his own happiness, and so of the wife. Cleanliness, dress, complaisance; every little piece of obsequiousness and tenderness; consulting one another upon every trifle, however obvious; commendations of one another's judgment or taste, if expressed with address, and without the appearance of flattery; yielding every point, if possible, before there be time to dispute it; these are the arts, by which love is kept alive for life.

Too great, and too constant fondness and indulgence will sometimes be found to lessen affection, as it may make the smallest occasional remission, or change of behaviour, be construed into coldness. Even the constant presence of married persons together, where there is no opportunity of longing for the sight of one another, may occasion indifference. So delicate is the passion of love, and so easily cooled!

SECTION VII.

Of the Management of Children.

CHILDREN being the usual consequence of marriage, it is natural in this place to say something on the conduct that is necessary for bringing them up to maturity, and settling them in the world.

It is certain, that what very strongly affects the mother, will likewise often produce amazing effects both upon the body and mind of the infant in her womb. If, therefore, a man does not choose to have a monster, an idiot, or a fury born to him, he ought to take the utmost care, that his pregnant wife be kept as much as possible from the sight of uncouth objects, and from whatever may terrify her, or ruffle her temper. Indeed, the distress a weak woman undergoes in that condition is such, that none but a savage could find in his heart to heighten by ill usage.

The child being brought into the world, the care of its health lies wholly upon the mother. And that mother,

who, according to the present polite custom, more barbarous than any that prevails among the brutes, turns her own offspring over to the care of a mercenary nurse, on any pretence but absolute necessity, ought not to be surprised, if her child grows up with a diseased constitution, or a depraved disposition, the effects of sucking the breast of an unhealthy or ill tempered woman; or if its tender limbs be distorted, its faculties stupified, or its days shortened by gin, opium, or *Godfrey's Cordial*.*

Whoever would have healthy and hardy children, must not only live temperately themselves, but must take care, that their children, especially in their infancy, be kept from all manner of gross food, as meat and sauces, and be allowed to indulge very sparingly in sweetmeats, but by no means to touch strong liquors. With every bit of the one, or a sip of the other, an infant swallows the seeds of a variety of species of diseases. For it being impossible that the stomach of a child should be strong enough to digest what those of grown people cannot, without prejudice to their constitutions, and shortening of their days, it is plain, that such substances must turn to crudities, which must mix with and corrupt the whole mass of blood. If a child is never used to indulgences in this respect, he will suffer nothing from the refusal of what is not fit for him. For he will be just what he is made by habit and custom.

From the time a child begins to speak, to four or five years of age, is the proper period for breaking and forming his temper. If that important work is not done within this time, it is, in most children, not to be done at all. For the mind quickly acquires a degree of obstinacy and untractableness, that is not to be conquered by any methods which tender parents can bring themselves to use. And habits once rooted, are not to be eradicated but by very violent means.

Of all the follies which show themselves in innumerable different ways, in the conduct of our weak and short-sighted species, there is none that is more general, that goes more extravagant lengths, or proves more fatal, than that which appears in the partiality of fond parents for their children. To love our offspring with the utmost

* A common custom with industrious nurses, to quiet the children committed to their care, that they may in the mean time go on with other business.

tenderness, to labour, to wish, and to pray for their real good, is no doubt our indispensable duty. But to shut our eyes against their faults, or to resolve not to correct them for fear of giving them a little pain; to effeminate and enervate their spirits by fondling them; to grant to their importunity, what we ought on all accounts to refuse; to hurt their constitutions, by indulging them in what is improper for them; to neglect the cultivation of their minds with useful knowledge, through fear of overburdening their faculties; and above all, to be so weak as to let them know our weakness; if there be any infirmity beyond this, it must be somewhat I have never heard of.

By that time people come to be parents it is to be expected they should be past the folly of youth, the usual excuse for the next greatest weakness of human nature, I mean romantic love. But we see every day, instances to the contrary; parents indulging their children in every wrong tendency, and even delighted with that very obstinacy, and those very follies, which they cannot but think, must one day, make both them and their children unhappy; allowing themselves to be overcome by their solicitations, to grant them what they know must prove hurtful to them; and withholding from them, at their desire, what they know is their greatest good.

A proof of the mischiefs arising from fondness for children, is, that we find by experience, the fools in a great family are generally the eldest and youngest, whose fate is commonly to be most doted on. Those in the middle, who pass neglected, are commonly found to turn out best in life. Natural sons, foundlings, and outcasts, often make their way better in the world, by their own industry, with little or no education, than those who have been brought up in effeminacy and extravagance, and with expectations of a fortune; whose education is by those means in a great measure defeated.

If you observe your child given to falsehood, one of the worst tendencies that can discover itself in a young mind, (as implying a kind of natural baseness of spirit,) the point in view must be, to endeavour to raise in him such a sense of honour, as may set him above that base practice. For this purpose, it may be proper to express

the utmost astonishment upon the first information of his transgressing that way ; to seem to disbelieve it, and to punish him rather with shame and the loss of your favour, than any other way ; and if you can raise in him a sense of shame, you will quickly habituate him to take care of falling into shameful actions. A turn to pilfering of playthings, or sweetmeats, is to be treated in the same manner ; as, is also, a disposition to tricking at play, and in purchasing of playthings of others, his equals.

To remove out of the way one great temptation to lying, or equivocation, (which is as bad,) it will be a good method to let him know, he may always expect to be pardoned what he has done amiss, upon an honest and ingenuous confession. For indeed, there is no fault a child is likely to be guilty of, that is so bad as a lie, or trick, to excuse it. Therefore it will be best, before you mention what you have to accuse him of, to put it in his power to save the punishment, by making the discovery himself ; intimating, that you know more than he may think of, and that you will treat him accordingly as you find he deals ingenuously with you, or otherwise.

If your son seems to show a turn to craft, and sly deceit, which appears in some children very early, and is a very unpromising character, the likeliest way to break him of that vice, is by showing him that his little arts are seen through ; by triumphing over him, and ridiculing his ineffectual cunning in the severest manner you can ; and by suspecting some design in all he says and does, and putting him to such inconveniences by your suspicions of him, as may make him resolve to be open and honest, merely in self-defence.

If his bent be to passion and resentment, shutting him up, and keeping him from his diversions and playfellows, is the proper method of treating him ; because it gives him an opportunity for what he most wants, to wit, consideration, and attention to his own weakness, which is all that is in early age necessary to the conquest of it.

If he appears timorous or cowardly, it will be necessary to accustom him, by degrees, to crowds, to stormy weather, to rough waters, to the sight of counterfeit fighting matches, and to be handled a little roughly, but without danger of being hurt, by others of his own age. If his

temper seems too boisterous, so that he is always ready to quarrel, and loves fighting for fighting's sake, keeping him among the female part of the family, is the likeliest mechanical means I know for softening his manners.

If he shows too much self conceit, it will be necessary to mortify him from time to time, by showing him his defects, and how much he is exceeded by others. If he is bashful and timorous, he must be encouraged and commended for whatever he does well.

If a child seems inclined to sauntering and idleness, emulation is the proper cure to be administered. If he sees others of his equals honoured and caressed for using a little diligence, he must be of a temper uncommonly insensible, and of a spirit uncommonly abject, if he is not moved to emulate their improvements.

Lying abed in a morning, or passing, at any time, a whole day, without doing somewhat, towards his improvement, if in health, ought by no means to be allowed in a child who is come to the age of learning to spell. And if he is from his infancy, accustomed to hear schools and places of education spoke of as scenes of happiness; and has books (not sweetmeats, playthings, or fine clothes,) given him as the most valuable presents and the richest rewards, he can hardly fail to be moved to exert himself. But all this is directly contrary to the common practice of threatening a child with school whenever he does amiss; of setting him a task as a punishment, and of sending for him from school, from time to time, as a gratification.

A tendency to prodigality, in a child, is to be curbed as early as possible. For he who will in his youth lavish away half-pence, when he comes to manhood, will be apt to squander away guineas. The best methods I know for correcting this bias in a child, are such as these: Encouraging him to save a piece of money some little time, on the promise of doubling it, and, which is to the same purpose, lessening his allowance (but not by any means depriving him wholly of pocket money) in case of misconduct: obliging him to give an exact account of his manner of laying out his money, by memory at first, and afterwards in a written account, regularly kept; putting in a purse by itself a penny, or sixpence, for every penny or

sixpence given him, and showing him, from time to time, the sum ; and so forth.

There is no error more fatal, than imagining, that pinching a youth in his pocket money, will teach him frugality. On the contrary, it will only occasion his running into extravagance with so much the more eagerness, whenever he comes to have money in his own hands ; as pinching him in his diet will make his appetite only the more rapacious. In the same manner, confining him too much from diversions and company, will heighten his desire after them : And overloading and fatiguing him with study, or with religious exercises, will disgust him against learning and devotion. For human nature is like a stream of water, which, if too much opposed in its course, will swell, and at length overflow all bounds ; but, carefully kept within its banks, will enrich and beautify the places it visits in its course.

If you put into the hands of your child, more money than is suitable to his age and discretion, expect to find that he has thrown it away upon what is not only idle, but hurtful. A certain small regular income any child above six years of age ought to have, but I should think no extraordinary advance proper upon any account. When he comes to be capable of keeping an account, he ought to be obliged to it. He will thereby acquire a habit of frugality, attention, and prudence, that will be of service to him through his whole life. On the contrary, giving a young person money to spend at will, without requiring any account of it, is leading, or rather forcing him upon extravagance and folly.

As a turn to covetousness and hoarding, it is in a child a frightful temper, indicating a natural inclination to sordid selfishness. This being a disposition which strengthens with years, and holds to the last, when it begins to appear so early, it is to be expected it will come to an excessive degree in time. A lad ought to be broke of this unhappy turn, by showing him the odiousness of it in the judgment of all openhearted people, and by exposing his churlishness to the ridicule of his equals. Children ought to be accustomed from their earliest years, to bring themselves with ease to quit what they may have a right to ; to give away part of their fruits or sweetmeats, and

to bestow, out of their pocket money, for the relief of the poor.

A natural perverseness and obstinacy in the temper of a child, it is hardly possible to break, after seven or eight years of age, till reason and experience do it, which may never happen. And even before that early period, it is not, in some, to be conquered but by severe means; though severity may be used without violence, as by confinement and dieting. When a parent finds himself obliged to come to extremities, the mildest way of proceeding, is to resolve to go through with it at once. It is likewise a more effectual method, to punish once with some severity, than a great many times in a superficial manner. For when once a child, of sturdy spirit and constitution, becomes accustomed to punishment, he grows hardened against it, till at length it loses its effects, and becomes no punishment. I need not add, that correction, when things come to the extremity which render it absolutely necessary, ought always to be administered with coolness and deliberation, and not without visible reluctance, that the child may plainly see it is not passion in the parent, but a regard to his good, and absolute necessity that brings it upon him. And as nothing but a visible pravity of mind is sufficient to make so rough a remedy necessary, so, whenever the perverseness, or wickedness of disposition which occasioned it, seems perfectly conquered, it ought by all means to be given over, and a quite contrary behaviour to be assumed by the parent. For the danger of hardening the temper of a child, by making him too familiar with punishment, is almost as bad as any fault intended to be corrected by it. Confinement, dieting, restraint from the amusements allowed to others, his equals, the loss of his father's or mother's favour, and, above all, disgrace, are much the most ingenuous punishments to be inflicted on young gentlemen.

When it is found necessary to inflict disgrace, the utmost care ought to be taken, that the whole family appear to be of a mind. If the father chides, and the mother or any other person encourages, what effect can be expected to be worked upon the mind of the child? On the other hand, when he meets with coldness and discouragement

from every body, he will find himself under a necessity of amending his manners in his own defence.

To make the young mind the more susceptible of a sense of shame, and to inspire it with sentiments of true honour; youth should be very early taught to entertain worthy thoughts of the Dignity of Human Nature, and the reverence we owe ourselves, so that they may be made to stand in so much awe of themselves as not to do a mean action, though never to be known to any creature.

All methods of education ought in general to be directed to the improvement of some good tendency, or the correction of some wrong turn in the mind. And that parent, or tutor, who thinks of forming a rational creature, as he would break a hound or a colt, by severity alone, without endeavouring to rectify the judgment and bend the will, shows himself wholly ignorant of human nature, and of the work he has undertaken. From the time a child can speak, it is capable of being reasoned with, in a way suitable to its age, and of being convinced of the good or evil of its actions, and is never to be corrected without; otherwise you may conclude, that the effect will cease with the smart. A sense of honour and shame, and of the right and wrong of actions, are the proper handles of education, as they lead directly to virtue, and lay a restraint upon the mind itself. Punishment, if not managed with great judgment, and administered rather as a mark and attendant of that disgrace, into which a youth has brought himself by bad behaviour, may have no other effect, than that of persuading him, that the pain is a great evil, which he ought not to think, but be taught to despise it. Or it may tend, if overdone, to harden and brutalize his temper, and lead him to use others as he has been used. Paltry rewards, as fine clothes or playthings, ought likewise never to be bestowed without a caution, that they are given not as things valuable in themselves, but only as marks of favour and approbation. If this be not taken care of, a child may be led to look upon such baubles as the *summum bonum* of life, which will give him a quite wrong turn of mind.

In chiding or correcting, it will be necessary to take the utmost care not to represent to a young person his fault as unpardonable or his case as desperate; but to leave room for reformation; lest he think he has utterly

lost his character and so become stupidly indifferent about recovering your favour, or amending his manners. Nor is the recovery of any person under thirty years of age to be wholly despaired of, where there is a fund of sense, and an ingenuous temper to work upon.

A turn to cruelty appearing in a child's delighting in teasing his equals, in pulling insects to pieces, and in torturing birds, frogs, cats, or other animals, ought by all means to be rooted out as soon as possible. Children ought to be convinced of what they are not generally aware of, that an animal can feel, though it cannot complain, and that cruelty to a beast or insect, is as much cruelty, and as truly wicked, as when exercised upon our own species.

There are few children that may not be formed to tractableness and goodness, where a parent has the conscience to study carefully his duty in this respect, the steadiness to go through with it, and the sagacity to manage properly the natural tendencies of the mind, to play them against one another, to supply what may be defective, to correct what may be wrong, and to lop off what may be redundant.

Let only a parent consider with himself what temper he would have his son be of, when a man; and let him cultivate that in him, while a child. If he would not have him fierce, cruel, or revengeful, let him take care early to show his displeasure at every instance of surliness, or malice, against his playfellows, or cruelty to brutes or insects. If he would not wish him to prove of a fretful and peevish temper, ready to lose all patience at every little disappointment in life, let him take care from the first, not to humour him in all his childish freaks, not to show him that he can refuse him nothing, nor especially to give him what he asks, because he cries or is out of humour for it, but for that very reason to withhold what might otherwise be fit for him. If he would not have him a glutton, when he comes to be a man, let him not consult his appetite too much in his childhood; and so of the rest.

It is a most fatal mistake, which many parents are in with respect to the important business of forming the moral character of their children, that the faults of children are of little consequence. Yet it is the very same

disposition, which makes a child, or youth, passionate, false, or revengeful, and which in the man, produces murder, perjury, and all the most atrocious crimes. The very same turn of mind which puts a child, or youth, upon beating his playfellows with his little harmless hand, will afterwards, if not corrected, arm him with a sword to execute his revenge. How then can parents be so unthinking as to connive at, much more to encourage, a wrong turn of mind in their children? At the same time that they would do their utmost to rectify any blemish in a feature or limb, as knowing that it will else be quickly incurable; they allow the mind to run into vice and disorder, which they know may be soon irretrievable.

If your child threatened to grow crooked, or deformed; if he were dwarfish and stunted; if he were weak in one or more of his limbs; or did not look with both eyes alike; would you not give any thing in the world to have such infirmity strengthened, or wrong cast of features redressed! Would you put off endeavouring this for one day, after you had discovered the defect? And will you trifle with a deformity of infinitely greater consequence, a blemish in the mind? Would you answer to any one, who advised you a remedy for weak hams, or an arm threatening to wither; that, as your child grew up, they would strengthen of themselves, and therefore it was needless to take any trouble at present? Why then should you put off using your utmost endeavours, and that as soon as possible, for breaking the impotency of his passions, bettering his temper, and strengthening his judgment? Will you say, that, though your child is now at six years old, fretful, perverse, crafty, given to idleness, lying, and disobedience; it does not follow, that he must be so at twenty or thirty? Why do you not likewise persuade yourself, that he must outgrow squinting, or a high shoulder? You cannot think a short neck, or a wrong cast of the eye, a worse blemish than a turn to falsehood, malice, or revenge? Yet you encourage your son, at three years of age, to vent his spite upon whatever disoblige him, even upon the floor, when he catches a fall. He asks you what you have got in your hand: you do not choose to let him have it; and you have not the courage to tell him so. You therefore put him off with answering, that

it was nothing. By and by, he has laid hold of somewhat not fit for him, which he endeavours to conceal. You ask him what he has got: Has he not your own example and authority for putting you off with a shuffling answer? He asks somewhat not fit for him. You refuse it; he falls a crying: you give it him. Is there any surer way of teaching him to make use, constantly, of the same means for obtaining whatever his wayward will is set upon? You trick him up with tawdry ornaments, and dandle him about after all manner of entertainments, while he ought to be applying to his improvement in somewhat useful. Is not this teaching him, that finery and gadding are the perfection of life? Is not this planting in his mind, with your own hand, the seeds of vice and folly? Yet you would turn away a nursery maid, who should, for her diversion, teach him to squint, or stammer, or go awry.

It is strange, that parents should either be so weak, as to look upon any fault in the minds of their children as of little consequence, and not worth correcting; or that they should not generally have the sagacity to distinguish between those infirmities, which, being the effects of unripe age, must of course cure themselves, and those, which, being occasioned by a wrong cast in the mind, are likely to grow stronger and stronger. Thoughtlessness, timidity, and love of play, which are natural to childhood, may be expected to abate as years come on. But it is evidently not so with a turn to deceit, malice, or perverseness.

I cannot help adding here, one advice to parents, which, if it should not be thought over complaisant, is however well meant. It is, that they would take care to set before their children an unexceptionable example. The consequence of a neglect of this, will be, that children will be drawn to imitate what is bad, and be prevented from regarding what good advice may be given them. Do not imagine you can effectually inculcate upon your son the virtues of sobriety and frugality, while he sees your house and your table the scenes of luxury and gluttony; or that your affected grave lessons will attach him to purity and piety, while your conversation is interlarded with swearing and obscenity; or that you can persuade him to think

of the care of his soul as the great concern, while he sees that you live only to get money.

Those natural inclinations of the human mind ought to be encouraged to the utmost (under proper regulations) which tend to put it upon action and excelling. Whoever would wish his son to be diligent in his studies, and active in business, can use no better means for that purpose, than stirring up in him emulation, a desire of praise, and a sense of honour and shame. Curiosity will put a youth upon inquiring into the nature and reasons of things, and endeavouring to acquire universal knowledge. This passion ought therefore to be excited to the utmost, and gratified, even when it shows itself by his asking the most childish questions, which should always be answered in as rational and satisfying a manner as possible.

It is by habit rather than precept, that a young person is best formed to readiness and address in doing things. If your son hands a glass or a tea cup awkwardly, he will profit more by making him do it over again, directing him how, than by preaching to him an hour. It is the same in scholarship, and in his behaviour to his equals, as to justice and sincerity; which shows the advantage of a social, above a solitary education. Therefore, opportunities of planting proper habits in young people ought to be sought, and they kept doing, merely that by practice they may come to do things well at last.

On this head, I cannot help remarking on the unhappy constraint I have often, with much sympathy, seen very young children put under before company. The chiding lectures I have heard read to boys and girls of eight or ten years of age, about holding up of heads, putting back shoulders, turning out toes, and making legs, have, I am persuaded, gone a good way toward disgusting the poor children against what is called behaviour. Did parents consider, that, even in grown people; the gracefulness of behaviour consists in an easy and natural motion of gesture, and looks denoting kindness and good-will to those with whom they converse; and that if a child's heart and temper are formed to civility, the outward expressions of it will come in all due time; did parents, I say, consider these obvious things, they would bestow their chief attention upon the mind, and not make them-

selves, their children, and their friends, uneasy about making courtesies, and legs, twenty times in a quarter of an hour.

The bodily infirmities of children may often, by proper management, be greatly helped, if not wholly cured. Crookedness, for example, by swinging and hanging by the arm next to the crooked side. Squinting, by spectacles properly contrived, and by shooting with the bow. A paralytic motion in the eyes by the cold bath and nervous remedies. Weakness in the eyes, by washing them in cold water, and not sparing them too much. Bashfulness and blushing, by company and encouragement. Crookedness in the legs, by being swung with moderate weights fastened to the feet, and using riding, as an exercise, more frequently than walking; never standing for any time together; and by iron strengtheners properly applied. Shooting with the long bow, is good for strengthening the chest and arms. Exercise, and regular hours of diet and rest, and simple food, for the appetite. Riding, especially on a hard trotting horse, is the first of exercises, and a cure for complaints, which no medicine in the dispensatory will reach. Stammering is cured by people who profess that art. And even dumbness so far got the better of, that persons born so are brought to be capable of holding a sort of conversation with those who are used to them. Shortness of the neck, and stuntedness, are helped by being swung in a neck-swing. Almost any bad habit, as shrugging the shoulders, nodding, making faces, and the like, may be helped by continual attention, and making the child do somewhat laborious, or disagreeable to him, every time you catch him at his trick.

Of those parts of education, which take in science, I shall have occasion to treat in the following book.

SECTION VIII.

Of the peculiar Management of Daughters.

FEMALE children being as much by nature rational creatures, as males, it seems pretty obvious, that, in bringing them up to maturity, there is some regard to be had to the cultivation of their reason, as well as the adorning

of their persons. As to the forming of their tempers, the directions above given, will, with some small variation, suit them. As girls are more apt to run into vanity, on account of their beauty or dress, than the other sex, it will be necessary to guard against this folly, which, else, will grow with years, till it becomes unsufferable. And after all, there is no doubt, but a foolish head is always contemptible, whether it be covered with a cap or a wig. And a creature, that values itself only upon its form, and has no other ambition but to make that agreeable, must be sunk to a very low pitch of understanding, and has little pretence to rank itself with rational beings.

The proper education of a daughter, if a parent has a mind she should ever be fit for filling a place in society, and being a suitable companion and help meet for a man of sense, is, first, reading, with propriety and life; readiness at her needle, especially for people in middling stations; a free command of her pen, and complete knowledge of numbers, as far as the rule called Practice. A woman cannot, with ease and certainty, keep or examine the accounts of her own family, without these accomplishments. The knowledge of English grammar, or orthography, is absolutely necessary to any person who would write to be read. Without some acquaintance with geography and history, a woman's conversation must be confined within a very narrow compass, and she will enjoy much less pleasure in that of her husband and his friends; and his entertainment from her conversation must likewise be very much abridged, if she can bear no part on any but the subjects of fashions or scandal.

Plays, romances, love verses, and cards, are utter ruin to young women. For, if they find any entertainment in them, they must unavoidably give their minds a cast, which can never be suitable to the useful part of a female character, which is wholly domestic. For, whatever the fine ladies of our age must think of the matter, it is certain that the only rational ambition they can have, must be to make obedient daughters, loving wives, prudent mothers and mistresses of families, faithful friends, and good christians; characters much more valuable than those of skilful gamblers, fine dancers, singers, or dressers, or than even of wits and critics.

SECTION IX.

Of Placing Youth out Apprentices.

THERE are some grievances with respect to the apprenticing out of youth intended for business, which I have long wished to see redressed. As, in the first place, it does not appear to me necessary, that parents should hurry their sons away from places of education, before they can, by their age, be supposed to be sufficiently grounded in the various parts of useful and ornamental knowledge, or (which is of infinitely more consequence) principled in virtue and religion, to place them out apprentices seven years, to learn to sell a piece of linen, or a loaf of sugar, where there is an end of all opportunity of improvement, except in business. While a youth is at boarding school, he lives with one, who is to be supposed qualified to instruct him, and conduct his morals, and who is evidently interested to bestow his best diligence for those purposes. Whereas, a merchant, or tradesman, who does not depend upon apprentices, as a master of a place of education does upon pupils, and is besides immersed in a variety of business, cannot be supposed to have it in his power or inclination to give much attention to the conduct of his apprentices. On these considerations, I say, it seems unreasonable, and prejudicial to youth, to be removed, as they often are, from boarding school at fourteen or fifteen years, when they are just come to be capable of the more manly and useful parts of knowledge, as, geography, mathematics, philosophy, moral and natural, and the like; and to be thrust down into a merchant's or tradesman's kitchen among menial servants, or let loose among a set of thoughtless young fellows like themselves, but half principled, and therefore too liable to be led astray by every seducer. I cannot see the necessity of a youth's being placed out for seven years to learn the mystery of buying in, and selling out, half a dozen different kinds of goods; at the same time, that to learn all the intricacies of the business of an attorney, five years clerkship is reckoned sufficient.

Having mentioned the common manner of entertaining

apprentices, I beg leave to add, that though I see no advantage in treating young people with too much delicacy, yet it seems absurd to place the sons of merchants and substantial tradesmen with chamber maids and footmen. This I know is done, where three or four hundred pounds apprenticeship is given. If a gentleman thinks it a restraint upon his conversation, to have his apprentices at his own table, it would be no great matter, methinks, for the fathers of the youth to allow somewhat extraordinary for a separate room and proper accommodations, to prevent their keeping company with people beneath them, from whom they are likely to learn nothing but what is mean and sordid.

The modern way of life of our citizens, is indeed such, as, generally speaking, to expose the youth placed with them almost to the certainty of being debauched, if not utterly ruined. The master and mistress of the house engaged in the evenings in visiting, receiving visits, attending clubs, or public diversions, or in short, any way but minding their own families. And in the summer season, out of town on Saturdays and Sundays; some half the week; while their apprentices are left to themselves, exposed to the solicitations of the lewd women, who are allowed, to the shame of law and magistracy, to invest every street in London, and to turn the city into a great brothel. The sense of the fatal hazards the youth run during their apprenticeships in London, has determined many judicious parents of late years, to send their sons to pass them in foreign parts, where the way of life of the trading people is different from what prevails here.

SECTION X.

Of choosing Employments for Sons, and of providing Fortunes for them.

IN order to a person's having a chance for success and happiness in life, it is necessary that his parents consult the natural bent of his genius, before they determine what employment to put him to. The neglect of this most important particular has been the cause of infinite distress and disappointment, and has obliged many, after a course

of misfortunes and vexations, in a way of life for which they have not been fitted by nature, to lay aside their first scheme and enter upon that for which nature has intended them. (It is common for parents to resolve to give their children such employments as suit their own humour or convenience, rather than the capacity or natural bent of the young persons, who are the most concerned in the matter ; to bring up a plain honest youth to law or physic, or thrust a heavy, plodding boy into a pulpit ; to hamper a genius behind a counter, or bury him among bales of goods in a warehouse.) But surely no parent of any consideration can hope to get the better of nature, to give his child qualifications which she has not given him, or to remove the insuperable difficulties she has laid in the way.

The tempers of youth however, may, in general, be said to divide themselves into two species. One is the inquisitive, penetrating, and studious ; the other, the slow and laborious ; both valuable in their respective ways. There are of these, several subdivisions, I mean those who have a particular turn to some single art or science. All which ought to be studied, with the utmost care by the parent, and humoured in the scheme of life intended for them. Had I a son, whose natural turn was to mechanics, I should certainly rather put him apprentice to a watchmaker, or a silversmith, in which I should think he could not fail to become eminent, and consequently to get a subsistence, if he applied diligently to his business, than bring him up to a learned profession, in which I could not expect him to make any figure. And so of other particular turns.

If the genius of a youth is bright, it will discover itself by its own native lustre ; so that a parent will be at no loss to determine his son's particular cast. If his capacity is slow, it will perhaps be necessary to try him with a variety of employments and exercises ; and as it is found that almost every rational creature has a turn for somewhat, and is by nature fitted for some place or other in society, a little time and attention will discover what a parent searches for.

Whatever the pride of parents may suggest, it is plain from observation, that great vivacity and brightness of parts in our sex, as well as extraordinary beauty or wit in

the other, do in fact often prove fatal to both ; as they naturally tend to fill the heads of those who are possessed of them, with vanity and ambition, and to put them upon romantic projects, which take off their attention from the serious business of life. Not but that men of the finest parts are sometimes found as steady and prudent in the management of their affairs, as the dull and plodding ; some of which, likewise, are found to grovel all their lives long in poverty and obscurity. But, generally speaking, it is otherwise. So that a parent, who has reason to look upon his son, as one who promises to make a figure by his parts, ought to be humble and cautious ; for when such fly out, they go dreadful lengths in vice or folly ; as, on the other hand, if a parent's prospects, with regard to his son's natural abilities, be less pleasing, he is not therefore to despair of making him fit for some useful and valuable station in life.

(It is a very great mistake some parents run into, that the greatest kindness they can do their children is to give them, or leave them a great fortune. With this view some labour and toil all their lives, pinching themselves, and their families, and grudging their children an education suitable to their fortunes, only to heap up an enormous capital, which is likely to be dissipated in much less time than it cost to amass it.)

If a young gentleman is to inherit a large estate, without a suitable education, his great fortune will only make him the more extensively known and despised. And, if his prospects in life be meaner, he will have the more occasion for an universal education to give him a chance for raising himself in the world. Experience shows that it is not, in fact, those who have set out in life with large capitals, that live happiest, and hold out longest in credit. One half of such traders, on the strength of their large fortunes and extensive credit, run into the fatal error of over trading, and the other into expensive living. Whereas, a young man, who has been prudently educated, and provided, by his parents, with a fortune sufficient for setting him on foot in business, knowing that he has no superfluous wealth to trust to, and consequently, that he must by frugality, industry and prudence, think to raise himself, will be likely to apply with steadiness and diligence to his

business; of which he will, in the end, reap the fruits. And if it should happen, in spite of his utmost care and prudence, that he should come to misfortunes, which I believe, no parent will pretend to insure his son against, a well accomplished man is not likely ever to be long destitute of a subsistence. Upon the whole, it is the greatest weakness a man of substance can fall into, to cramp his son's education for the sake of adding a few hundred pounds to his fortune. For it is not a few hundred pounds that will support him, when the bulk of his fortune is gone: but an useful education will enable him to get a subsistence, when the whole of his paternal fortune is gone.

SECTION XI.

Of settling Children, of both Sexes, in life.

WHEN a parent has in this manner equipped out his son with a proper education, and settled him in a way of living, if he has a fair opportunity, it will be his wisdom to see him, in his own lifetime, likewise settled in marriage. It is on all accounts the safest and best state. And a man is always less likely to break loose from virtue after he has entered into a settled way of life, than before.

What I have said of a son, may be urged with still more reason with respect to a daughter. It may often be much more prudent to give away a daughter in marriage on an indifferent offer, I mean as to circumstances of wealth, than to let slip an opportunity of seeing her placed out of harm's way. But no consideration will make up for the unhappiness she will be doomed to, if she falls into the hands of a morose, a furious, a drunken, a debauched, a spendthrift, or a jealous husband. If a man may be said to have shaken hands with happiness, who has thrown himself into the arms of a bad woman, much less reason has a weak, helpless woman to expect ever to see a happy day, after she comes into the power of a man void of virtue or humanity. Let those parents, therefore, who constrain their children, for the sake of sordid views, to plunge themselves into irretrievable misery, consider what they have to answer for, in doing an injury, which they

never can repair, to those whose real happiness they were, by all the ties of nature and reason, bound to promote.

It is to be hoped what is here said of the danger of constraining the inclinations of children in marriage, will by no means be construed, as if intended to encourage young people to obstinacy and contempt of the advice of parents in making a choice for life.

SECTION XII.

Of retiring from Business.

AS on the one hand, it is odious for a man of an overgrown fortune to go on in business to a great age, still striving to increase a heap already larger than is necessary, to the prejudice of younger people, who ought to have a clear stage, and opportunity of making their way in life; so it is vain for a person, who has spent his days in an active sphere, to think of enjoying retirement, before the time of retirement be come. He who resolves at once to change his way of life, from action to retirement, or from one state to another directly contrary, without being prepared for it by proper age and habit, for some continuance of time, will find, that he will no sooner have quitted his former way of life, than he will desire to be in it again.

It is on this, as well as other accounts, of great advantage, that a man have acquired some turn to reading, and the more sober entertainments of life, in his earlier days. There is not a much more deplorable sort of existence, than that which is dragged on by an old man, whose mind is unfurnished with the materials proper for yielding him some entertainment suitable to the more sedate time of life; I mean useful knowledge. For the remembrance of fifty years spent in scraping of money, or in pursuing pleasure, or in indulging vicious inclinations, must yield but poor entertainment at a time of life, when a man can at best say, he has been.

SECTION XIII.

Of disposing of Effects by Will.

IT is a strange weakness in some people, to be averse to making their wills, and disposing of their effects, while they are in good health, and have ease of mind, and a sound judgment to do it in a proper manner; as if a man must certainly die soon after he has made his will. It is highly proper that people, who have any thing considerable to leave, should settle their affairs in such a distinct manner, that their intentions may appear plain and indisputable, and their heirs may not have an endless and vexatious lawsuit, instead of a fortune.

For this purpose I would advise, that a gentleman, at his leisure, draw up a sketch of his will, leaving the names of the legatees, and the sums, blank, if he chooses to conceal either the state of his affairs, or the persons he intends to benefit at his death. This draught he may have examined by those who are judges of such matters; so that he may be quite easy as to the condition he leaves his wife and children, or other relations in.

The calamity in which a widow and orphans are involved, who, through some quirk of law, or the omission of some necessary formality, find themselves disappointed of their whole dependence, and have the mortification to see an heir at law (to the shame of law) seize on what the deceased intended for their support; the circumstances, I say, of a family thus plunged into want and misery, from the fairest expectations, are to the last degree deplorable.

A man ought to consider that it is a tender point for an affectionate wife to touch upon, and ought to spare her the trouble of soliciting him upon this head. For it must be no easy state of mind a woman must be in, who considers that she and her children depend, for their daily bread, upon the slender thread of the life of an husband, who at the same time has it in his power to secure her effectually, by taking only a very little trouble.

It is an unjust and absurd practice of many, in disposing of their effects by will, to show such excessive partiality to some of their children beyond others. To leave to an eldest son the whole estate, and to each of the other chil-

dren, perhaps one year's rent. The consequence, indeed, of this is often, that the heir, finding himself in possession of an estate, concludes he shall never be able to run it out; and may be got, through extravagance, just within sight of want, by the time his industrious brothers, who, having no such funds to trust to, were obliged to exert themselves, have got estates, or are in a fair way toward them. This, I say, is a common consequence of the unequal distribution of estates. But, whatever the consequence be, it seems pretty evident, that to treat so very differently, those who are alike our offspring, cannot be strictly just.

It proves often a fatal error in the disposal of effects for the benefit of one's family, to leave them in the hands of any private person whatever, especially of one who has concerns in trade. The state of such a one's affairs, must, by the very course of trade, be so liable to change, that no money can be absolutely safe which he can lay his hands upon. We see every day instances of the failure of traders, who have generally passed for men of first rate fortunes, and often see young families ruined by their ruin. If it be plain that the public funds are, at least, a more probable security than any private, one would think it natural to fix upon the best, since even the best is not too secure.

SECTION XIV.

Of Old Age.

WHEN people draw towards old age, the infirmities of nature, joined with the various ills of life, become more and more grievous; and strength of mind continually decaying, the burden becomes at last hardly supportable. To wave, for the present, all moral or religious considerations, I will only observe, that, if one would, in any period of life, or under any distress whatever, desire to have his grievances as tolerable as possible, there is no surer means for that end, than to endeavour to preserve an equal, composed, and resigned temper of mind. To struggle, and fret, and rage at every misfortune or hardship, is tearing open the wound, and making it fester. Composing the mind to contentment and patience is the

most likely means to heal it up. It is, therefore, obvious what conduct prudence directs to in the case of distress or hardship.

But in what light does this show the prudence of many people? Do we not see, that they who have no considerable real distresses in life to struggle with, take care to make themselves miserable, by mustering up imaginary, or heightening inconsiderable misfortunes? Does not a courtier, in the midst of affluence, and with independence in his power, make himself as unhappy about a cold look from the minister, as a poor tradesman is at the loss of his principal customer? Is not a fine lady as much distressed, if her lap-dog has a fit of the cholic, as a poor woman about the sickness of a child? Such imaginary unfortunates complain heavily of the afflictions of life, while neither labours under any worth mentioning but what are of their own making.

When people have all their lives allowed themselves to give way to foolish discontent and uneasiness, it is no wonder, if when they come to old age, they find themselves unhappy, and by their peevishness make all about them unhappy, and put it in their hearts to wish them well out of the world.

The art of growing old with a good grace is none of the least considerable in life. In order to this, it is absolutely necessary, that a man have spent the former part of his days in a manner consistent with reason and religion. He who has passed his life wholly in secular pursuits, in grasping at riches, in aspiring after preferments, in amusing himself in show and ostentation, in wallowing in sensuality and voluptuousness, what foundation has he laid for passing old age with dignity? What is more universally despised than an old man, whose mind, unstored with knowledge, and unaffected with a sense of goodness, still grovels after the objects of sense, still hankers after the scenes which formerly engaged him; scenes of vanity and folly in any age, but in the graver part of life, unnatural and monstrous? Yet there is nothing more certain (for universal experience confirms it) than that, according as a person has formed his mind in the younger part of life, such it will be to the last. The ruling passion seldom fails, till all fails. He who has made the bottle his chief

delight, will drink on even when he has hardly breath to swallow a glass of wine. The impure lecher will creep after his mistress, when his knees knock together. The miser, who has all his life made riches his god, will be scrambling after the wealth of this world, with one foot in the other. The vain coquet will show affectation, when she can no longer move any passion but pity. The brainless card-player will waste the last lawful remains of life in an amusement unworthy of the most considerate age. Even when all is over, how do we see many old people in their conversation dwell with pleasure on the vanities, and even the vices of their younger days?

How should it be otherwise than that the mind, which has been for fifty years together constantly bent one way, should preserve to the end, the cast it has received and kept so long? In the same manner, those who have been so wise, as to view life in its proper light, as a transient state, to be temperately enjoyed while it lasts; who have improved their minds with knowledge, and enriched them with virtue and piety; have qualified themselves for acting the last concluding scene with the same propriety as the rest. To such, their finding themselves unequal to the active or the gayer scenes of life, is no manner of mortification. Indifferent to them, while engaged in them, they quit them with indifference; sure to find in retirement a fund of the noblest entertainment from sober and wise conversation, from reading, and from views of that future world, for which the conscience of a well-spent life assures them of their being in a state of preparation. Useful by their wise and pious conversation while they live, they go off the stage lamented, leaving behind them the sweet savour of a good name, and the universal approbation of the wise and good.

SECTION XV.

Of the Dignity of Female Life, prudentially considered.

WITHOUT the general concurrence of both sexes, in a prudent and virtuous conduct, the perfection of human nature is not to be attained. The influence which the fair sex have, and ought to have in life, is so great, that

their good behaviour can give a general turn to the face of human affairs; and a great deal more than is commonly imagined depends upon their discretion; since (to say nothing of their influence over our sex, in the characters of mistresses and wives) the minds of the whole species receive their first cast from womankind.

The dignity of female life, exclusive of what is common to both sexes, consists in an equal mixture of the reserve with benevolence in the virgin state, and affection and submission in that of marriage; a diligent attention to the forming of the tempers of children of both sexes in their earliest years, (for that lies wholly upon the mother) and the whole education of the daughters: for I know of none so proper for young ladies as a home education.

The greatest errors and dangers to be avoided by ladies, are comprehended in the following paragraphs.

Vanity in womankind, is, if possible, more absurd than in the other sex. Men have bodily strength, authority, learning, and such like pretences, for puffing themselves up with pride: But woman's only peculiar boast is beauty. For virtue and good sense are never the subjects of vanity.

There is no endowment of less consequence than elegance of form and outside. A mass of flesh, blood, humours, and impurities, covered over with a well coloured skin, is the definition of beauty. Whether is this more properly a matter of vanity, or of mortification? Were it incomparably more excellent than it is, nothing can be more absurd, than to be proud of what one has had no manner of hand in procuring, but is wholly the gift of heaven. A woman may as reasonably be proud of the lilies of the field, or the tulips of the garden, as of the beauty of her own face. They are both the works of the same hand; equally out of human power to give, or to preserve; equally trifling and despicable, when compared with what is substantially excellent; equally frail and perishing,

Affectation is a vice capable of disgracing beauty more than pimples, or the small-pox. I have often seen ladies in public places, of the most exquisite forms, render themselves, by affectation and visible conceit, too odious

to be looked at without disgust; who, by a modest and truly female behaviour, might have commanded the admiration of every eye. But I shall say the less upon this head, in consideration, that it is, generally speaking, to our sex, that female affectation is to be charged. A woman cannot indeed become completely foolish, or vicious, without our assistance.

Talkativeness in either sex is generally a proof of vanity and folly, but is in womankind, especially in company with men, and above all, with men of understanding and learning, wholly out of character, and peculiarly disagreeable to people of sense.

If we appeal either to reason, scripture, or universal consent, we shall find a degree of submission to the male sex, to be an indispensable part of the female character. And to set up for an equality with the sex to which nature has given the advantage, and formed for authority and action, is opposing nature, which is never done innocently.

The great hazard run by the female sex, and the point in which their prudence or weakness appears most conspicuous, is in love matters. To a woman's conduct with regard to the other sex, is owing, more than to all other things, the happiness or misery of her existence in this world; for I am at present only considering things in a prudential light.

A woman cannot act an imprudent part in listening to the proposal of a lover, whether of the honourable or dishonourable kind, without bringing herself to ruin irretrievable. If she does but seem to hear with patience the wanton seducer, her fame is irrecoverably blasted, and her value for ever sunk. The mere suspicion of guilt, or even of inclination, soils her reputation; and such is the delicacy of virgin purity, that a puff of foul breath stains it; and all the streams that flow will not restore its former lustre. Nothing therefore can exceed the folly of so much as hearing one sigh of the dishonourable lover: His raptures are only the expressions of his impure desire. His admiration of the beautiful and innocent, is only the effect of eagerness to gratify his filthy passion, by the ruin of beauty and innocence. He pretends to love: But so may the wolf declare his desire to devour the lamb. Both love their prey; but it is only to destroy.

Again, with respect to honourable proposals, prudence will suggest to a woman, that the hazard she runs in throwing herself away, is incomparably more desperate than that of the other sex, who have every advantage for bettering, or bearing their afflictions of every kind. The case of the man, who is unhappily married, is calamitous; but that of the woman, who has a bad husband, is desperate, and incurable, but by death.

If there be any general rule for ladies to judge of the characters of men, who offer them proposals of marriage, it may be, to find out what figure they make among their sex. It is to be supposed that men are generally qualified to judge of one another's merits; and as our sex are accustomed to less delicacy and reserve than the other, it is not impossible to come at men's real characters, especially with regard to their tempers and dispositions, upon which the happiness of the married life depends, more than upon capacity, learning, or wealth.

Too great a delight in dress and finery, besides the expense of time and money, which they occasion, in some instances, to a degree beyond all bounds of decency and common sense, tend naturally to sink a woman to the lowest pitch of contempt among all those, of either sex, who have capacity enough to put two thoughts together. A creature who spends its whole time in dressing, gaming, prating, and gadding, is a being originally indeed of the rational make; but, who has sunk itself beneath its rank, and is to be considered, at present, as nearly on a level with the monkey species.

SECTION XVI.

Miscellaneous Thoughts on Prudence in Action.

TO pursue worthy ends, by wise means, is the whole of active prudence. And this must be done with resolution, diligence, and perseverance, till the point is gained, or appears impracticable.

To retort an injury, is to be almost as bad as the aggressor. When two throw dirt against one another, can either keep himself clean?

Action and contemplation are no way inconsistent;

but rather reliefs to one another. When you are engaged in study, throw business out of your thoughts. When in business, think of your business only.

To a man of business, knowledge is an ornament. To a studious man, action is a relief.

If you ever promise at all, take care, at least, that it be so as nobody may suffer by trusting to you.

If you have debtors, let not your lenity get the better of your prudence; nor your care of your own interest make you forget humanity. A prison is not for the unfortunate, but the knavish.

Tractableness to advice, and firmness against temptation are no way inconsistent.

There is more true greatness in generously owning a fault, and making proper reparation for it, than in obstinately defending a wrong conduct. But, quitting your purpose, retreat rather like a lion than a cur.

A mind hardened against affliction, and a body against pain and sickness, are the two securities of earthly happiness.

Let a person find out his own peculiar weakness, and be ever suspicious of himself on that side. Let a passionate man, for example, resolve always to show less resentment than reason might justify; there is no danger of his erring on that side. Let a talkative man resolve always to say less than the most talkative person in the company he is in. If one has reason to suspect himself of loving money too much, let him give always, at least, somewhat more than has been given by a noted miser.

A man who does not know in general his own weakness, must either be a person of high rank, or a fool.

How comes it that we judge so severely the actions we did a great while ago. It is because we are now at a proper distance, and look upon them with an indifferent eye, as on those of another person. The very objects which now employ us so much, and the conduct we now justify so strenuously, can we say, that the time will not come when we shall look upon them as we now do upon our follies of ten or twenty years backwards? Why can we not view ourselves, and our own behaviour, at all times in the same manner? This shows our partiality for ourselves, in a most absurd light.

When you are dead, the letters which compose your name will be no more to you than the rest of the alphabet. Leave the rage of fame to wits and heroes. Do you strive to live usefully in this world, and you will be happy in the next.

It is best if you can keep quite clear of the great. But if you happen at any time to be thrust into their company, keep up in your behaviour to them the dignity of a man of spirit and worth, which is the only true greatness. If you sneak and cringe, they will trample upon you.

Beware of mean spirited people. They are commonly revengeful and malicious.

The following advantages are likely to make a completely accomplished man. 1. Good natural parts. 2. A good temper. 3. Good and general education, begun early. 4. Choice, not immense, reading, and careful digesting. 5. Experience of various fortunes. 6. Conversation with men of letters and of business. 7. Knowledge of the world, gained by conversation, business, and travel.

If the world suspect your well intended designs, be not uneasy. It only shows that mankind are themselves false and artful, which is the cause of their being suspicious.

Never set up for a jack-in-an-office. Men of real worth are modest, and decline employment, though much fitter for it than those who thrust themselves forward. But if good can be done, do it, if no one else will.

How much less trouble it costs a well disposed mind to pardon, than to revenge!

If your enemy is forced to have recourse to a lie to blacken you, consider what a comfort it is to think of your having supported such a character, as to render it impossible for malice to hurt you without the aid of falsehood. And trust to the genuine fairness of your character to clear itself in the end.

Whoever has gone through much of life, must remember, that he has thrown away a great deal of useless uneasiness upon what was much worse in his apprehension, than in reality.

A miser will sometimes serve you any way you please to ask him, purely to save his money.

If you give away nothing till you die, even your own children will hardly thank you for what you leave them.

A great number of small favours will engage some people more to you, than one great one. And where they hope for more and more, they will be willing to go on to serve you.

An idle person is dead before his time.

The great difficulty of behaviour is in case of surprise.

The truest objects of charity are those whom modesty conceals.

A generous man does not lose by a generous man.

It will be a great misfortune to you, if an intimate friend, or near relation, falls into poverty. You must either lend your assistance, or be ill looked upon. And people are often blamed for niggardliness, when, if all the truth were known, (which might be very improper) they would be justified in having given to the full extent of their abilities.

A man's character and behaviour in public, and at home, are often as different as a lady's looks at a ball, and in a morning before she has gone through the ceremony of the toilet. But real merit, like artless beauty, shines forth at all times distinguishingly illustrious.

There is nothing more agreeable to human nature than to have somewhat moderately to employ both mind and body. There is nothing more unnatural, than for a creature endowed with various active powers, to be wholly inactive. Hence the silly and mischievous inventions of cards, dice, and other amusements, which empty people have been obliged to have recourse to, as a kind of artificial employment, to prevent human nature from sinking into an absolute lethargy. Why might not our luxurious wasters of heaven's most inestimable gift; as well employ the same eagerness of activity in somewhat that might turn to account to themselves and others, as in the insipid and unprofitable drudgery of the card-table?

To serve your friends to your own ruin, is romantic. To think of none but yourself, is sordid.

Riches and happiness have nothing to do with one another, though extreme poverty and misery be nearly related.

Judge of yourself by that respect you have voluntarily

paid you by men of undoubted integrity and discernment, and who have no interest to flatter you. Act up to your character. Support your dignity. But do not make yourself unhappy, if you meet not with the honour you deserve from those whose esteem no one values.

Despise trifling affronts, and they will vanish. A little water will put out a fire, which, blown up, would burn a city.

Give away what you can part with. Throw away nothing: you know not how much you may miss it.

Provide for after-life, so as to enjoy the present. Enjoy the present, so as to leave a provision for the time to come.

Avoid too many and great obligations. It is running into debt beyond what you may be able to pay.

Conclude at least nine parts in ten of what is handed about by common fame to be false.

Wealth is a good servant, but a bad master.

Do not offend a bad man, because he will stick at nothing to be revenged. It is cruel to insult a good man, who deserves nothing but good. A great man may easily crush you. And there is none so mean who cannot do mischief. Therefore follow peace with all men.

To carry the triumph over a person you have got the better of, too far, is mean and imprudent: it is mean, because you have got the better; it is imprudent, because it may provoke him to revenge your insolence in some desperate way.

Presents ought to be genteel, not expensive: they are not valued by generous minds for their own sake, but as marks of love or esteem.

Provide for the worst; but hope the best.

Set about nothing, without first thinking it over carefully. To say, "I did not think of that," is much the same as saying, "You must know I am a simpleton."

Whoever anticipates troubles, will find he has thrown away a great deal of terror and anguish to no purpose.

Accustom yourself to have some employment for every hour you can prudently snatch from business. This book was put together in that manner, else it could never have been writ by its author.

Live so, as nobody may believe bad reports against you.

Whenever you find you do not care to look into your

affairs, you may assure yourself that they will soon not be fit to look into.

Reform yourself first and then others.

Do not place your happiness in ease from pain : there is no such thing in this world ; but in patience under affliction, which is within your reach.

If you are a master, do not deprive yourself of so great a rarity as a good servant for a slight offence. If you are a dependant, do not throw yourself out of a good place for a slight affront.

Do what good offices you can ; but leave yourself at liberty from promises and engagements.

Let no one overload you with favours : you will find it an unsufferable burden.

There are many doublings in the human heart : do not think you can find out the whole of a man's real character at once, unless he is a fool.

If you would embroil yourself with all mankind at once, you have only to oppose every man's prevailing passion. Endeavour to mortify the proud man ; irritate the passionate ; put the miser to expense ; and you will have them all against you. On the other hand, if you had rather live peaceably, give way a little to the particular weakness of those you converse with.

It will take some time to raise your fortune in a fair way, and to fit you for a better world : it will therefore be proper to begin a course of industry and piety as early as possible.

Aim at desert rather than reward.

Let no pretence of friendship mislead you ; he is not your friend who attempts it.

Never keep a bad servant, in hope of his reformation.

It is seldom that either borrower or lender gets by the bargain.

Think yourself cheap off with a little scandal for extraordinary goodness : how many have paid their lives for their integrity ?

The friendship of an artful man is mere self-interest : you will get nothing by it.

If you trust a known knave, people will not so much as pity you, when you suffer by him.

In dealing with a person you suspect, it may be useful

in conversation to draw him into difficulties, if possible, as they 'cross-examine witnesses at the bar, in order to find out the truth. It may even be of use to set him a talking; in the inadvertency and hurry of conversation, he may discover himself.

Consider how difficult a thing it must be to deceive the general eye of mankind, who are as much interested to detect you, as you are to deceive them.

He is surely a man of a greater reach, who can conduct his affairs without being obliged to have recourse to tricks and temporary expedients, than with them; he who knows how to secure the interest both of this world and the next, than he who cannot contrive to get a comfortable subsistence in this world without damning his soul.

It is foolish to show your teeth when you cannot bite.

Whoever loves injuries, let him provoke injuries.

In prosperity, prepare for a change: in adversity, hope for one.

If you are ill used by a man, especially a great one, put up with the injury quietly, and be thankful it was not worse. When they do but a little mischief, the world has a good pennyworth of them.

If you let alone making your will till you come to a death-bed, you will not do it properly.

If you give at all, do it cheerfully.

If you want to show a person, that you see through his crafty designs, a hint between jest and earnest may do better than telling him bluntly and fully how he stands in your mind: from a little, he will guess the rest.

With the multiplicity of business every person has to do, how can people complain of being distressed for somewhat to pass the time? Besides private affairs to conduct, or oversee; children to form to wisdom and virtue; the distressed to relieve; the unthinking to advise; friends and country to serve; their own passions to conquer; their minds to furnish with knowledge, virtue, and religion; a whole eternity's happiness to provide for.

Try a friend before you trust him. Trust him no more than is necessary. Bear with any weakness that does not strike at the root of friendship. If a difference arise, bring the matter to a calm hearing. Make up the breach, if

possible. But if friendship languishes for any time, let it expire peaceably.

There is as much meanness in taking every trifle for an affront, as in putting up with the grossest indignity. The first is the character of a bully; the latter of a coward: which of the two had you rather be?

In all schemes, leave room for the possibility of a miscarriage.

Those are the best diversions, which most relieve the mind, and exercise the body; and which bring the least expense of time and money. Mirth is one thing, and mischief another.

It is strange to reflect a little upon some of the irreconcilable contrarieties in human nature. Nothing seems more strongly worked into the constitution of the mind than the love of liberty. Yet how very ready are we in some cases to give up our liberty? What more tyrannical than fashion? Yet how do all ranks, sexes, and ages enslave themselves in obedience to it? There is great reason to believe that it is wholly in compliance with custom, that many judicious, thinking people, waste so many valuable hours as we see they do, at an amusement, which must be a slavery to persons capable of thought, I mean the card-table. But such people ought to consider, how they can justify to themselves the throwing away so great a part of precious life, besides giving their countenance to a bad practice; merely because it is the fashion.

Bestir yourself while young: you will want rest when old.

Do not wish; but do.

Trust not relations, unless they be such as you would think worthy of trust, if they were strangers.

If you are not worth a shilling after all your debts are paid, do not spend a shilling that you can save. Do not squander away your hopes.

If you can live independent, never give up your liberty and your leisure, much less your conscience, to a great man. He has nothing to give in return for them. If you can but be contented in moderate circumstances, you may be happy, and keep your inestimable liberty, leisure, and integrity into the bargain.

People are better found out in their unguarded hours,

than by the principal actions of their lives : the first, is nature, the second, art.

If you chance to have a quarrel with any one, by no means write letters, or send messages ; bring the matter to a hearing, as quickly as possible, before your spirits have time to rankle. Endeavour rather to reconcile than conquer your enemy. By so doing, you take from him the inclination to hurt you, which is the best security. When you have reconciled him, take care, if you find he has acted a traitorous part, never to trust, or be intimately concerned with him any more. You may love him as a fellow creature ; but not confide in him as a good man.

To gain applause, you must do as the archer, who obtains the prize by hitting the mark.

Asking a favour by letter, or giving a person time to think of it, is only giving him an opportunity of getting off handsomely.

It is not hard to find out a man's true merit, as to abilities.

He who behaves well, is certainly no weak man. But nothing is more difficult, than to find out a man's character as to integrity.

He who never misbehaved either in joy, in grief, or surprise, must have his wisdom at command, in a manner almost superior to humanity, and may be pronounced a true hero.

Haste is but a poor apology : take time and do your business well.

If you would not be forestalled by another, or laughed at in case of a disappointment, do not tell your designs.

If you are to be called a scrub, let it be for sparing, where frugality is proper. Who would spare in the education of a son ; in carrying on a considerable law suit ; or in defraying the expense of a solemnity ?

I would not answer for the conduct of the ablest man in the world, if I knew that he was so conceited of his own abilities, as to be above advice.

There is more good to be done in life by obstinate diligence, and perseverance, than most people seem aware of. The ant and bee are but little and weak animals ; and yet by constant application, they do wonders.

Do not scold or swear at your servants : they will des-

pise you for a passionate, clamorous fool. Do not make them too familiar with you : they will make a wrong use of it, and grow saucy. Do not let them know all the value you have for them : they will presume upon your goodness, and conclude that you cannot do without them. Do not give them too great wages : it will put them above their business. Do not allow them too much liberty : they will want still more and more. Do not entreat them to live with you : if you do, they will conclude they may live as they please.

Irresolution is as foolish as rashness. If the husbandman should never sow, or the shipmaster never put to sea, where would be the harvest, or the gains ?

Do not think to prevail with a man in a fury; to calm his passion in a moment ; if you can persuade him to put off his revenge for some time, it will be the most you can hope. Advice may sometimes do good when you do not expect it. People do not care to seem persuaded to alter any part of their conduct : for that is an acknowledgment, that they were in the wrong. But they may, perhaps, reflect afterwards upon what you said ; and, if they do not wholly reform the fault you reprov'd, they may rectify it in some measure.

To be regular, is prudence ; to go like a clock, is mere formality.

Do not wish for an increase of wealth ; it does but enlarge the desires : whereas happiness consists in the gratification of the wants of nature.

Where lies the wisdom of that revenge, which recoils upon one's self? Instead of getting the better of your enemy, by offending your Maker in revenging an injury, you give your enemy the advantage, of seeing you punished. If you would have the whole advantage, forgive ; and then, if he does not repent, the whole punishment will fall upon him.

Profuse giving or treating is laughed at by the wise, according to the old saying, " Fools make feasts," &c.

He has a good income, who has but few occasions of spending : not he who has great rents, and great vents.

Providence can raise the meanest, or humble the highest : it is therefore absurd for the one to despair, or the other to presume.

In difficult businesses, it may answer good purposes, to let the proposal be made by a person of inferior consequence, and let another, whose word will have more weight, come, as if by chance, and second the motion.

Would you punish the spiteful? Show him that you are above his malice. The dart, he threw at you, will then rebound, and pierce him to the heart.

To get an estate fairly requires good abilities. To keep and improve one, is not to be done without diligence and frugality. But to lose one with a grace, when it so pleases the divine Providence, is a still nobler art.

He who promises rashly, will break his promise with the same ease as he made it.

Keep a watch over yourself, when you are in extreme good humour: artful people will take that opportunity to draw you into promises, which may embarrass you either to break or keep.

Your actions must not only be right, but expedient: they must not only be agreeable to virtue, but to prudence.

You may safely be umpire among strangers, but not among friends: in deciding between the former, you may gain; among the latter, you must lose.

Great fame is like a great estate, hard to get, hard to keep.

Party is the madness of many, for the gain of a few; says Swift.

If it gives you pain, or shame, to think of changing your scheme at the remonstrance of your faithful friend, (which shows extreme weakness in you,) you may get over that difficulty, by seeming to have thought of some additional consideration, which has moved you to follow his advice.

In a free country, there is little to be done by force: gentle means may gain you those ends, which violence would for ever put out of your power.

He who is unhappy, and can find no comfort at home, is unhappy indeed.

Never trust a man for the vehemence of his asseverations, whose bare word you would not trust: a knave will make no more of swearing to a falsehood, than of affirming it.

Theory will signify little, without address to put your knowledge in practice.

In affliction, constrain yourself to bear patiently for a day or so only for the sake of trying, whether patience does not lighten the burden: if the experiment answers, as you will undoubtedly find, you have only to continue it.

If you borrow, be sure of making punctual payment, else you will have no more trust.

Is it not better that your friend tell you your faults privately, than that your enemy talk of them publicly?

A princely mind will ruin a private fortune. Keep the rank in which Providence hath placed you: and do not make yourself unhappy, because you cannot afford whatever a wild fancy might suggest. The revenues of all the kingdoms of the world would not be equal to the expense of one extravagant person.

Where there is a prospect of doing good, neither be so forward in thrusting yourself into the direction of the business as to keep out others, who might manage it better; nor so backward, through false modesty, as to let the thing go undone, for want of somebody to do it. If no one else, who could execute a good work better, will engage in it, do you undertake and execute it as well as you can.

The man of books is generally awkward in business: the man of business is often superficial in knowledge.

In engaging yourself for any person or thing, you will be sure to entangle yourself, if things should not turn out to your expectation. And if you get off for a little ridicule think it a good bargain.

You may perhaps come to be great or rich; but remember the taxes and deductions you will be liable to, of hurry, noise, impatience, flattery, envy, anxiety, disappointment; not to mention remorse. All these, and a hundred other articles set on one side of the account, and your wealth and grandeur on the other, are you likely to be greatly a gainer in happiness by quitting a private station from pomp and show? Ask those who have experience.

Necessity and ability live next door to one another.

If you never ask advice, you will hardly go always right. If you ask too many, you will not know which way to go. If you obstinately oppose advice, you will certainly go

wrong. A wicked counsellor will mislead you wilfully : a foolish one thoughtlessly.

Never take credit where you can pay ready money ; especially of low dealers : they will make you pay interest with a vengeance.

Never refuse a good offer, for the sake of a better market : the first is certainty ; the latter only hope.

To make a thing come of another, which you must at last have done yourself, is an innocent, and often useful art in life.

Take care of irrevocable deeds.

He who has done all he could, has discharged his conscience.

Debt is one of the most substantial and real evils of life : especially when a man comes to be so plunged, as to have no prospect of ever getting clear. An honest mind in such circumstances, must be in a state of despair, because there is no hope of ever being in a condition to do justice to mankind.

Never let yourself be meanly betrayed into an admiration of a person of high rank, or fortune, whom you would despise, if he were your equal in station : none but fools and children are struck with tinsel.

It is an employment more useful in society, to be a maker-up of differences, than a professor of Astronomy. But it requires prudence to know how to come between two people who are bickering at one another ; and not have a blow from one or other.

If you must give a person, who comes to ask a favour, the mortification of a denial, do not add to it that of an affront, unless he has affronted you by his petition.

If you make use of the faults of others, as warnings to avoid falling into the same errors, you may profit by folly, as well as by wisdom. If you think of nothing but laughing at them, I know no great advantage you can get by that.

If you can by any sudden contrivance, (for framing of which you do not find yourself reduced to the necessity of a lie, or any other baser art) draw off part of the attention of your enemy, or disconcert his measures, as it is common in war to attack at several places at once ; I hold it an honest and laudable artifice.

Do you not remember, when you was about twenty or twenty-five years of age, that you was very full of your own talents and accomplishments? Do you not find, that you have been growing every year since, more and more ignorant and weak in your own opinion? Let this teach you to put a proper estimate upon your attainments, and to know that the time will come, when (if you be found worthy of true knowledge) you will reflect on all your acquisitions in this state, as comparatively mean and trivial.

Look back upon the difficulties and troubles you have been embarrassed with in life; and observe, whether most of them have not been occasioned by misconduct, pride, passion, folly, and vice: and if you find you cannot bring yourself to give up what has cost you infinite trouble and vexation, conclude yourself a confirmed incurable madman.

If ever you engage in any design for the public good, depend upon meeting with almost as many hindrances, as you have different persons to be concerned with. You will have a difficulty started by almost every one, to whom you propose your scheme. One will tell you, it will do no good; another, that it will do harm; and almost all will be cold to what is not of their own proposing. Some will seem to come into your scheme at once, and will by degrees draw you out of the way you was in. By and by, some bugbear starts up before them; and then they are as hasty to desert you, as they were sanguine to join you. Many love to make a show of public spirit, while there is no trouble to be taken, or expense to be laid out; but when you expect them to bestir themselves in earnest, you find yourself disappointed. Many, for the mere vanity of being in a scheme, will be very busy; but if they find they cannot be of the importance they desire, or that they cannot rule all, the public good may shift for itself, for what they care; they will have no concern, where they must go along with others. The timorousness of some; the difficulty of others, with respect to their characters, which they do not care to hazard for the public advantage; and the rashness of others, who will be meddling; the coldness, the forwardness, the pride, the diffidence, of those who should go along with you, will be so many obstacles in your way, which will heartily plague you, if not wholly disconcert your scheme. But we must not, on

account of the difficulties, resolve against attempting any thing for the general advantage. On the contrary, the more the difficulty, the greater the praise. The proper method of proceeding on such occasions, I take to be as follows :

Consider carefully your scheme, with its probable consequences, comparing it with whatever you have known done, that may coincide with or resemble it, either at home or in foreign countries. Then talk it over with one or more friends, whom you know to be men of understanding and sincerity. Keep it as private as possible, till it be almost ripe for execution. Carry it as far as you can, before you desire the concurrence of any number of persons, especially of high rank. They are generally, and not altogether without reason, suspicious of whatever is proposed to them as a project. And one will not be first, and another will not be first, in a new scheme : though they will perhaps join with others, especially of their own rank. By this conduct you may by degrees draw into a concurrence with you some persons, whose names may be of service, and may prevent the objections which may be made by others. For when people see a design going into immediate execution, they will consider it in a very different manner from what is only proposed as a possible scheme, but is yet wholly immature.

I cannot help wondering at the turn of many people's minds, who are fond of what is far fetched, merely for its being foreign. Whereas one would think self-love, which produces so many foolish effects, might at least produce one reasonable one, I mean, to make people fond of home, and whatever is the product of their own country, and their own grounds. Why should we love our own children, our own works, and our own weaknesses merely because they are our own, at the same time that we love foreign fashions, wines, musicians, &c. merely because they are foreign ? For my part, I think it is much more for an English gentleman to boast, that the provisions of his table are the product of his own estate, and the dress he wears, the manufacture of his own country, than that the four quarters of the globe have been ransacked to feed and clothe him.*

* These remarks on the Love of Country ought, at this time in particular, to have their full force on the heart of every American.—*Publisher.*

If while you are young, and bad habits are yet but weak in you, you have not strength of mind to conquer them, how will you be able to do it, when they have acquired strength by length of time and practice? If you do not find yourself now disposed to look into the state of your mind, and to repent and reform, while there is less to set right, how will you bring yourself hereafter to examine your own heart, when all is confusion within, and nothing fit to be looked into? Or how will you bring yourself to repent and reform, when there will be so much to set right, that you will not know where to begin?

It is easy to keep from gaming, drunkenness, or any other fashionable vice. You have only to lay down a firm resolution, and fix in your mind a steady aversion against them. When once your humour is known, nobody will trouble you. They will perhaps say of you, "He is a queer fellow, and will not do as other people do." At last those who cannot live without the card-table and the bottle, will drop you; and then you have only to seek out company where improvement is more pursued than amusement. I am mistaken if you will be a great loser by the exchange.

Make a sure bargain beforehand with workmen; and by no means be put off with their telling you, they will refer the price to your discretion.

A person, who fills a place of eminence, will do well to observe the following rules: 1. Above all things to act a strictly just and upright part: for that will be sure to end well. 2. To make his advantage of the errors of his predecessors. 3. To avoid all extremes in general: violent measures are wholly inconsistent with prudence. 4. To suspect all; but take care not to seem suspicious of any. 5. To be content with a moderate income, and moderate ostentation: great riches and grandeur infallibly draw envy and hatred. 6. To be easy of access: stiffness is universally hated; and affability tends to reconcile people to the private character of a person whose public conduct may be obnoxious. 7. To hear all opinions, and follow the best. 8. To listen attentively to the remarks made by enemies. 9. To show to inferiors somewhat personally great in his conduct and character: it exposes

a man of rank to extreme contempt, to observe that what makes the difference between him and his inferiors, is chiefly dress, riches, or station. 10. To retire in time, if possible, with a reputation unsullied.

Health; a good conscience; one hundred a year for a single person, or two for a family; the real necessaries of life are soon reckoned up. If there happen to be in the neighbourhood a few conversable people, with whom you may walk, or ride out, hear a song, crack a harmless joke, or have a game at bowls, you are possessed of the whole luxury of life. Where is the man whose merit may challenge such happiness? Yet how many are there dissatisfied in affluence beyond this?

If you find yourself in a thriving way keep in it.

Throw sordid self out of your mind, if you think of being truly great in spirit.

A readiness at throwing any sudden thought which may occur, either in reading or conversation, into easy language, may be of great use towards improvement in prudence for action, and furniture for conversation. One who accustoms himself much to making remarks of all kinds in writing, must in time have by him a collection containing somewhat upon every thing.

I do not know a much greater unhappiness in life, than that of being connected by blood or friendship, with unfortunate necessitous people. A generous mind cannot bear to see them sink, without endeavouring to help them out of their difficulties. The consequence of which is, being drawn into difficulties by their means. If you lend, and ask for your own, a quarrel follows. And if you give freely, they will depend on your supporting them in idleness. And after all, what is most vexatious is, that you can seldom do any good to imprudent and unthriving people. Such connections a prudent man will avoid, or give up as soon as possible.

Do not think of any great design after forty years of age.

The very deliberating upon business is half the business.

Your neighbour has more income than enough; you have just enough. Is your neighbour the better for having what he has no use for? Are you the worse for being free from the trouble of what would be useless to you?

Better consider for an hour, than repent for a year.

Let scandal alone, and it will die away of itself: oppose it, and it will spread the faster.

Let safety and innocence be two indispensable ingredients in all your amusements: Is there any pleasure in what leads to loss of health, fortune, or soul?

Take care of falling out of conceit with your wife, your station, habitation, business, or any thing else, which you cannot change. Let no comparisons once enter into your mind: the consequence will be restlessness, envy, and unhappiness.

Be not desirous of scenes of grandeur, of heightened pleasures and diversions: it is the sure way to take your heart off from your private station and way of life, and to make you uneasy and unhappy. It is a thousand to one but, if you were to get into a higher station, you would find it awkward and unsuitable to you, and that you would only want to return again to your former happy independence.

There is no time spent more stupidly than that which some luxurious people pass in a morning between sleeping and waking, after nature has been fully gratified. He who is awake, may be doing somewhat: he who is asleep, is receiving the refreshment necessary to fit him for action: but the hours spent in dozing and slumbering, can hardly be called existence.

Consider, the most elegant beauty is only a fair skin drawn over a heap of the same flesh, blood, bones, and impurities, which compose the body of the ugliest dunghill beggar.

If you have made an injudicious friendship, let it sink gently and gradually; if you blow it up at once, mischief may be the consequence: never disoblige, if you can possibly avoid it.

If you want to try experiments, take care at least, that they be not dangerous ones.

Better not make a present at all, than do it in a pitiful manner; every thing of elegance, is better let alone than clumsily performed.

If you want to keep the good opinion of a great person, whom you find to be a man of understanding; do not

thrust yourself upon him, but let him send for you when he wants you. Do not pump for his secrets, but stay till he tells you them ; nor offer him your advice unasked ; nor repeat any thing of what passes between you, relating to family, or state affairs ; nor boast of your intimacy with him ; nor show yourself ready to sneak and cringe, or to make the enemy of mankind a present of your soul to oblige your patron. If your scheme be to make your fortune at any rate, put on your boots, and plunge through thick and thin.

It will vex you to lose a friend for a smart stroke of railery ; or the opinion of the wise and good, for a piece of foolish behaviour at a merry-making.

The more you enlarge your concerns in life, the more chances you will have of embarrassments.

Mankind generally act not according to right ; but more according to present interest ; and most according to present passion : by this key you may generally get into their designs, and foretell what course they will take.

In estimating the worth of men, keep a guard upon your judgment, that it be not biassed by wealth or splendour. At the same time, there is no necessity for treating with a cynical insolence, every person whom Providence hath placed in an eminent station, merely because your experience teaches you, that very few of the great are deserving of the esteem of the wise and good. Consider the temptations which besiege people of distinction, and render it almost impossible for them to come at truth ; and make all reasonable allowances. If you see any thing like real goodness of heart in a person of high rank, admire it as an uncommon instance of excellence, which, in a more private station, would have risen to an extraordinary pitch.

Never write letters about any affair that has occasioned, or may occasion a difference : a difference looks bigger in a letter than in conversation.

Do not let one failure in a worthy and practicable scheme baffle you : the more difficulty the more glory.

If you do not set your whole thoughts upon a business, while you are about it, it is ten to one but you mismanage it : if you set your affections immoveably upon worldly things you will become a sordid earth-worm.

Grief smothered preys upon the vitals ; give it vent into the bosom of a friend : but take care that your friend be a person of approved tenderness ; else he will not administer the balm of sympathy : of tried prudence ; else you will not profit by his advice or consolation : and of experienced secrecy ; else you may chance to find yourself betrayed and undone.

In public places be cautious of your behaviour : you know not who may have an eye upon you, and afterwards expose your levity or affectation where you would least wish it. Nothing can be imagined more nauseous than the public behaviour of many people, who make mighty pretensions to the elegancies of life. To go to church, to a tragedy, or an oratorio, only to disturb all who are within reach of your impertinence, shows a want, not only of common modesty and civility, but of common sense. If you do not come to improve, or to enjoy the entertainment, you can have no rational scheme in view. If you want to play off your fooleries, you have only to go to a rout, where you are sure nothing of sense or reasonable entertainment will have any place, and where consequently you can spoil nothing. As to indecencies in places of public worship, one would think the fear of being struck by the Power to whom such places are dedicated, would a little restrain the public impiety of some people.

Never disoblige servants if you can avoid it. Low people are often mischievous : and having lived with you, have it in their power to misrepresent and injure you.

The more servants you keep, the worse you will be served.

Great people think their inferiors do only their duty in serving them : And that they do theirs in rewarding their services with a nod or a smile. The lower part of mankind have minds too sordid to be capable of gratitude. It is therefore chiefly from the middle rank that you may look for a sense and return of kindness, or any thing worthy or laudable.

Do not let your enemy see that he has it in his power to plague you.

Beware of one who has been your enemy, and all of a sudden, no body knows how, or why, grows mightily loving and friendly.

In proposing your business, be rather too full, than too brief, to prevent mistakes. In affairs, of which you are a judge, make the proposal yourself. In cases which you do not understand, wait if possible, till another makes it to you.

Be fearful of one you have once got the better of. You know not how you may have irritated him; nor how deeply revenge works in his heart against you. It is better not to seem to have got the advantage of your enemy when you have.

If you ask a favour, which you had some pretensions to, and meet with a refusal, it will be impolitic to show that you think yourself ill used. You will act a more prudent part in seeming satisfied with the reasons given. So you may take another opportunity of soliciting; and may chance to be successful: for the person you have obliged will, if he has any grace, be ashamed and puzzled to refuse you a second time.

If you are defamed, consider, whether the prosecution of the person who has injured you is not more likely to spread the report than to clear your innocence. If so, your regard for yourself, will teach you what course to take.

THE
DIGNITY
OF
HUMAN NATURE.

BOOK II.

OF KNOWLEDGE.

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING in the former book laid before the young reader a series of directions with regard to his conduct in most circumstances in life, which, if he will follow, supplying their deficiencies (as it is impossible to frame a system of prudentials that shall suit all possible cases without deficiency) by applying to the judicious and experienced for advice in all extraordinary emergencies, and by forming his conduct by the best rules and examples, he will have great reason to hope for success and credit in life, and to have even his disappointments and misfortunes ascribed, at least by the candid and benevolent, to other causes, rather than to error, or misconduct on his part; it follows next to proceed to the consideration of what makes another very considerable part of the dignity of human life, to wit, The improvement of the mind, by useful and ornamental knowledge.

It may be objected, that, as all our knowledge is comparatively but ignorance, it cannot be of much importance that we take the pains to acquire what is of so little consequence when acquired.

But it is to be observed, that our knowledge is said to be inconsiderable only in comparison with that of superior beings, and that what we can know is not to be named in comparison with what in the present state lies wholly out of our reach. And though this is the case not only of our shortsighted species, but also of the highest archangel in heaven, whose comprehension, being still finite, must fall infinitely short of the whole extent of knowledge, which in the Divine Mind is strictly infinite; yet I believe hardly any man can be found so weak as to despise the knowledge of an angel, or superior being, or who would not willingly acquire it, if it were possible.

If there is a certain measure of knowledge, which we are sure is attainable, because it has been attained by many of our own species, must we despise it because we know there are vast tracks of science to which human sagacity cannot reach? Must we fall out with our eyes because they cannot take in the ken of an angel? Must we resolve not to make use of them to see our way here on earth, because they are not acute enough to show us whether there are any inhabitants in the moon?

Truth may be compared to gold or diamonds in the mine, the smallest fragment of which is valuable. And if one had the offer of all the gold dust, or all the small diamonds of a mine, I believe he would hardly reject it, because he could not have the working of the rich vein wholly to himself. Truth is the proper object of the understanding, as food is the nourishment of the body. Less important truths are still worth searching for. Truths of great importance are worth any labour the finding them may cost.

It is, therefore, plainly one thing to be conceited of any acquisitions we can make in knowledge, and another, to, despise those that are within our power. There is no doubt but the most enlightened angel above, is less conceited of the vast treasures of knowledge he possesses, than a student in his first year at the university, is of the crude and indigested smattering he has gained. Nor is there any room to doubt, that knowledge is more esteemed by those sagacious beings who best know the value of it, than by our shortsighted species, who have gone such inconsiderable lengths in it.

The present is by no means an age for indulging ignorance. A person, who thinks to have any credit among mankind, or to make any figure in conversation, must absolutely resolve to take some pains in improving himself. We find more true knowledge at present in shops and counting houses, than could have been found an age or two ago in universities. For the bulk of the knowledge of those times consisted in subtle distinctions, laborious disquisitions, and endless disputes about words. The universal diffusion of knowledge, which we observe at present among all ranks of people, took its rise from the publishing those admirable essays, the *Spectator*, *Tatler*, and *Guardian*, in which learned subjects were, by the elegant and ingenious authors, cleared from the scholastic rubbish of Latin and logic, represented in a familiar style, and treated in a manner which people of plain common sense might comprehend. The practice of exhibiting courses of experiments in *London*, and other great cities, which was first introduced by *Whiston*, *Disagulier*, and others, has likewise greatly contributed to the spreading a taste for knowledge among the trading people, who now talk familiarly of things, their grandfathers would have thought it as much as their credit was worth to have been thought to know.

There is indeed greater danger, lest the flood of luxury and vice, which overruns the nation, go on increasing, till it destroys all that is truly noble and valuable in the people. I need not say danger. There is not the least doubt but the debauchery of modern times will shortly make an end, either of the nation or of itself. The histories of all the states of former times, where luxury has prevailed, sufficiently show what we have to expect. However, at present, it is absolutely necessary, in order to be on a footing with others, that we take a little pains to improve ourselves, especially in those parts of knowledge which enter commonly into conversation, as morals, history, and physiology.

Nothing makes a greater difference between one being and another, than different degrees of knowledge. The mind of an ignorant person is an absolute void. That of a wrongheaded person may be compared to a town sacked by an enemy, where all is overturned, and nothing in

its proper state or place. That of a wise man is a magazine richly furnished. Their important truths are stored up in such regular arrangement, that reflection sees at once through a whole series of subjects, and observes distinctly their relations and connexions. We may consider the mind of an angelic being as a vast palace, in which are various magazines stored with sublime truths, the contemplation of whose connexions, relations, and various beauties, must afford a happiness to us inconceivable.—The Divine mind (if it may be allowed us to attempt to form any faint idea of the Original of all perfection) may be considered as the immense and unbounded treasure of all truth, where the original ideas of all things that ever have been, that now are, and that ever shall be, or that are barely possible, are continually present; the continual contemplation of which infinitude of things, with the infinite beauties resulting from their various relations and connexions, must (if we may take the liberty of the expression) afford infinite entertainment and delight.

Thus, in proportion to the rank which any being holds in the universe, such are his views and his comprehension of things. And I know not whether the difference be greater betwixt the most enlightened of our species, and the lowest order of angelic beings; than downward from the most knowing of our species to the most ignorant. To compare an illiterate clown, or even a nobleman sunk in sensuality and ignorance, (for it is the same thing whether you choose out of the great vulgar or the small) with a *Newton* or a *Clarke*; to compare, I say, two minds, of which the one is wholly blind and insensible to every thing above the mere animal functions, of which a brute is as capable as he; and the other is raised habitually above the regards of sense, and is employed in the contemplation of great and sublime truths, in searching into the glorious works of his Almighty Maker in the natural world, and his profound scheme of government in the moral, and, by the force of a stupendous sagacity, is able, to penetrate into, and lay open to others, truths seemingly beyond human reach; by knowing more of the Divine works, is capable of forming more just conceptions of the glorious Author of all, and consequently of paying him a more rational obedience and devotion, of approaching nearer to

him; to compare two minds so immensely different in their capacities and endowments, what likeness appears to determine us to regard them as of the same species, and not rather to pronounce the one an angel, and the other a brute?

We see, therefore, that though there may be no room for pride or self-conceit on account of our attainments in knowledge, since the highest pitch we can possibly soar to, will be but inconsiderable in comparison with what we never can reach; yet there is a great deal of room for laudable ambition; since we see it is possible to excel the bulk of our species, for any thing we know, almost as much as an angel does a brute.

All endowments and acquisitions must have a beginning. Time was, when Sir *Isaac Newton* did not know the letters of the alphabet. And the time may, and, no doubt will come, when the meanest of my readers, if he makes a proper use of the natural abilities, and providential advantages given him, and studies to gain his favour, in whose disposal all gifts and endowments are, will exceed not only the pitch to which the above-mentioned prodigy of our species reached, but will rise to a station above that which the highest archangel in heaven fills at present, though the distance must still continue. And no one knows what immense advantage it may be of, to have endeavoured, even in this imperfect state, to get our minds opened; by the access of new ideas and views; to have habituated ourselves to examine, to compare, to reflect, and distinguish. It is evident that all these exercises of the understanding must be absolutely necessary in any future state whatever, for enlarging the sphere of our knowledge, and ennobling our minds. And what an advantage must it be for future states to have begun the work here that is to be carried on to eternity? To what end does religion, and even reason direct us to mortify our passions and appetites, to habituate our minds to the contemplation of those high and heavenly things we hope to come one day to the enjoyment of? No doubt, it is necessary, in the nature of things, that our minds, in their present infant state (as this may very properly be called) be formed and disciplined, by custom and habit, to that temper and character, which is to be hereafter their glory,

their perfection, and their happiness. Transfer the view from practice to knowledge, and you will find, that the analogy will hold good there likewise. It is necessary that we cultivate to the utmost all the faculties of our souls in the present state, in order to their arriving at higher degrees of perfection hereafter. And no rational mind ever will, or can rise to any high degree of perfection in any state whatever, and continue in ignorance. For if the definition of a rational mind be, "A being endowed with understanding and will," (I mention only the two principal faculties) there is no doubt but it is equally necessary to the perfection, and consequently to the happiness of every rational being, that its understanding be enlarged and improved by knowledge, as that its will be formed and directed by a sense of duty. To put the matter upon its proper footing, we ought to consider the improvement of every faculty of our minds as a part of virtue, of which afterwards. And in doing so, we shall find, that there ought to be no distinction between the love of knowledge and of virtue; it being evident, that the proper improvement and due conduct of the understanding is an indispensable part of the duty of every rational being. Just sentiments of the supreme governor of the world, of our own nature and state, of the fitness and propriety of moral good, and the fatal effects of irregularity, are the only sure foundation of goodness. Now, to attain full and clear notions of these, it will be necessary to make pretty extensive inquiries, to carry our researches a considerable way into the works of God, from whence we draw the clearest conceptions of his nature and attributes; to study our own nature and state, with the various passions, appetites, and inclinations which enter into our constitution; the connexions and relations we stand in to one another; and the different natures and consequences of actions, according to the motives they spring from, and the circumstances which diversify them. All this, I say, will be of immense advantage for raising us above vice, and confirming us in a steady course of virtue, which is the direct tendency of all true knowledge, and the effect it never fails to produce in every honest and uncorrupted mind.

And though it must be owned, that an illiterate day-labourer who earns his living by hedging and ditching,

who is devout toward his God, and benevolent to his neighbour, is a much nobler and more valuable being in the sight of his Maker, than the most accomplished courtier, who supports his grandeur by the wages of iniquity; nay, though it is evident, that great knowledge will even make a wicked being the worse, as it enables him to be more extensively wicked; it does not therefore follow, that knowledge is of no consequence to virtue; but only that vice is of so fatal and destructive a nature, as to poison and pervert the best things where it enters. If the above day-labourer, by the mere goodness of his heart, may be acceptable to God, and esteemed by all good men, how much higher might he have risen, with the addition of extensive improvements in knowledge? Could ever a *Woolaston* or a *Cudworth* have formed such just, or such sublime notions of virtue and of spiritual things? Could they ever have arrived at the pitch of goodness themselves reached, or could they have represented it in the amiable lights they have done, so as to gain others to the study and practice of it, without extensively improved abilities?

Enough, methinks, has therefore been said to invite readers, especially the younger sort, to engage in the truly noble and worthy labour of improving their minds, rather than indulging their senses: of cultivating the immortal part, rather than pampering the body; of aspiring to a resemblance of the nature of angels, rather than sinking themselves to the rank of brutes.

It is amazing and delightful to consider, what seemingly difficult things are done by means of human knowledge, scanty and confined as it is. The wonders performed by means of reading and writing are so striking, that some learned men have given it as their opinion, that the whole was communicated to mankind originally by some superior being. That by means of the various compositions of about twenty different articulations of the human voice, performed by the assistance of the lungs, the glottis, the tongue, the lips, and the teeth, ideas of all sensible and intelligible objects in nature, in art, in science, in history, in morals, in supernaturals, should be communicable from one mind to another; and again, that signs should be contrived, by which those articulations of the human voice should be expressed, so as to be communicable from one

mind to another by the eye; this seems really beyond the reach of humanity left to itself. To imagine, for example, the first of mankind capable of inventing any set of sounds, which should be fit to communicate to one another the idea of what is meant by the words *virtue* or *rectitude*, or any other idea wholly unconnected with any kind of sound whatever, and afterwards of inventing a set of signs, which should give the mind by the eye, an idea of what is properly an object of the sense of hearing; (as a word when expressed with the voice, represents an idea, which is the mere object of the understanding) to imagine mankind, in the first ages of the world, without any hint from superior beings, capable of this, seems doing too great honour to our nature. Be that as it will; that one man should, by uttering a set of sounds no way connected with, or naturally representative of one set of ideas more than another; that one man should, by such seemingly unfit means, enlighten the understanding, rouse the passions, delight or terrify the imagination of another; and that he should not only be able to do this when present, *viva voce*; but that he should produce the same effect by a set of figures no way naturally fit to represent either the ideas he would communicate, or (less still) the articulate sounds, which are themselves but representatives of ideas; and that he should affect another person at pleasure, at the distance of five thousand miles, and with as much precision and accuracy as if he were upon the spot, nay, as if he could open to him his mind, and give him to apprehend the ideas as they lie there in their original state, is truly admirable. The translating (so to speak) ideas into sounds, the translating those sounds into visible objects, the translating one set of those visible objects into another, or turning one language into another, as *Hebrew*, *Greek*, or *Latin*, into *English*; all this, if we were not familiar with it, would appear a sort of magic; but our being accustomed to it, does not lessen its real excellence.

Again, if we consider what strange things are commonly done by every novice in numbers, we cannot help admiring the excellence of knowledge. To tell an *Indian*, that a boy of twelve years of age, could by making a few scrawls upon paper, determine the number of barley-

corns, which would go round the globe of the earth; would strangely startle him! To talk to one unacquainted with the first principles of arithmetic, of adding together a set of numbers, as five thousand five hundred and fifty-five, six thousand six hundred and sixty-six, seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, and so on; to the number of twenty or thirty lines of figures, especially, if those lines consisted of a great many places of figures, going on to hundreds of thousands, millions, billions, trillions, and so on, to tell such a person, that it was not only possible, but even that nothing was more easy or trifling, than to determine the whole amount of such a set of numbers, and that without mistaking a single unit; all this would seem to the untutored *Indian* utterly incredible and impossible! To tell a Barbarian, that nothing was more common, than for traders in this part of the world, to buy in goods to the value of many thousand pounds, to sell them out again in parcels, not exceeding the value of ten or twenty shillings each, to receive in their money only once a year, and yet they committed no considerable mistake, nor suffered any material loss in the dealings of many years together, through error or miscalculation; he would conclude, that either those traders had memories above the usual rate of human nature, or that they had supernatural assistance! Yet all that has been hitherto mentioned, and a thousand times more, is what we find persons of the meanest natural endowments, and the narrowest educations, capable of acquiring! That by observing with so simple an instrument as a quadrant, the apparent altitude of the pole at one place, and travelling on, till we find it elevated a degree, that from thence we should determine with undoubted certainty, the real circuit of the whole globe of the earth, and consequently its diameter and semidiameter! That by an^d observation of the parallax of the moon, which is not difficult to take, with a few deductions and calculations, we should, by knowing the proportion between the unknown sides and angles of a triangle and those which are known, and by forming a triangle according to observation, the base of which to represent the earth's semidiameter, be as sure of the distance from the earth to the moon, as we are of the distance and height of a tower, viewed at two stations! That astronomers should

thence proceed through all their wonderful discoveries and calculations: the consideration of these things gives no contemptible idea of human knowledge. If we proceed to the calculation of eclipses, determining the revolutions and paths of comets, and so forth, we cannot help looking upon the degree of knowledge we are capable of attaining, as highly worthy our attention, and viewing our own nature, as truly great and sublime, and the Divine Goodness as highly adorable, which has endowed our minds with abilities in themselves so wonderful, and promising of endless improvements and enlargements!

In what light then ought we to view those groveling and meanspirited mortals, who make a pride of declaring their contempt of knowledge? Did one hear a vicious person expressing his contempt of honesty and virtue, should we think the more meanly of them, or of him? In the same manner, when a shallow fop sneers at what he does not understand, his low raillery ought to cast no reflection upon learning; but he is to be considered as sunk from the dignity of reason, and so far degenerated as to make his ignorance his pride, which ought to be his shame.

If we cast our eyes backward upon past times, or if we take a view of the present state of the world, if we consider whole nations, or single persons, nothing so fills the imagination, or engages the attention, as the conspicuous and illustrious honours of knowledge and learning. The ancient *Egyptians*, the fathers of wisdom; studious *Athenians*, the cultivators of every elegant art; the wise *Romans*, the zealous imitators of learned *Greece*; how come these nations to shine, like constellations, through the deeps of that universal mist which involves the rest of antiquity? How come the *Pythagoras*'s, the *Aristotles*, the *Tullys*, the *Livys* to appear, even to us at this distance, as stars of the first magnitude in the vast fields of æther? How comes it that *Africa*, since the setting of learning in that quarter of the world, has been the habitation of obscurity and cruelty? What is the disgrace of wild *Indians*, and swinish *Hottentots*? Is it not their brutish ignorance? What makes our island to differ so much from the aspect it had when *Julius Cesar* landed on our coast, and found us a flock of painted savages, scampering naked through the

woods? What nation makes such an appearance now, as *England*, wherever knowledge is valued? What names of ancient warriors make so great a figure on the roll of fame, or shine so bright in wisdom's eye, as those of the improvers of arts and sciences, who have risen in our island? Who would not rather, in our times, who know to despise romantic heroism, choose to have his name enroled with those of a *Bacon*, a *Boyle*, a *Clarke*, or a *Newton*, the friends of mankind, the guides to truth, the improvers of the human mind, the honours of our nature and our world; than to have a place among the *Alexanders*, the *Cesars*, the *Lewis'*, or the *Charles'*,* the scourges and butchers of their fellow-creatures?

SECTION I.

Of Education from Infancy. Absolute Necessity, and proper Method, of laying a Foundation of Moral Knowledge.

HAVING already treated in part, of so much of the education of young children as falls under the care of the parents, I will now, for the sake of exhibiting at once a comprehensive view of the whole improvement of the mind, begin from infancy itself; and lay down a general plan of knowledge, and the method of acquiring it. And I doubt not but the reader will own, that a genius naturally good, and which has been cultivated in the manner here to be described, may be said to have had most of the advantages necessary for attaining the highest perfection of human nature, of which this state is capable.

First, and above all things, it is to be remembered, and cannot be too often inculcated, that, from the time a child can speak, throughout the whole course of education, the forming of the temper to meekness and obedience, regulating the passions and appetites and habituating the mind to the love and practice of virtue, is the great, the constant, and growing labour, without which all other culture is absolute trifling. Nor is this to be done by fits and starts, nor this most important of all knowledge to be superficially or partially communicated. Every obligation of mo-

* And *Burgh*, had he lived, might have added, the *Bonapartes*.—*Publisher*,

ality; every duty of life; every beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, is to be particularly set forth, and represented in every different light. It is not a few scraps of good things got by memory, nor a few particular lessons given from time to time, that can be called a religious education. Without laying before the young mind a rational, a complete and perfect system of morals, and of Christianity, the work will be defective and unfinished. These important lessons must be begun early; constantly inculcated; never lost sight of; raised from every occasion and opportunity; improved and enlarged as reason opens; worked into every faculty of the soul; begun by parents; carried on by the master or tutor; established by the man himself, when of age to inquire and to act for himself; studied every day and every hour while one faculty remains capable of exerting itself in the mind; and the man, when full of years, must still proceed, and at last go out of the world engaged in the important study of his duty, and means for attaining the happiness and perfection for which he was brought into being.

The knowledge of morality and Christianity is the absolutely indispensable part of education. For what avails it how knowing a person is in speculative science, if he knows not how to be useful and happy? If this work be neglected in the earlier part of life it must be owing to some very favourable circumstances, if the person turns out well afterwards. For the human mind resembles a piece of ground, which will by no means lie wholly bare; but will either bring forth weeds or fruits, according as it is cultivated or neglected. And according as the habits of vice and irreligion, or the contrary, get the first possession of the mind, such is the future man like to be.

We see that the gross superstitions and monstrous absurdities of popery, by the mere circumstance of their being early planted in the mind, are not to be eradicated afterwards, though it is certain, that as reason opens, and the judgment matures, they must appear still more and more shocking. With how great advantage, then may we establish in the minds of young ones the principles of a religion strictly rational, and that will appear the more so, the more it is examined.

It is plain, that early youth is the fittest season of life

for establishing first principles of any kind, because then the mind is wholly disengaged from the pursuits which afterwards take possession of it. And the knowledge of right and wrong is indeed the most level to all capacities of any science whatever. For we are properly moral agents, and are naturally qualified with sufficient abilities to understand the obligations of morality, when laid before us, if we can but be prevailed with to observe them in our practice; for which purpose the most effectual method, no doubt, is to have them early inculcated upon us.

We do not think it proper to leave our children to themselves, to find out the sciences of grammar, or numbers, or the knowledge of languages, or the art of writing, or of a profession to live by. And shall we leave them to settle the boundaries of right and wrong by their own sagacity; or to neglect, or misunderstand, a religion, which God himself has condescended to give us, as the rule of our faith and practice? What can it signify to a youth, that he go through all the liberal sciences, if he is ignorant of the rules by which he ought to live, and by which he is to be judged at last. Will *Greek* or *Latin* alone gain him the esteem of the wise and virtuous? or will philosophy and mathematics save his soul?

I know of but one objection against the importance of what I am urging, which is taken from the deplorable degeneracy, we sometimes observe the children of pious and virtuous parents run into, who have had the utmost pains taken with them, to give them a turn to virtue and goodness.

But is it not in some cases to be feared, that parents, through a mistaken notion of the true method of giving youth a religious turn, often run into the extreme of surfeiting them with religious exercises, instead of labouring chiefly to enlighten and convince their understandings, and to form their tempers to obedience. The former, though noble and valuable helps, appointed by Divine Wisdom for promoting virtue and goodness, may yet be so managed as to disgust a young mind, and prejudice it against religion for life; but the latter, properly conducted, will prove an endlessly various entertainment. There is not a duty of morality you can have occasion to inculcate, but what

may give an opportunity of raising some entertaining observation, or introducing some amusing history; and nothing can be more striking than the accounts of supernatural things, of which Holy Scripture is full. And though it may sometimes happen, that a youth well brought up may, by the force of temptation, run into fatal errors in afterlife, yet such a one, it must be owned, has a much better chance of recovering the right way, than one who never was put in it. I am ashamed to add any more upon this head; it being a kind of affront to the understandings of mankind, to labour to convince them of a truth as evident as that the sun shines at noonday.

That it may unquestionably appear to be fully practicable for a parent, or tutor, to establish youth, from the tenderest years, in principles of virtue and religion, by reason, not by authority, by understanding, not by rote; I will here add a sketch of what I know may be taught with success.

A parent in any station of life whatever, may, and ought to bestow sometime every day, in instructing his children in the most useful of all knowledge: Half an hour, or an hour every day, will be sufficient to go through a great deal of such sort of work in a year. And what parent will pretend, that he cannot find half an hour a day for the most important of all business? At three or four years of age, a child of ordinary parts is capable of being shown and convinced, "That obedience is better than perverseness; that good-nature is more amiable than peevishness; that knowledge is preferable to ignorance; that it is wicked to dissemble, to use any one ill, to be cruel to birds, or insects; that it is wrong to do any thing to another, which one would not wish done to one's self; that the world was made by one who is very great, wise, and good, who is every where, and knows every thing that is thought, spoke or done by men; that there will be a time when all, that ever lived, will be judged by God; and that they, who have been good, will go to heaven among the angels, and those who have been wicked, to hell among evil spirits."

There are few children of three or four years of age, who are not capable of having their understandings opened, and their minds formed, by such simple principles

as these ; and these, simple as they seem, are the ground-work of morality and religion.

As the faculties strengthen, farther views may by degrees be presented to the opening mind ; and every lesson illustrated and inculcated by instances taken from the Bible, and other books, or from characters known to the teacher. The asking questions upon every head and bringing in little familiar stories proper for the occasion, will keep up a young one's attention, and make such exercises extremely entertaining, without which they will not be useful.

Besides all set hours for instruction, a prudent parent will contrive to apply as much spare time as possible that way, and to bring in some useful and instructive hint on every occasion ; or to moralize upon the blowing of a feather, and read a lecture on a pile of grass, or a flower.

Can any one think, that such a method of giving "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," is likely to miss having a considerable effect upon the mind, for leading it to an early habit of attending to the nature and consequences of actions, of desiring to please, and fearing to offend, which if people could but be brought to accustom themselves to from their youth, they would never, in afterlife, act the rash and desperate part we see many do.

Nor is there any thing to hinder a master of a *private* place of education to bestow generally an hour every day, and more on Sundays, in instructing the youth under his care in the principles of prudence, morality, and religion. This may be digested into a scheme of twenty or thirty lectures, beginning from the very foundation, and going through all the principal particulars of our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves, and from thence proceeding to a view of the fundamental doctrines, evidences, and laws of revealed religion. In all which there is nothing but what may be brought down to the apprehension of very young minds, by proceeding gently, and suiting one's expression to the weak capacities of the learners ; doing all by way of question, without which it is impossible to keep up their attention, and in the manner of familiar dialogue, rather than a set harangue, or magisterial precept.

Above all things care ought to be taken, that religious

knowledge be as little as possible put on the footing of a task. A parent, or teacher, who communicates his instructions of this kind in such a manner, as to tire or disgust the young mind, though he may mean well, does more harm than good. A young person will have a better chance for taking to a course of virtue and religion, if left wholly to himself, than if set against them by a wrong method of education. The mind, like a spring, if unnaturally forced one way, will, when let loose, recoil so much the more violently the contrary way.

The first Sunday evening's conversation, between the master and pupils in a place of education, might be upon happiness in general. Questions might be put to the eldest of the youth, as whether they did not desire to secure their own happiness in the most effectual way; or if they would be content to be happy for a few years, and take their chance afterwards. They might be asked, what they thought happiness consisted in, if in good eating, drinking, play, and fine clothes only; or whether they did not think a creature capable of thought, of doing good or evil and of living for ever in a future state, ought to make some provision of a happiness suitable to its spiritual part. For illustrating this, they might be asked wherein they thought the respective happiness of a beast, a man, and an angel consisted. They might be taught partly what makes the difference of those natures, and some general account given them of the nature of man, his faculties, passions, and appetites. They might be asked, whether they did not think, that the only certain means for attaining the greatest happiness mankind are capable of, was to endeavour to gain the favour of God, who has all possible happiness in his power.

The next Sunday evening's conversation might be upon the most likely means for gaining the favour of God, in order to securing happiness. The youth might be asked, whether they did not think there was a difference in the conduct of different persons, and in the effects of their behaviour upon the affairs of the world. Instances might be made use of, to show in general, that the natural tendency of a virtuous behaviour is to diffuse happiness, and that vice naturally produces confusion and misery. They might be asked, what would be the conse-

quence, if all men gave themselves to drunkenness, and other kinds of intemperance; or to cruelty and violence; and might be made to see, that if all men were wicked the world could by no means subsist. From thence they might be led on to conclude, that it was to be expected that vice would always be displeasing to God; that consequently none but the virtuous could reasonably expect to be finally happy; however they might be suffered to pass through the present life. They might then be shown, that all the good or bad actions of men must relate either to themselves, to their fellow creatures, or to God. And that whatever action can have no effect either upon one's self, or any other person, and is neither pleasing nor displeasing to God, cannot be called either virtuous or vicious.

The subject of the third evening's conversation might be the introduction to the first head of duty, viz. that which relates to ourselves. The youth might be shown the propriety of beginning with that, as it is necessary towards a person's behaving well to others, that his own mind be in good order. They might be taught, that our duty to ourselves, consists in the due care of our minds, and of our bodies. They might be asked, whether they did not think the understanding was to be improved with useful knowledge; the memory cultivated and habituated for retaining important truths; the will subdued to obedience; and the passions subjected to the authority of reason. They might be shown in a few general instances what would be the consequence if none of these was to be done; what a condition the mind must be in, which is neglected, and suffered to run to absolute misrule. They might then be informed briefly of the uses and ends of the passions, and their proper conduct.

The conversation the fourth, and one or two succeeding evenings, might proceed to the necessity and means of regulating the several passions, whose excess, and the bad consequences of such excess, might be pointed out. The passions not to be rooted up, but put under proper regulations. Excess in the indulgence of them, how first run into, and cautious to guard against it. Of self-love, self-opinion or pride, ambition, anger, envy, malice, revenge, and the rest; of which as I shall have occasion to treat

pretty copiously in the third book, I shall add nothing farther at present, but refer the reader thither for a method of treating them, which may with advantage be used in instructing youth, excluding what may be thought too abstract for their apprehension. For masters are to proceed with prudence, according to the various capacities of the youth under their care; never taking it for granted, that such and such parts of moral knowledge are beyond their reach; but putting their capacities to a thorough trial, which will show, contrary to common opinion, how early the human mind is capable of comprehending very noble and extensive *moral* views.

To treat of the due regulation of the bodily appetites, as they are commonly called, will be employment for several evenings. The love of life, of riches, of food, of strong liquors, of sleep, of the opposite sex, (a subject to be very slightly touched on) of diversions, of finery; the due regulation of each of these is to be pointed out, and the fatal consequences of too great an indulgence of them as strongly as possible set forth; with cautions against the snares by which young people are first led into sensuality, and methods of prevention or reformation. Of all which I shall likewise have occasion to treat in the third book. The virtues contrary to the excessive indulgence of passion and appetite, ought to be strongly recommended, as humility, meekness, moderation in desires, consideration, and contentment. And it is not enough that young persons understand theoretically wherein a good disposition of mind consists. They are to be held to the strict observance of it in their whole behaviour. One instance of malice, cruelty, or deceit, is a fault more necessary to be punished, than the neglect of some hundreds of tasks. And it must appear to every understanding, that the keeping a youth under proper regulations, even by mechanical means, is of great advantage, as he will thereby be habituated to what is good, and must find a vicious course unnatural to him. And there is no doubt but the minds of youth may be rationally, as well as mechanically formed to virtue, by the prudent conduct and instructions of masters, where parents will give their concurrence and sanction.

Several evenings may be employed in giving the youth

a view of our duty to our neighbour, under which the relative duties ought to be considered; and particularly that fundamental, but now unknown, virtue of the love of our country, very strongly recommended. Materials, and a method of instructing the youth in the duties of negative and positive justice and benevolence, may be drawn from what will be said on social virtue in the third book.

Young people of good understanding may be rationally convinced of the certainty of the Divine existence, by a set of arguments not too abstract, but yet convincing. The proof *a posteriori*, as it is commonly called, is the fittest to be dwelt upon, and is fully level to the capacity of a youth of parts at fourteen years of age. An idea of the Supreme Being, a set of useful moral reflections upon his perfections, and an account of the duty we owe him, may be drawn from what is said on that subject in the following book.

To habituate young people to reason on moral subjects, to teach them to exert their faculties in comparing, examining, and reflecting, is doing them one of the greatest services that can be imagined.—And as there is no real merit in taking religion on trust; but on the contrary, a reasonable mind cannot be better employed than in examining into sacred truth: and as nothing is likely to produce a lasting effect upon the mind, but what the mind is clearly convinced of; on these, and all other accounts, it is absolutely necessary that young people be early taught to consider the christian religion, not as a matter of mere form, handed down from father to son, or as a piece of superstition, consisting in being baptized, and called after the author of our religion, but as a subject of reasoning, a system of doctrines to be clearly understood, a set of facts established on unquestionable evidence, a body of laws given by Divine authority, which are to better the hearts, and regulate the lives of men. To give the youth at a place of education, a comprehensive view of only the heads of what they ought to be taught of the christian religion, will very nobly and usefully employ several evenings. The particulars to be insisted on may be drawn from the fourth book.

The whole course may conclude with an explanation of

our Saviour's discourse on the mount, *Matth.* v. vi. and vii. which contains the christian law, or rule of life, and is infinitely more proper to be committed to memory by youth, than all the catechisms that ever were or will be composed.

This may be a proper place to mention, that from the earliest years, youth ought to be accustomed to the most reasonable of all services, I mean worshipping God. It is no matter how short the devotions they use may be, so they offer them with decency and understanding; without which they had better let them alone; for they will be a prejudice instead of an advantage to them.

Besides all other improvements, endeavours ought to be used to lead young persons to study, to love, and to form themselves by the holy Scriptures, the fountain of knowledge, and rule of life. For this purpose, some of the time allotted for moral instruction, in a seminary of learning, may be interchangeably bestowed in reading, commenting, and questioning the youth upon select parts of Scripture, as the account of the creation and flood, the remarkable characters of *Noah*, *Lot* and *Abraham*, the miraculous history of the people of *Israel*, the moral writings of *Solomon*, some of the most remarkable prophecies, with accounts of their completions, the Gosple-history, and the moral parts of the epistles. An hour every morning may be very well employed in this manner.

A course of such instructions continued, repeated, and improved upon, for a series of years, will furnish the young mind with a treasure of the most valuable and sublime knowledge, and must, with the divine blessing, give it a cast toward the virtuous side, which it must at least find some *difficulty* in getting the better of in afterlife.

For any man to put himself at the head of a place of education, who is not tolerably qualified for explaining the nature and obligations of morality, and who has not some critical knowledge of Scripture, is intolerable arrogance and wickedness. And that teacher of youth, who does not consider the forming of the moral character of his pupils as the great and indispensable part of his duty, has not yet learned the first principles of his art.

SECTION II.

Intention and Method of Education. Concurrence of the Parents necessary.

THE sooner a boy is sent from home for his education, the better. For though the parents themselves should be abundantly capable of judging of, and resolute enough to keep up a proper conduct to the child, which is very seldom the case, yet there will always be enough of silly relations coming and going, and of visitants flattering and humouring him in all his weaknesses; which, though they be entertaining, as indeed every thing is from a pretty child, ought without all question to be eradicated as soon as possible, instead of being encouraged. The very servants will make it their business to teach him a thousand monkey tricks, and to blame the parents for every reproof or correction they use, though ever so seasonable and necessary.

It is surprising that ever a question should have been made, whether an education at home or abroad was to be chosen. In a home education, it is plain, that the advantage arising from emulation, the importance of which is not to be conceived, must be lost. It is likewise obvious, that by a home education youth misses all the advantage of being accustomed to the company of his equals, and being early hardened by the little rubs he will from time to time meet with from them, against those he must lay his account with meeting in life, which a youth, who goes directly out of his mother's lap into the wide world, is by no means prepared to grapple with, nor even to bear the sight of strange faces, nor to eat, drink, or lodge differently from the manner he has been used to at his father's house. A third great disadvantage of a home education, is the missing a number of useful and valuable friendships a youth might have contracted at school, which, being begun in the innocent and disinterested time of life, often hold through the whole of it, and prove of the most important advantage. The sooner a young person goes from the solitary state of home into the social life of a place of education, the sooner he has an opportunity of knowing what it is to be a member of society, of seeing a differ-

ence between a right and a wrong behaviour, of learning how to conduct himself among his equals, and in short the sooner he is likely, under proper regulations, to become a formed man.

The view of education is not to carry the pupils a great length in each different science; but only to open their minds for the reception of various knowledge, of which the first seeds and principles are to be planted early, while the mind is flexible, and disengaged from a multiplicity of ideas and pursuits. Those seeds and principles are afterwards to be cultivated by the man when grown up, and, by means of constant diligence and application, may be expected, through length of time, to produce the noblest and most valuable fruits. From hence it is evident, what constitutes the character of a person properly qualified for being at the head of the education of youth. Not so much a deep skill in languages only, or in mathematics only, or in any single branch of knowledge, exclusive of the rest; but a general and comprehensive knowledge of the various branches of learning, and the proper methods of acquiring them, with clear and just notions of human nature, of morals, and revealed religion.

The most perfect scheme that has yet been found out, or is possible for the whole education of youth, from six years of age and upwards, is where a person, properly qualified, with an unexceptionable character for gentleness of temper and exemplary virtue, good breeding, knowledge of the world, and of languages, writing, accounts, book-keeping, geography, the principles of philosophy, mathematics, history, and divinity, and who is disengaged from all other pursuits, employs himself and proper assistants, wholly in the care and instruction of a competent number of youth placed in his own house, and under his own eye, in such a manner, as to accomplish them in all the branches of useful and ornamental knowledge, suitable to their ages, capacities, and prospects, and especially in the knowledge of what will make them useful in this life, and secure the happiness of the next.

There is no one advantage in any other conceivable plan of education which may not be gained in this, nor any one disadvantage that may not be as effectually avoided in this way as in any. If there is any thing good in a child,

it may, in this method of education, be improved to the highest pitch; if there is any thing bad, it cannot be long unknown, and may be remedied, if it is remediable; if a child has a bright capacity, there is emulation, honour, and reward, to encourage him to make the best of it; and if his faculties be low, there are proper methods for putting him upon using his utmost diligence; and there is opportunity to give him private assistance at by-hours, to enable him to keep nearly upon a footing with others of his age. In such a place of education, the master has it in his power, by assiduity and diligence, to make the highest improvements upon the youth under his care, both in human and divine knowledge; and, by a tender and affectionate treatment of them, may gain the love, the esteem, and the obedience due to a parent rather than a master. Such a place of education is indeed no way different from another private house, only, that instead of three or four, or half a dozen children, there may be thirty or forty in a family. Instead of an indulgent parent, who might fondle or spoil the youth, there is at the head of such an economy, an impartial and prudent governor, who, not being biassed by paternal weakness, is likely to consult, in the most disinterested manner, their real advantage. Having no other scheme in his head, nor any thing else to engage his thoughts; he is at liberty, which few parents are, to bestow his whole time upon the improvement of the youth under his care. Having no other dependence for raising himself in life, he is likely to apply himself in good earnest to do whatever he can for the advantage of the youth, and his own reputation; as knowing that, though foundations, exhibitions, fellowships, and preferments, will always draw pupils to public schools and universities, it is quite otherwise with a private place of education, which must depend wholly upon real and substantial care and visible improvement of the youth; and that a failure of these must be the ruin of his credit and fortune. And suppose a competent set of duly qualified teachers employed in such a place of education, it is plain, that there is no part of improvement to be had at any kind of school, academy, or university, which may not be taken in, and carried to the utmost length, the pupils are capable of, according to their age and natural parts.

This is indeed, in the main, the great *Milton's* plan of a place of education to carry youth from grammar quite to the finishing of their studies. In which the very circumstance of a person's being brought up under the same authority from childhood to mature age, is of inestimable advantage. When a child is first put to a silly old woman to learn to read, or rather murder his book, what a number of bad habits does he acquire, all which must afterwards be unlearned? When from thence he is removed to a public, or boarding school, with what contempt does he look back upon his poor old mistress, and how saucily does he talk of her? The case is the same, when he is removed from the school to the university. Then my young master thinks himself a man, finds himself at his own disposal, and resolves to make use of that liberty, which no person ought to be trusted with before years of discretion. And the consequences are generally seen to answer accordingly. But a youth, who has been brought up from childhood to ripe age, under the same person, supposing him properly qualified, acquires in time the affection and the sense of authority of a son to a parent, rather than of a pupil to a master, than which nothing can more, or so much contribute to his improvement in learning, or to the forming of his manners.

Whether there are not some particulars in the very constitution and plan of certain places of education, that may be said to be fundamentally wrong, I shall leave to better judgments, after setting down a few queries on the subject.

Whether the most perfect knowledge of two dead languages is, to any person whatever, let his views in life be what they will, worth the expense of ten years study, to the exclusion of all other improvements?

Whether, in order to a thorough knowledge of *Latin* and *Greek*, there is any real necessity for learning by rote a number of crabbed grammar rules? And whether the same method which is commonly used in teaching *French* and *Italian*, (in which it is notorious that people do actually acquire as great, or rather a greater mastery) would not be as effectual, and incomparably more compendious, for acquiring a sufficient knowledge of *Latin* or *Greek*? I mean, only learning to decline nouns and verbs, and a

few rules of construction, and then reading books in the language.

Whether the superfluous time, bestowed in learning grammar rules, would not be much better employed in writing, arithmetic, elements of mathematics, or other improvements of indispensable use in life? especially as it may be farther asked,

Whether the neglect of the first principles of those valuable parts of knowledge, till the more tractable years of youth are past (all for the sake of *Latin* and *Greek*,) is not in experience found to be a great and irreparable loss to those who have been educated in that imperfect method? And whether they do not find it extremely hard, if not impossible, in afterlife, to acquire a perfect knowledge of what they were not in early youth sufficiently grounded in?

Whether the time spent in making *Latin* themes and verses is not wholly thrown away? Whether *English* people do not commonly acquire a very sufficient knowledge of *French* and *Italian*, without ever thinking of making verses in those languages? Whether putting a youth, not yet out of his teens, upon composition of any kind, is at all reasonable? Whether it is not requiring him to produce what, from his unripe age and uninformed judgment, is not to be supposed to be in him, I mean thought? Whether the proper employment of those tender years is not rather planting than reaping? Whether therefore it would not be a more useful exercise to set a youth of fifteen to translate, paraphrase, comment upon, or make abstracts from the productions of masterly hands, than to put him upon producing any thing of his own?

Whether any knowledge of the learned languages, besides being qualified to understand the sense, and relish the beauties, of an ancient author, be of any use? and whether the making of themes or verses does at all contribute to that end?

Whether, in a seminary of learning, where some hundreds of youth are together, it is by any human means possible to prevent their corrupting one another, undistinguished and undiscovered? Whether it is by any human means possible to find out the real characters, the laudable or faulty turns of disposition in such a number of youth, or to apply particularly to the correction or en-

couragement of each fault or weakness, as they may respectively require?*

It is not to be expected that the business of education should go on to purpose, unless parents resolve to allow a gentleman, properly qualified for the important trust to be reposed in him, such an income as may be sufficient to enable him to carry on his scheme without uneasiness and anxiety, to support proper assistants, and to furnish himself with books, and the other apparatus necessary for the improvement of the youth under his care.

There is no danger of rewarding too well the person whose faithful diligence has, by the divine blessing, made your son a scholar, a virtuous man, and a christian. That the gentlemen who employ, or rather wear themselves out, in the laborious work of the education of youth, do but too generally meet with narrow and ungrateful returns, is evident from this demonstration, that so few of them are seen to reap such fruits of their labours, as are sufficient to put them in easy, much less affluent circumstances, when old age comes upon them, while fiddlers, singers, players, and those who serve at best only to amuse, and often to debauch us, wallow in wealth and luxury.—And yet, without reserve, and without disparagement, be it spoken, there is not a more valuable member of society, than a faithful and able instructor of youth.

Nor is it to be expected that the education of youth should succeed properly, if parents will thwart every measure taken by a prudent master for the advantage of a child, taking him home from time to time, interrupting the course of his studies, and pampering and fondling him in a manner incompatible with the economy of a place of edu-

* Whoever is in doubt about the subjects of the foregoing queries, may read, for settling his judgment, the following Authors, viz. *Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. x.* upon the absurdity of making verses in a foreign language. *Mr. Locke's Treat. of Educat.* in various places, particularly page 305, on the absurdity of putting youth upon making themes and verses. *Cowley* upon that of fatiguing them with a needless heap of grammar rules. To which, add the authorities of *Tituaquil Faber*, *Mr. Clark*, *Milton*, *Carew*, the Governors of the Princes of the Royal blood of *France*, *Roger Ascham*, Esq. *Latin* preceptor to Queen *Elizabeth*, and others quoted at large by *Mr. Philips*, formerly preceptor to his Royal Highness the Duke of *Cumberland*, in his *Compendious Method of teaching languages*, printed 1750. And if these be not enough to condemn the laborious trifling commonly used in certain places of education, let *Mr. Walker*, *Ad-dison*, *Pope*, and many other able men who have writ on the subject, be consulted.

education, whereby a child must be led to conclude, that it is an unhappiness to be obliged to be at school; that it is doing him a kindness to fetch him home, to keep him in idleness, to feed him with rich food, and high sauces, and to allow him to drink wine, and, to keep such hours for eating and sleeping as are unsuitable to his age. Did parents but consider, that a child's happiness depends not at all upon his being indulged and pampered; but upon having his mind easy, without hankering after what he does not know, and will never think of, if not put in his head by their improper management of him; and that the more he is humoured in his childish follies, the more wants, and, consequently, the more uneasiness he will have; did parents, I say, consider this, they would not give themselves and their children the trouble they do, only to make both unhappy.

I have heard of a mother, who humoured her son to that pitch of folly, that, upon his taking it into his head, that it would be pretty to ride upon a cold surloin of beef, which was brought to table, she gravely ordered the servant to put a napkin upon it, and set him astride in the dish, that he might have his fancy. And of another, who begged her little daughter's nurse to take care, of all things, that the child should not see the moon, lest she should cry for it.

If parents will, in this manner, make it a point, never, even in the most necessary cases, to oppose the wayward wills of infants, what can they expect, but that peevishness and perverseness should grow upon them to a degree, that must make them unhappy on every occasion, when they meet with proper treatment from more reasonable people? The youth, who, at his father's table, has been used to eat of a variety of dishes every day, than which nothing is more pernicious to any constitution, old or young, will think himself miserable, when he comes to the simple and regulated diet of a boarding school; though this last is much more conducive to health. He, who has been used to do whatever he pleased at home, will think it very grievous to be controuled, when he comes to a place of education. The consequence of which will be, that his complaints will be innumerable, as his imaginary grievances. Where the truth will not seem a sufficient

foundation for complaining, lies and inventions will be called in; for youth have very little principle. They will be listened to by the fond parent. The number of them will increase, upon their meeting encouragement. The education of the child, and his very morals, will in this manner be hurt, if not ruined.—This is not theory; but experienced and notorious fact. The weakness of parents in this respect does, indeed, exceed belief. And unhappily, the best people are often most given to this weakness, having minds the most susceptible of tenderness and affection, and of the most easy credulity. This weakness appears in all shapes, and produces all kinds of bad effects. It is the case of parents overlooking the most dangerous and fatal turns of mind in their children, till the season of correcting them be past; of indulging them in the very things they ought to be restrained in; of their hating those who endeavour to open their eyes to the faults of their children; of listening to their groundless complaints against their masters; of restraining and hampering them in the discharge of their duty to their children; and of ungratefully imputing to the master's want of care the failure of their children's improvement in what nature has denied them capacities for; at the same time, that they know other youths have made proper improvements under the same care; and cannot with any colour of reason suppose a prudent master so much his own enemy, as to neglect one pupil, and use diligence with another.

SECTION III.

Process of Education from four Years of Age, to the finishing of the Puerile Studies and Exercises.

FROM the age of four to six, a healthy child of good capacity may learn to read *English* distinctly according to the spelling and points. The propriety of emphasis and cadence must not be expected at so early an age. Within this period likewise, he may be introduced into the rudiments of *Latin*, and may learn to decline by memory a set of examples of all the declinable parts of speech.

If I did not think some knowledge in the *Latin* language absolutely necessary to any person, whose station raises

him above the rank of a working mechanic, I should not recommend it. Notwithstanding what has been said by many against the necessity of any knowledge of *Latin*, I must own, I cannot see that an *English* education can be begun upon any other foundation. Without grammar, there can be no regular education. And the grammar of one language might as well be learnt as another, the science being in the main the same in all. It is very well known, that most of the *European* languages are more *Latin* than any thing else. And what more thorough method is there of letting a person into the spirit of a language, than by making him early acquainted with the original roots, from whence it is derived? As great part of the *Latin* arises from the *Greek*, some judicious persons have thought it best to begin with that language.

Upon the whole, one would think, no parent should wish his son brought up in so defective a manner, as to be at a stand at a *Latin* phrase in an *English* book, or a saying of an ancient author mentioned in conversation, which must be very often met with by any man who reads at all, or keeps company above the very lowest ranks of life.

From the age of six to eight, his reading may be continued and improved, his principles of *Latin* reviewed from time to time, and he may be employed in reading such easy books as *Corderius*, and some of *Erasmus*'s Colloquies with an *English* Translation.

About this age likewise, children may be taught to read a little *French*, a language which no gentleman, or man of business can be without. After they have gone through *Boyer*'s Grammar and learned by memory a set of examples of verbs regular and irregular, and common phrases, they may read a little collection lately published, called, *Recueil des auteus Francois*, printed at *Edinburgh*. *Les aventures de Gil Blas*, *Le diable boiteux*, *Les aventures de Telemaque*, *Les comedies de Moliere*, and *Les tragedies de Racine*, are proper books for youth to read for their improvement in *French*. They must likewise practise translating into *French*, and speaking the language.

From eight to twelve years of age, they may be employed in the same manner, and may besides be introduced to such *Latin* authors as *Justin*, *Cornelius Nepos*, *Eutropius*, *Phædrus*, and the like. There is likewise a pretty

collection lately published, entitled, *Selecta Latina Sermonis Exemplaria*, &c. very proper for the lower classes. *Ovid* is an author usually put into the hands of youth about this age. But for my part, I do not think any thing of his, besides his *Fasti*, at all fit for the young and unprincipled mind. His obscenities and indecencies will, I hope, be readily given up. And the bulk of his other writings are either overstrained witticisms, bombastic rants, or improbable and monstrous fictions; none of which seem proper for laying a good foundation in the young mind for raising a superstructure of true taste; rational goodness; and a steady love of truth.

From twelve years of age to sixteen or eighteen, that is, to the finishing of the education, properly so called; for a wise man never finishes his inquiries and improvements till life itself be finished; in the beginning of this period, I say besides carrying on and improving the above, a youth ought (and not much before according to my judgment) to be entered into writing, and soon after into arithmetic, and then to read a little of the elements of geometry. Writing requires some degree of strength of muscle, and of sight; and numbers and the elements of geometry, some ripeness of judgment, which are not to be found in the generality of youth before twelve years of age.

The neglecting too long the first principles of geometry, and the knowledge of numbers, is found in experience to be very prejudicial; as a person, whose mind comes once to be full of various ideas, and eager after different pursuits, as those of most people are by sixteen or eighteen, can hardly by any means bring himself to apply to any new branch of knowledge, of which he has not had, in the young and tractable years of life, some principles. Mathematics, to one who has had no tincture of that sort of knowledge infused into his mind in youth, will be a mere *terra incognita*; and therefore too disagreeable and irksome to be ever pursued by him with any considerable success. The case is by experience found to be the same with respect to languages, and every other complex or extensive branch of knowledge; which gave occasion to the great Mr. *Locke* to observe, that "the taking a taste of every sort of knowledge is necessary to form the

mind, and is the only way to give the understanding its due improvement to the full extent of its capacity.”

* Books proper for learning the elements of geometry, some think *Pardie's* an easy introduction. *Simpson's* geometry is a very elegant compend. But *Cunn's* or *Simpson's Euclid* is the best book for a young beginner. Of the higher parts of mathematics I shall speak afterwards.

About the age of twelve it will be proper for a youth to enter on the *Greek* language. From the small *Westminster* Grammar (which is as good as any) he may go on to read the New Testament, and from thence to sundry *Collections*, and *Isocrates*, or *Demosthenes*, *Plato*, and *Homer*.

I know no occasion a youth can have to be obliged to get any thing by memory in learned or foreign languages, except the declensions of a set of examples, a few phrases, and rules of construction, which last may be learned in *English*. The memory may be, to much greater advantage, furnished with what may be of real use in life, than with crabbed grammar rules, or with heaps of *Latin* or *Greek* verse. As to making *Latin* or *Greek* themes or verses, I would as soon have a son of mine taught to dance on a rope. But of this enough.

From the *Latin* authors above-mentioned, a youth of parts, may, about fourteen and fifteen, and onwards, be advanced to *Virgil*, *Salust*, *Terence*, *Livy*, *Tully*, with select parts of *Horace* (for many parts of that author ought not to be in print,) and so on to *Tacitus*, *Juvenal*, and *Persius*.

One of the best school books extant is a small collection lately published, printed for *L. Hawes*, in *Paternoster-Row*, which I could wish enlarged to the extent of a volume or two more, collected with equal judgment. It is entitled, *Selectæ ex profanis scriptoribus historiæ*. This may be read by youth from ten years of age and upwards; and would be very proper to make translations from, for improving them at once in orthography, in writing, in stile, and sentiment. If they were to speak such versions, corrected by the master, by way of orations, before their parents, I should think the end of improving

* The Books now used in our Colleges and other seminaries of learning in the various branches of science, are so changed since the time of *Burgh*, that we propose saying something of them at the end of the volume.—*Publisher*.

their elocution and giving them courage to speak in public, might be thereby much better attained, than by their being taught either to act plays in a dead language, or to rant in a theatrical manner *English* tragedies. To speak a grave speech with proper grace and dignity may be of use in real life. The rant of the stage can never be used off the stage. And practising it in youth has often produced very bad effects.

I know no necessity for a youth's going through every classic author he reads. There are parts in all books less entertaining than others. And perhaps it might have a good effect to leave off some times where the pupil shows a desire to go on, rather than fully satiate his curiosity.

When youth come to read *Horace*, *Livy*, and such authors, they may be supposed capable of entering a little into the critical beauties of the ancients, and of writing in general. It will be of great consequence, that they be early put in the right way of thinking with respect to the real merit of the ancients, their excellencies, which may properly be imitated, their faults to be avoided, and deficiencies to be supplied. Of which more fully afterwards.

Pope's Essay on Criticism, may with success be commented upon. From which, as it takes in the principal rules laid down and observations made by the writers before him, as well as his own, may be drawn a general view of the requisites for a well written piece. The principles of this knowledge, early planted in the mind, would be of great use in leading people to form their taste by some clear and certain rules drawn from nature and reason, which might prevent their praising and blaming in the wrong place; their mistaking noisy bombast for the true sublime; a stile holding forth more than is expressed, for the dull and unanimated; bigness, for greatness; whining for the pathetic; bullying for the heroic; oddity for terror; the barbarous for the tragical; farce for comedy; quaint conceit, pert scurrility, or affected cant, for true wit; and so forth. The beauty and advantage of method; the force of expression suited to the thought; the causes of perspicuity or confusion, in a writer, the peculiar delicacy in the turn of a phrase; the importance or insignificancy of a thought, the aptness of a simile; the music of a cadence in prose, and measure in verse; the liveliness of

description ; the brightness of imagery ; the distinction of characters ; the pomp of machinery ; the greatness of invention ; the correctness of judgment ; and I know not how many more particulars, might with success be enlarged upon in teaching youth about fifteen years of age, and upwards.

When a youth has acquired a readiness at writing and numbers, he may learn the beautiful and useful art of book-keeping according to the *Italian* method. Though this piece of knowledge is more immediately useful for traders, it ought not to be neglected by any person whatever. Many an estate might have been saved, had the owner of it known how to keep correct accounts of his income and expenses. Were there only the beauty and elegance of this art to recommend it, no wise parent would let his son be without what may be so easily acquired. The best system of book-keeping, and the briefest, is *Webster's*.

About fourteen or fifteen years of age a youth of parts may be instructed in the use of the globes, which will require his having the terms in geography, and many of those used in astronomy, explained to him. To this may be joined an abridgement of the ancient and present state of nations, commonly called ancient and modern geography. The best books on the use of the globes, are *Harris'* and *Randal's* Geography, or *Gordon's* Geographical Grammar ; which, with *Hubner's* Compend, and *Wells' Geographia Classica*, will be sufficient to introduce the pupil to a general notion of ancient and modern geography. A set of maps ought to be turned to, and the pupil taught to understand the manner of constructing and using them.

The knowledge of the surface of our globe, and the present state of nations, is necessary and useful for men of all ranks, orders, and professions. The statesman can have no distinct ideas of the interest and connexions of foreign nations ; the divine no clear conception of Scripture or ecclesiastical history, nor the merchant of the voyages his ships are to make, the seats of commerce, and means of collecting its various articles ; nor indeed the private gentleman bear a part in common conversation, without understanding the situations, distances, extent, and general state of kingdoms and empires. In a word, he, who does

not know geography, does not know the world. And it is miserable, that a gentleman should know nothing of the world he lives in, but the spot, in which he was born.

Algebra is a science of admirable use in solving questions seemingly inexplicable. I would advise that every youth of fortune and parts have a tincture of it about this period of life. *Hammond's*, *Simpson's* and *Maclaurin's* treatises are proper to be made use of in teaching it.

About the same age, youth may be led into a general knowledge of chronology, or of the principal eras and periods of the world, and of the outlines of universal history. This cannot be better done, than by reading them lectures upon the Chart of the Universal History, lately published, showing them, at the same time, upon the terrestrial globe, and in maps, the situation and extent of kingdoms and empires. The chronological tables in the twenty-first volume of the Universal History may be consulted by those who would descend to more minute particulars in teaching youth the knowledge of chronology.

About the age of sixteen or eighteen, a youth of good parts may learn just so much of logic as may be useful for leading him to an accurate and correct manner of thinking, and judging of such truths as are not capable of mathematical demonstration. The *Aristotelian* method of reasoning in mood and figure might be proper, if the ideas we affix to all words were as precise as those of a right line, a surface, or a cube. But so long as we neither have in our own minds at all times, nor much less can communicate to those we converse with, the same invariable ideas to the same words, we must be content, if we mean either to receive or communicate knowledge, to recede a little from the rigid rules of logic, laid down by the *Burgersdykes* and the *Scheiblers*, which always hamper, and often mislead the understanding.

For the purpose of putting young persons in the way of reasoning justly, Dr. *Watts's* Logic may with success be read and commented on to them, and some of the easiest and most fundamental parts of Mr. *Locke's* Essay on Human Understanding. After which some parts of the writings of some of the closest reasoners in morals may be examined, and the force of the arguments shown, to lead the pupil to the imitation of their manner. Such writers

as Dr. *Clarke*, *Woollaston*, and Bishop *Butler*, author of the *Analogy*, will be proper for this purpose. It may also be useful to show how subtle men imperceptibly deviate from sound reason, and lead their readers into fallacies. The works of *Hobbes*, *Morgan*, and *Hebrew Hutchinson*, may, among innumerable others, be proper examples to show, that the semblance of reason may be, where there is no substance.

It would be of great advantage to youth, if they could, as a part of their education, have an opportunity of seeing a course of experiments, at first exhibited by *Desaguliers*, *Whiston*, and others. They would there learn, in the most entertaining and easy manner, the grounds, as far as known, of the noble science of physiology. And in seeing a regular series of experiments, and observations, in mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, astronomy, chemistry, and the like, would have their curiosity raised to the highest pitch, and would acquire a taste for knowledge, which might not only lead them, in afterlife, to pursue their own improvement in the most valuable ways, but likewise might, by furnishing an inexhaustible fund of entertainment, supply the continual want of taverns, plays, music, or other less innocent amusements, to fill up their vacant hours. For it is only the want of something within themselves to entertain them, that drives people to routs, rackets, or masquerades, to the fatal waste of time and money, and the utter perversion of the true taste of life.

A person who understands this kind of knowledge, with the help of a very few instruments, as a telescope, a microscope, an air pump, and a pair of Mr. *Neal's* patent globes, may go through the grounds of this sort of knowledge, following the method given by Mr. *Martin* in his philosophical grammar (guarding against his errors) to the great entertainment and improvement of a set of pupils.

Dancing, fencing, riding, music, drawing, and other elegant arts and manly exercises, may, according to the circumstances of parents, and genius of children, be carried greater or shorter lengths. For a person, whose education has fitted him for being a useful member of society, according to his station, and for happiness in a future state, may be said to have been well brought up, though he

should not excel in these elegancies. And it is not such frivolous accomplishments as these that will make a man valuable, who has not a mind endowed with wisdom and virtue. Above all things, to make the mere ornaments of life, the employment of life, is to the last degree preposterous.

It is evidently of advantage, that a young gentleman be, from his infancy almost, put into the way of wielding his limbs decently, and coming into a room like a human creature. But I really think it more eligible, that a youth be a little bashful and awkward, than that he have too much of the player or dancing master. Care ought therefore to be taken, that he do not learn to dance too well. The consequence will probably be, that, being commended for it, he will take all opportunities of exhibiting his performance, and will in time become a hunter after balls, and a mere dangler among the ladies.

The same caution ought to be used with respect to music. It is true, there are very few of the good people of *England*, who have so much true taste, as to be capable of excelling in that alluring and bewitching art. But there are instances of the bad effects of cultivating it too much.

So much of the riding school as is useful and necessary, there is nothing to be said against it. But it is deplorable to see many of our gentry study the liberal science of jockeyship to the neglect of all the rest.

Fencing, if practised to such a degree as to excel at it, is the likeliest means that can be contrived for getting a man into quarrels. And I see not, that the running a fellow-creature through the body, or having that operation performed upon one's self, is much the more desirable for its being done *secundum artem*. Yet whoever wears a sword, ought to know somewhat of the art of handling it.

Drawing is an ingenious accomplishment, and does not lead directly to any vice that I know of. It may even be put upon the same footing with a taste for reading, as a sober amusement, which may lead a young gentleman to love home and regular hours. But it is far from being friendly to the constitution. Like all sedentary employments which engage the attention, it is prejudicial to the health, espe-

cially where oil colours are used, which is not indeed a necessary part in drawing. It likewise fixes and strains the eyes, and, in small work, fatigues them too much to be pursued to any great length with safety. At the same time, to know perspective, and the other principles of the art, and to have such a command of the pencil, as to be capable of striking out a draught of an object, or view, not so much with delicacy as with strength, swiftness, and fluency, is an accomplishment very ornamental, and often useful.

I will conclude this section with the following remark, That there is this difference between the conduct of education, and the improvement of the mind afterwards, that in education, the view being to open the mind to all kinds of knowledge, there is no absurdity in carrying on several studies together, nor in passing from one to another, before the pupil arrives at great perfection in the first; on the contrary, in maturity, the view being not to learn the first principles (which are supposed to have been studied in youth) but to acquire a perfect knowledge of subjects, it is then improper to pursue many different studies at once, or to give over one, and proceed to another, till one has carried the former a competent length.

SECTION IV.

Of many Studies. Of a Method of acquiring a competent Knowledge of the Sciences. Of proper Books and Apparatus.

BEFORE a young gentleman sets about any particular study, supposing his puerile education finished, he may prepare himself for more manly improvements, by a careful perusal of the following books, which will give him a general view or map of science, viz. The Preface to *Chambers' Dictionary*. *Clark's Method of Study*. *Boswell's Method of Study*. *Locke's Conduct of Human Understanding*. *Watts' Improvement of the Mind*. *Baker's Reflections on Learning*, (an ingenious work, except upon the subject of Astronomy and Philosophy, where the author has bewildered himself miserably.) *Wootton's*

Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning, *Rollin's Belles Lettres.*

Nothing will be of more consequence towards the success of a young gentleman's endeavours for his own improvement, than his getting early into a right track of reading and study: for by that means he will save infinite trouble, which many go through, by beginning at the wrong end; who after distressing themselves in pursuing what they have not the necessary accomplishments for, find themselves obliged to give up what they had undertaken, and go back to first principles. Men thus suffer great loss of time and labour; meet with discouragement in their studies; and the structure of learning which they raise, proves in the end but a piece of patchwork. Others, by being at first put upon a wrong course of reading, find themselves plunged into mystery, fanaticism, or error of one kind or other; out of which it costs them many years to extricate themselves. Others, attaching themselves too early and too closely to one narrow track, as pure mathematics, or poetry, cramp their minds in their youth; or, by giving too great a loose to fancy, unfit them for expatiating boldly, and at the same time surely, in the fields of knowledge. To avoid these radical errors, let a young gentleman carefully study the books above recommended, and, through the whole course of his reading, take all opportunities of conversing with, and consulting men of judgment in books; of a large and free way of thinking, and of extensive knowledge. The consequence of which judicious manner of proceeding has, in many instances, been improvement in most branches of science to a masterly degree to thirty or forty years of age. But this supposes a superior natural capacity, and various other advantages.

Next after such a knowledge of languages, numbers, geometry, geography, chronology, and logic, which may be called instrumental studies, after such a moderate acquaintance with these, as may be acquired before eighteen or twenty, youth may proceed to the more manly studies of history, biography, the theory of government, law, commerce, economics, and ethics.

I mention these together, because there is a connexion between them, which renders them proper to be carried

on in succession, as they will mutually assist and throw a light on each other. And I advise a studious youth to improve himself in such branches of knowledge as these, before he proceeds to perfect himself in the higher mathematics; first, on account of the incomparably superior importance of a thorough knowledge of our own nature, state, and obligations; the indispensable necessity of understanding which subjects is such, as to make all our pursuits appear comparatively but specious trifling. And secondly, because this kind of knowledge is obviously of such a nature, as not to hazard any possible bad effect upon a young mind, which is more than can be said of most other branches of study, indulged to great length. The vanity and affectation which a little unusual knowledge in classical learning gives weak minds, is so conspicuous, as to have occasioned that species of learning to be termed, by way of distinction, *pedantic scholarship*. And as to mathematics many instances could be produced of men of very fine heads for that science, who, by accustoming themselves wholly to demonstration, have run into an affected habit of requiring demonstration in subjects naturally incapable of it, and of despising all those parts of study, as unscientific, which do not give the satisfaction of mathematical certainty. Such persons thus disqualifying themselves for improvement in the most useful parts of knowledge, though eminent in one particular way, may, upon the whole, be properly said to be men of narrow minds. This evil might have been prevented, had they timely given themselves to other inquiries, as well as mathematics, and been accustomed to apply their minds to various ways of searching into, and finding out truth. But the natural and almost unavoidable effect of confining the mind to one kind of pursuit, is the hampering and narrowing, instead of enlarging and ennobling it.

At the same time it ought to be remembered, that nothing tends so much to habituate to a justness of thought, and accuracy of expression, as a tincture of mathematical knowledge received in youth. All that is here intended to be guarded against is the plunging too deep at first into that study, which often tends to the exclusion of all others for life. And, as was before observed, no part of useful

or ornamental knowledge is to be excluded, consistently with a view of a complete improvement of the mind.

Useful books, previous to the reading of history, are such as the following, viz. *Rollin's* Method of studying History, in his *Belles Lettres*. *Bousset's* Discours de l'Histoire Universelle. *Potter's* Greek and *Kennet's* Roman Antiquities, *Strauchius'* and *Helvicus'* Chronology, *Sleidon* on the Four Monarchies, *Whear's* and *Fresney's* Methods of studying History.

In order to read history with perfect clearness, geography must go hand in hand. The system of Geography lately published together with *Anson's* Voyage, which contains some new accounts, not in that work. *Well's* *Geographia Classica*, and *Senex's* New General Atlas, may be proper to perfect a gentleman in that useful branch of knowledge.

To be master of ancient history, let a person first peruse carefully the Universal History, consulting all along the maps of the several countries which have been the scene of action, and referring every character and event to its proper date. After this general view of the whole body of ancient history, those who have leisure, and other advantages, may read as many of the originals as they please, especially upon the more important characters and facts. They are all along quoted by the compilers of the above excellent and useful work. Those who possess the learned languages, in which those originals were writ, find in the perusal of them a peculiar pleasure even where the facts related are already known. There is a purity and beautiful simplicity in the descriptions the ancients give, which discerning readers do not find in the works of translators or compilers. Besides that, the very circumstance of the mind's letting itself be deceived into the belief, that we read the very words of an ancient warrior, or orator, though it is certain, those we have ascribed to them by historians, are for the most part put into their mouths by the historians, themselves; the mind's persuading itself, that it hears the very words and accents of an illustrious character in antiquity, makes the perusal of an original peculiarly entertaining and striking.

Gentlemen of leisure and fortune especially, ought by no means to be without a little acquaintance with *Herodo-*

tus, *Thucydides*, *Polybius*, *Xenophon*, *Diodorus Siculus*, and *Plutarch*, the most celebrated *Greek* historians; nor with *Justin*, *Livy*, *Tacitus*, *Cæsar*, *Sallust*, *Suetonius*, and *Curtius*, the greatest among the *Romans*.

Some of the best modern histories, are *Puffendorff's* Introduction, *Hume* and *Smollet's* History of *England*, *Mezeray's* and *Daniel's* of *France*, *Mariana's* of *Spain*, *Vertot's* of *Portugal*, *Sir Paul Ricaut's* of the *Turks*, *Oakley's* of the *Saracens*, *Du Halde's* of *China*;—of the Piratical States of *Barbary*, *Robertson's* of *America*, History of the Conquest of *Mexico*, of *Germany*, of *Naples*, of *Florence*, by *Machiavel*; of *Venice*, by *Nain* and *Paruta*; of *Genoa*, of *Poland*, by *Connor*; of *Holland*, of *Flanders*, by *Bentivoglio*.

To read history with advantage, keep constantly in view the following ends; to find out truth; to unravel if possible, the grounds of events, and the motives of actions; to attain clear ideas of remarkable characters, especially of that which distinguishes one character from another; to profit by the various useful lessons exhibited; to study human nature, as represented in history, and to endeavour to find out which characters you yourself resemble the most; and to remark whatever throws any light or evidence upon religion.

To draw up in writing an epitome or abstract of the most shining parts of history and eminent characters, as one proceeds, adjusting the chronology and geography all along, will contribute greatly to the fixing in the mind a general comprehensive view of the whole thread of story from the oldest accounts of time downward, disposed according to the several ages and countries which make a figure in history. But this will require leisure to execute it properly. Among the abridged facts might, with great advantage be disposed a sect of reflections, moral, political, and theological, as they occurred in the course of reading, which would in the whole amount to a very great number and variety; and would prove an agreeable and improving amusement in advanced life, to peruse, add to, and correct, according as one's judgment matured, and views enlarged. A man of leisure and abilities might, in his collection of historical remarks, unite together in one view whatever characters seemed to have any resemblance, might

set against one another such as, by making striking contrasts, might set off one another to the best advantage. He might observe the different conduct of the same person at different times, and account, from the different circumstances he was engaged in, for those differences, in his behaviour. He might observe how one, of perhaps the best abilities, was unhappily led into such a course of conduct as has blasted his reputation; how another, by missing certain advantages, fell short of the character, which, by a happy coincidence of circumstances he must have attained. How seemingly inconsiderable particulars in the conduct of princes and great men, have produced strange effects in the affairs of mankind, and what momentous consequences to the rest of the world depend upon the behaviour of those who are at the head of it.

History is the key to the knowledge of Human Nature. For in it we see what sort of beings our fellow creatures are, by reading their genuine characters in their actions. These a person, who carefully studies history, may trace up to their source, and pursue and unravel all the wonderful disguises, doublings, and intricacies of the human heart. Life, as it is generally conducted by persons of all stations, but especially of the highest, appears from history, in its true colours, as a scene of craft, of violence, of selfishness, cruelty, folly, and vanity. History shows the real worth of the usual objects of the pursuits of mankind; that there is nothing new under the sun; nothing to be wondered at; that mankind have been from the beginning bewildered and led from their real happiness, and the end of their being, after a thousand visionary vanities, which have deluded and disappointed them from generation to generation, and are likely to do so to the last.

What can be more entertaining or instructive, than in history to trace this world of our's through its various states; observe what sort of inhabitants have possessed it, in different periods; how different, and yet how much the same; how nations, states, and kingdoms have risen, flourished, and sunk; the first rise of government, patriarchal, monarchical, republican; what characters have appeared in different ages, eminent for virtue, or infamous for wickedness; to what seemingly slight causes the most important events have been owing; the arts, by which one man has

been able to subdue millions of his fellow creatures, and to tread on the neck of mankind; the motives which have put men upon action; and the weaknesses which have been the cause of the baffling of their schemes; the force of human passions, the weakness of reason, the influence which prejudices and attachments have on the conduct of men, the surprising heights to which virtue has raised some men, the difficulties conquered, the honours gained, and the lasting fame acquired by a disinterested love of their country, the madness on which ambition, covetousness, and love of pleasure have driven men; and through the whole, the influence of the unseen Providence disappointing the counsels of the wise; weakening the power of the mighty; putting down one, and raising another up; and working out its own great and important ends, by the weakness, the power, the virtue, the wickedness, the wisdom, and the folly of mankind.

History is the great instructor for all ranks in life, but especially the highest. For those who are besieged and blocked up by triple guards of flatterers, (whose chief care and great interest it is above all things to prevent the approach of truth) in history may see characters as great, or greater than their own, treated with the utmost plainness. There the haughty tyrant may see how a *Nero* was spoke of behind his back, though deified by the slavish knee of flattery. Thence he may judge how he himself will be spoken of by historians, who will no longer dread his menace after his head is laid in the dust. Thence he may judge how his character is perhaps now treated in the antichamber of his own palace, by the very sycophants whose servile tongues had, the moment before, been lavishing the fulsome and undistinguished applause on his worst vices, which they had sanctified with the title of *princely virtues*. History will faithfully lay before him his various and important duty (for the higher the rank, the more extensive the sphere of duty to be performed) which those, who come into his presence, dare not, or oftener will not, instruct him in. There he will see the original of the institution of government, and learn, that power is given into the hands of one for the advantage of the many; not, according to the monstrous doctrine of tyranny and slavery, the many made for one. There he will learn every hon-

est art of government, and can be engaged in no difficult circumstance, of which he will not find an example, and upon which he may not learn some useful instruction for governing mankind. For the human species have been from the beginning very much the same, and generally capable, by wise laws, strictly executed, by a judicious police universally prevailing, and by the powerful example of persons in high rank, of being governed and managed at the pleasure of able and politic princes. There he will see the difference between the real glory of a *Titus*, or an *Alfred*, and the horrible barbarity of a *Philip* or a *Lewis*. He may set his own character and actions at the distance of a few centuries, and judge in his own mind, whether he will then appear in the light of a devourer of his fellow creatures, or of the father of his people; of a wise and active monarch, or of a thing of shreds and patches; of an example to mankind of every sublime virtue, or a general corrupter of manners. History is the grand tribunal, before which princes themselves are, in the view of all mankind, arraigned, tried, and, often with the greatest freedom as well as impartiality, condemned to everlasting infamy. And though it is the mark of a truly great mind to dare to be virtuous at the expense of reputation; it is a proof of a soul sunk to the lowest baseness of human nature, to bear to think of deserving the contempt or hatred of all mankind, the wise and good, as well as the unthinking and worthless.

There is not indeed a lesson in the whole compass of morals, that is not in the most advantageous and pleasing way, to be learned in history and biography, taking in ancient and modern, sacred and profane. There the madness of ambition appears in a striking light. The dreadful ravages produced with that wide wasting fury, whenever she has possessed the frantic brain of a hero, and sent him, like a devouring fire, or an overflowing inundation, spreading destruction over the face of the earth; the numbers of the innocent and helpless, who have, in the different ages of the world, been spoiled and massacred, to make one fellow worm great; the human hecatombs, which have been offered to this infernal demon; the anxious hours of life, and the violent deaths, to which unthinking men have brought themselves, by the egregi-

ous folly of flying from happiness in pursuit of the phantom of a name; the extensive and endlessly various views, which history exhibits, of the fatal consequences of this vice ought to teach the most inconsiderate the wisdom of contentment, and happiness of retirement.

In history we see the most illustrious characters, for that worth, which alone is real, the internal excellence of the mind, rising superior to the mean pursuit of riches, dignifying and sanctifying poverty by voluntarily embracing it. From thence we cannot help learning this important lesson; That the external advantages of wealth, titles, buildings, dress, equipage, and the like, are no more to the man, than the proud trappings to the horse, which add not to his value, and which we even remove before we can examine his soundness, and which may be put upon the stupid ass, as well as the generous steed.

The contrast we find in history between those nations and particular persons, who studied temperance and abstinence, and those whose beastly luxury renders them infamous to posterity, ought in all reason to convince the readers of history of the advantage of living agreeably to the Dignity of Human Nature. The spontaneous and voluntary approbation, which the heart immediately gives to virtue, where passion and prejudice are out of the way (as is the case where we consider the character of those who have been buried a thousand years ago,) seems to be the voice of God within the mind, calling it to the study and practice of whatever is truly laudable. Why does not every prince judge of himself with the same impartiality as he does of the *Cæsars*? Why does a private person indulge himself in vices, which all mankind, and even himself, abhor in a *Sardanapalus*, or *Heliogabalus*?

It would be easy to write a book, as large as this whole work, upon the moral advantages of the study of history. But to proceed:

The writers of ecclesiastical history may be as properly mentioned here, as any where else, viz. *Eusebius*, *Socrates*, &c. *Cave's* Lives of the Fathers; *Dapin's* Ecclesiastical History; Histories of the Councils; *Bower's* History of the Popes; *Chandler's* of the Inquisition; *Sleidan's* History of the Reformation in *Germany*; *Brandt's* in the

Low-Countries; *Ruchat's* in *Switzerland*; and *Burnet's* in *England*. To which add *Whiston's* *Sacred History*; *Jortin's* *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*; and *Mosheim's* lately published work.

Biography is a species of history, with this peculiarity, that it exhibits more minutely the characters, and sets forth to view some which are too private for history, but which are not on that account less worthy of being known, but perhaps more so than those which, being more exposed, were more disguised and affected, and consequently more remote from nature, the knowledge of which ought to be the object in view. There is no sort of reading more profitable than that of the lives and characters of wise and good men. To find that great lengths have been actually gone in learning and virtue, that high degrees of perfection have been actually attained by men like ourselves, entangled among the infirmities, the temptations, the opposition from wicked men, and the other various evils of life; how does this show us to ourselves as utterly inexcusable, if we do not endeavour to cumulate the heights we know have been reached by others of our fellow creatures. Biography, in short, brings us to the most intimate acquaintance with the real characters of the illustrious dead; shows us what they have been, and consequently what we ourselves may be; sets before us the whole character of a person who has made himself eminent either by his virtues or vices; shows us how he came first to take a right or wrong turn; how he afterwards proceeded greater and greater lengths; prospects which invited him to aspire to higher degrees of glory, or the delusions which misled him from his virtue and his peace; the circumstances which raised him to true greatness, or the rocks on which he split and sunk to infamy. And how can we more effectually, or in a more entertaining manner, learn the important lesson, what we ought to pursue, and what to avoid.

Besides *Plutarch*, *Cornelius Nepos*, *Suetonius*, and the rest of the ancient biographers, the moderns are to be consulted. The *General Dictionary*, continued by the writers of *Biographia Britannica*, is a vast treasure of this kind of knowledge. One cannot propose to peruse thoroughly such voluminous works. They are only to have

a place in a gentleman's library, and to be turned to at times, and select parts to be read and digested.

A general insight into the theoretical part of government, and law, seems necessary to the complete improvement of the mind. This may be best acquired by a careful attention to history, which shows the original of government; its necessity and advantage to the world, when properly administered; its corruptions and errors; changes and revolutions; ruin and subversion, and their causes. This is the proper science of a gentleman of eminent rank, who has weight and influence in his country.

Proper helps for this study are the following, viz.

Bacon, Locke, and Sidney, on Government; Harrington's and Sir Thomas More's Works; Grotius on the rights of War and Peace; Puffendorff's Law of Nature and Nations, with Barbeyrac's Notes; Milton's Political Works, which are to be read with large allowances, for his zeal for the party he was engaged in; Sir William Temple's Works; Castiglione's Courtier; Rymer's Fœdera; Wood's Institutes; L'Esprit des Loix; Domat's Civil Law; and The Statutes abridged.

The theory of commerce is closely connected with the foregoing. It is a subject highly worthy the attention of any person, who would improve himself with a general and extensively useful knowledge; and for persons in eminent and active stations is indispensably necessary. Those who have any concern with the legislature, and those who are at the head of cities and corporations, if they be deficient in knowledge of the interests of trade, are wanting in what is their proper calling. Every person who has either vote or interest in choosing a representative in parliament, ought to make it his business to know so much of the commerce of this country, as to know how, and by whom, it is likely to be promoted or discouraged. And if all was rightly regulated, it is to be questioned if any one ought to be an elector, who could not make a tolerable figure in the house, if not as a speaker, at least as a voter.

To acquire some general understanding of the theory of trade and commerce, a gentleman may with advantage, use the following books, viz. *Postlethwaite's Dictionary of Trade and Commerce; The British Merchant; Sir*

Josiah Child on Trade; *Urtariz's* Theory of Trade and Commerce; Universal Library of Trade and Commerce; 'The Merchant's Map of Commerce; *Locke* on Trade and Coin; *Lex Mercatoria Rediviva*; *Oldenburgh's Stevens'* and *Lockyer's* Pieces on Trade and Exchange; *Davenant* on Trade and Revenues; *Gee* on Trade; Tracts by Mr. *Tucker* of *Bristol*; and *Anderson's* History of Commerce.

But whoever, from a view to public good, would perfectly understand the present state of the commerce of these kingdoms, as it is continually varying and fluctuating, he cannot expect to have a just account of it by any other means than the informations of those actually engaged in it.

A gentleman may afterwards read the works of those writers who have treated of the human nature and faculties, their extent and improvement, in a speculative or theoretical way. After having studied history, he will be qualified to judge whether such authors treat the subject properly or not; and will be capable of improving and correcting their theory from the examples of real characters exhibited in history.

Mr. *Locke's* Essay on The Human Understanding is the foundation of this sort of knowledge. There is no good author on the subject who has not gone upon his general plan. His conduct of the understanding is also a work worthy of its author. The great Bishop *Butler*, author of the Analogy, in some of his sermons, which might be more properly called philosophical discourses, has with much sagacity corrected several errors of the writers on this subject, on the theory of the passions, and other particulars. The works of *Hutcheson* of *Glasgow* may be perused with advantage. He is both, on most points, a good reasoner and an elegant writer. Besides these authors, and others, who have written expressly on this subject, many of whom have said good things; but have run into some indisputable peculiarities of opinion, on account of which I do not choose to recommend them: besides these, I say, the writings of almost all our celebrated *English* divines and moralists contain valuable materials on this subject.

The inimitable authors of the *Spectator*, *Tatler*, and

Guardian, have displayed the whole of human life in all the shapes and colours it appears in. These admirable essays may be read as a ground-work of economics, or the knowledge of the arts of life.

There would be no end of giving a list of books on this head.—The few following are some of the best, viz. *The Rule of Life in Select Sentences*, from the Ancients; *Apophthegms of the Ancients*; *Mason's Self Knowledge*; *Charron on Wisdom*; *Bacon's*, *Collier's* and *Montaigne's* *Essays*; *Fuller's Introduction to Wisdom and Prudence*; *The Moral Miscellany*; *The Practical Preacher*; and *The Plain Dealer*, in 2 vols.

Of all parts of knowledge, which may be properly termed scientific, there is none, that can be so ill dispensed with by a gentleman, who would cultivate his mind to the utmost perfection, as that of ethics, or on the grounds of morality. The knowledge of right and wrong, the obligations and consequence of virtue, and the ruinous nature and tendency of vice, ought to be perceived by every well-cultivated mind in the most clear and perfect manner possible. But of this most important branch of science, and what is very closely connected with it, viz. *Revealed Religion*, I shall treat in the two following books.

The best ancient moralists are *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Epicte-tus*, *Hierocles*, *Xenophon*, *Æsop*, *Plutarch*, *Cicero*, *Seneca Antoninus*. Among the moderns, besides those mentioned under other heads, and besides our best divines, as *Barrow*, *Tillotson*, and the rest, the following are excellent moral treatises, viz. *Woolaston's Religion of Nature Delineated*; *Grove's System of Morality*; *Balguy's Tracts*; *Cudworth's Immutable and Eternal Morality*; *Cumberland de Legibus*. Add to these, *Glover's*, *Campbell's*, and *Nettleton's* *Pieces on Virtue and Happiness*; *Wilkins* on *Natural Religion*; *Fiddes* on *Morality*; *The Minute Philosopher*; and *Paschal's Thoughts*. But no writer, ancient or modern, on this subject, exceeds, in closeness of reasoning, *Price's Review of Morals*, lately published.

Of all studies, none have a more direct tendency to aggrandize the mind, and consequently; none are more suitable to the Dignity of Human Nature, than those which are included under the general term of physiology, or the knowledge of nature, as astronomy, anatomy, botany,

mineralogy, and so on. The study of nature appears in no light so truly noble, and fit to ennoble the human mind, as when compared with those of the works of men; as criticism, antiquities, architecture, heraldry, and the like. In the former, all is great, beautiful and perfect. In the latter, the subjects are all comparatively mean and defective. And whatever is otherwise, owes its excellencies to nature, as in poetry, painting, sculpture, and so forth. The first leads us to know and adore the greatest and most perfect of beings. The last, to see and regret our own weakness and imperfection.

The system of nature is the magnificent palace of the King of the universe. The ignorant and incurious, to use the comparison of a great philosopher, is as a spider, which retires into some dark corner, and wraps itself in its own dusty cobweb, insensible of the innumerable beauties which surround it. The judicious inquirer into nature, in contemplating, admiring, and moralizing upon the works of its infinite Author, proves the justness of his own understanding, by his approbation of the perfect productions of an infinite perfect Being.

The sneers of superficial men, upon the weakness which has appeared in the conduct of some inquirers into nature, ought to have no influence to discourage us from those researches. If some few have spent too much time in the study of insects, to the neglect of the nobler parts of the creation, their error ought to suggest to us not a total neglect of those inferior parts of nature; but only to avoid the mistake of giving ourselves wholly to them. There is no species, which infinite Wisdom has thought worthy making, and preserving for ages, whose nature is not highly worthy of our inquiring into. And it is certain, that there is more of curious workmanship in the structure of the body of the meanest reptile, than in the most complicated, and most delicate machine, that ever was or will be constructed by human hands.

To gain the great advantage which ought to be kept in view, in inquiring into nature, to wit, improvement of the mind, we must take care to avoid the error of some, who seem to have no scheme but the finding out a set of mere dry facts, or truths, without ever thinking of the instruction which may be drawn from the observations made.

An inquiry into nature, (says the above eminent author, who himself went as great lengths as any one ever did in that study) who carries his researches not farther than the mere finding out of truths, acts a part as much beneath him, who uses philosophy to lead him to the knowledge of the Author of Nature, as a child who amuses himself with the external ornaments of a telescope, is inferior to the astronomer, who applies it to discover the wonders of the heavens.

The truth is, a man may be a great astronomer and physiologist, and yet by no means a truly great man. For mere speculative knowledge alone will not make a great mind, though joined with the other necessary endowments, it gives the proper idea of an accomplished character. Sir *Isaac Newton*, Mr. *Boyle*, and those who, like them, look through nature up to nature's God, can alone be said to have pursued and attained the proper end of philosophy, which can be no other way of any real service to moral agents, than in so far as it has proper moral effects upon them.

It is strange that any man can think of the several wonders of nature, as the two extremes of stupendous greatness and inconceivable minuteness, the immense variety and wonderful uniformity, frightful rapidity, and yet unvarying accuracy, of motions; the countless numbers, and yet ample provision, the simplicity of causes, and variety of effects, and the rest, and not be irresistibly led to think of the Maker and Governor of such a glorious work! How can men think of a globe twenty-five thousand miles round, as the earth we inhabit is known to be, without thinking of the hand which formed this mighty mass, and gave it a figure so regular, as we see it has by its shadow cast upon the moon in a lunar eclipse, without adoring Him, who could as it were, roll the stupendous heap between his hands and accurately mould it into shape? But if astronomers are right, in calculating the magnitude of some of the other planets to exceed many hundred times this on which we live, and the sun himself to be equal to a million of earths, whose figure we observe to be perfectly regular; what can we think of the eye which could take in, and the hand which could form into regular shape, such cumbrous masses? If we consider this unwieldy

lump of matter on which we live, as whirling round the sun in a course of between four and five hundred millions of miles in a year, and consequently, sixty thousand in one hour, a rapidity exceeding that of a cannon ball just discharged, as much as that does the speed of a horse; can we avoid reflecting on the inconceivable might of the arm which brandished it, and threw it with a force proportioned to such a rapidity? One would think those who best understand the laws of motion, and the exactness necessary in adjusting the two fold forces which produce a circular or elliptical revolution round a centre, should be the properest persons to set forth the wonders of Divine Wisdom, which has exhibited such instances of skill in the motions of our earth, and other planets round the sun, and in the compounded motions of satellites or moons round them.

Who can survey the countless myriads of animalcules, which with the help of the microscope are visible in almost all kinds of fluids, when in a state tending to putrefaction, without thinking on the Almighty Author of such a profusion of life? When some grains of sand, some small cuttings of human hairs, or any other body, whose real size is known, are put into a drop of one of those fluids which exhibit animalcules, it appears evident to any eye, that a grain of sand must be equal to the size of some millions of them.—For the grain of sand appears a body of a great many inches solid, while the whole fluid seems filled with living creatures, even then (when so enormously magnified) too small to be distinguished: I mean at present the smallest species of animalcules, for the most infusions exhibit a great variety of sizes—Two or three times the number of the inhabitants of *London*, *Westminster*, and *Southwark* crowded into the bulk of a grain of sand! Every one with an organized body, consisting of the various parts necessary to animal life! What must then be the size and particles of the fluid, which circulates in the veins of such animals? What the magnitude of a particle of light, to which the other is a mountain?

These few particulars are thus cursorily mentioned, only for the sake of an opportunity of remarking upon the oddness of the cast of some minds, which can spend years in examining such wonders of nature, going through the

calculations necessary to determine facts, and yet stop short of the reflections so natural upon making the discovery, and for the sake of which alone, one would think it was worth while to have bestowed the pains. For it is really of very little consequence to us to know the exact proportion between the magnitude of a grain of sand and an animalcule in pepper-water; the wonderful regularity of the motions of all the great bodies in nature, describing equal areas in equal times; the amazing properties of light and colours; and the means by which vision is performed, and the like: it is, I say, of very little consequence to know a number of facts which obtain in nature, if we never consider them farther than as dry uninteresting facts, nor think of applying our knowledge of them to some purpose of usefulness for life or futurity.

The invitations to acquire a general knowledge of anatomy are innumerable. An animal body is indeed a system of miracles. The number of various parts adapted to such various uses; the structure of the bones, as the supporters of the whole frame; the number and apt insertion of the muscles, for performing the various motions of the body with ease and gracefulness; the endless variety of vessels, tubes and strainers, gradually lessening to imperceptibility, with the fluids circulating through them, and, secreted by them, for the various purposes of nature, which render the body of an animal a system in which a greater number of streams are continually flowing, than those which water the largest kingdoms upon earth, or, more probably, than all that run in all the channels round the globe.

The eye alone, that miracle of nature, is a study for life! We find how difficult it is to form and adjust a set of glasses for any compound optical instrument. Yet glass is a solid substance, which will keep the form that is once given it. But the eye must be considered as a composition of various coats or pellicles, of three different humours and a set of muscles, to alter the form of those humours, and the aperture of the eye, instantaneously, according to the situation, or distance, brightness or obscurity, of the object to be viewed; at the same time, that the whole mass of the eye is to be considered as a system in which there are innumerable streams continually flowing. Now

as we know, that in order to distinct vision, the laws of optics require the figure of the eye to be strictly true and regular; that it should continue fit for vision for a few moments together, considering of what soft and pliable substance it is made, and how continually changing its figure and state, is what we can in no respect give an account of. How delightful is the search into these wonders! How naturally does it lead the well disposed mind to love and adore the Almighty Author of so excellent a work!

There is indeed none of the works of nature, down to the most common and contemptible (if any thing could be so called, which infinite Wisdom has deigned to make) that is not found, when attentively examined, to be, for curioisity of structure, above the apprehension of any human mind. What is meaner, or more common than a pile of grass? Yet, whoever with a microscope, examines its various parts, will find it a work of such curiosity, as to deserve his highest admiration. In the blade he will find a double coat throughout, between which, the vessels which convey the juices to nourish it, are disposed. The minuteness of those tubes decreases to imperceptibility. Nor do the same vessels carry and return the juices. There are in every plant, and consequently in every pile of grass, two kinds of vessels, analogous to the veins and arteries in an animal body, by means of which a circulation of the juices is performed. The blade is also furnished with excretory vessels to carry off by perspiration whatever juices may be taken into the plant, which may be superfluous, or unfit for its nourishment, and with absorbent vessels, at whose orifices nourishment is taken in from the ambient air, as well as from the earth by the root. The blade is always furnished with a strong fibrous substance running up its middle, and tapering to a point, for supporting and strengthening it. The substance of the roots of all plants, is quite different from the other parts, in outward form and internal structure. It is so in grass. Every single tendril is furnished with vessels, at whose open mouths the proper juices enter, which, as they mount upwards, are secreted, so that those which are proper for each respective part, are conveyed to it; and the other particles, by means of valves and other contrivances within the vessels, are stopped and turned back. The substance

of the root itself is of three sorts, the cortical, or bark, the woody part, and the pith. Each of these has its vessels or passages, differently disposed, and of a different size and make, as the microscope shows. The seed itself is a miracle of curiosity. For in every single grain the stamina of the future plant, or rather of the plant itself in miniature, is disposed so that the growth of the plant is only the unfolding of the stamina, and their enlargement by the addition of new juices. If the opinion of some naturalists be well founded, viz. that in the stamina contained in a seed, there are also contained the stamina of the plant which is afterwards to spring from that, and so on for ever, this increases the wonder infinitely. It is likewise observed, that almost every plant, if cut off above the root, will send out new branches, leaves, and seeds almost endlessly. So that it would seem, that every stock of every plant, and consequently every stalk of grass, as well as every seed, contained almost an infinite number of other plants, branches, leaves, and so forth, in miniature. But I will not urge this too far, because there is another hypothesis, which does not require such inconceivable minuteness of stamina, nor their being thus disposed one within another, without end, from the creation of the first plant: I mean, the supposition of those stamina floating in the air, in infinite numbers, and being received into proper matrices, and so-fructifying. Be this as it will, there are, as we have seen, wonders without end in so despicable an object as a pile of grass. After all that has been said, there may, for any thing we know, be a thousand times more unknown of the internal substance or structure of a pile of grass. We know not how two particles of matter come to adhere to one another, why they do not fall asunder like grains of dust or sand. We know not how the particles of nourishment are taken into the vessels of the root of a plant; how they are carried on and secreted every one to its proper place; what it is in the make of the particles of the juice, and effluvia exhaled from the root and blade, which makes them taste or smell differently; what disposition of the external parts makes the root part appear white, and the blade green, and so on. Yet this subject, in which there are so many curiosities known to us, and enough of inexplicable difficulties to puzzle all the philoso-

phers of ancient and modern times is no rarity, but it is every where to be met with. The whole earth is covered with it. Whilst every single pile, of which there may be some thousands in every square foot of ground, is formed with all the admirable curiosity and exactness I have been here describing. What then is the art displayed in all the various and numberless plants of different species which cover the face of the earth? What the profusion of workmanship in the innumerable multitudes of beasts, birds, fishes, and insects, which inhabit all parts of the earth and waters; of which every single individual displays wonders of inexpressible power and inconceivable wisdom beyond number? "Great and manifold are thy works, O "Lord, in wisdom hast thou made them all."

If a person has a strong genius for mathematical learning, it will be natural for him to improve himself in the higher parts of that noble science, as plain and spherical trigonometry, conic sections and fluxions. But it does not appear to me absolutely necessary to the idea of a well improved mind, that a person be master of those abstruse parts of mathematics. On the contrary, I know not whether the employing a great deal of time in those parts of science, which are rather sublime and curious, than useful in life, can be justified; at least, where a person has a capacity for improving himself and others in useful knowledge. On the other hand, it must be owned, that the exercising the genius in the most difficult parts of study, is not without its uses, as it tends to whet the capacity, and sharpen the faculties of the mind, which may, for any thing we know, be of advantage to it, in fitting it for the sublime enjoyments of a future state. Add to this, that it is not always easy to say what is altogether useless in science. What has been at its first discovery looked upon as a mere curiosity, has often been found afterwards capable of being applied to the noblest uses in science, and in life. This has been experienced in no instance more frequently than in the discovery of mathematical proportions. Those of triangles were discovered before they were found to be of such important usefulness in mensuration and navigation; and those in common geometry, in trigonometry, conics, and fluxions, before they were applied to astronomical calculations. Nor

can any one pronounce with certainty, that those which have not yet been applied to any direct use for improving science, or art, never will, or are capable of it. Upon the whole, the pursuit of any study, however it may seem merely curious, rather than useful, is an employment incomparably more noble and suitable to the dignity of human life, than those of pleasure, power, or riches. Though this is not saying, that study is the sole business of life, or that it may not be carried lengths inconsistent with our present state.

For improvement in the higher mathematics, *Wolfius's* and *Wilson's* Trigonometry, *Muller's* or *De la Hire's* Conic sections, *Ditton's*, *Simpson's*, or *Maclaurin's* Fluxions may be studied.

At last we come to the summit and pinnacle of knowledge, the utmost reach of human capacity, I mean the *Newtonian* philosophy. This sublime of science is what very few, perhaps not six in an age, have been found equal to. The labours of that prodigy of our species; the calculations and demonstrations upon which he has founded his immortal and impregnable structure, are not to be investigated, but by one possessed of the quickest penetration, the most indefatigable diligence, leisure, and vacancy of mind. There are, for example, some of his problems, which few men can hold out to go through; few minds being capable of keeping on the stretch for so long a time as is necessary for the purpose. It will therefore be in vain to advise readers in general to try their strength in this *Achillean* bow. It is however, possible to acquire a general idea of his philosophy from *Pemberton's* and *Maclaurin's* views of it. They who would go farther, must read his *Principia* with the Jesuit's Comment, and his *Optics*.

I will here give a list of books which will make a pretty complete and useful collection upon the various branches of natural philosophy and mixt mathematics. *Ray's* Wisdom of God in the creation. *Derham's* Physio-theology. Nature displayed. *Nieuwertyt's* Religious Philosopher. *Bacon's* and *Boyle's* Works. *Lieuwenhowek's* Arcana. *Adams's* Micrographia, and *Baker's* Employment for the Microscope. *Ray's*, *Ruysch's* and *Gesner's* History of Animals. *Willoughby's* Ornithologia. *Swam-*

merdam of Insects. *Keil's* and *Gravesande's* Physics. *Gravesande's*, *Desagulier's* and *Rowning's* Experimental Philosophy. *Hill's* History of Minerals and Fossils. *Blackwell's* Herbal. *Martin's* Philosophical Grammar, and *Philosophia Britannica*. The tracts which give an account of the late discoveries in electricity. *Hale's* Statics. *Cotes' Hydrostatics* and *Pneumatics*. *Miscellanea Curiosa*. *Philosophical Transactions* abridged, and those of the foreign academies of science. *Muschenbroeck's* Physical Essays. *Keil's*, *Winslow's* and *Heister's* Anatomy. *Monro's* Osteology. *Boerhaave's* *Œconomia Animalis*. *Ray*, *Malpighi*, *Tournefort*, and *Sloan* on Plants. *Keil's* and *Gregory's* Astronomy. *Pemberton's* and *MacLaurin's* Account of *Sir Isaac Newton's* Discoveries. *Sir Isaac's* Principia, with the Jesuit's Comment. *Dr. Halley's*, *Huygens'* and *Flamstead's* Works. *Whiston's* Religious Principles of Astronomy. *Smith's*, *Gregory's* and *Sir Isaac Newton's* Optics. *Boerhaave's* Chemistry. To which add, *Harris' Lexicon Technicum*; *Chambers' Dictionary*; or the *Encyclopedia* now publishing.

A gentleman of fortune and leisure will do well to furnish himself with a few of the principal instruments used in experimental philosophy, as an air pump, which alone will yield almost an endless variety of entertainment; to which add a condensing engine; a microscope, with the solar apparatus, which likewise is alone sufficient to fill up the leisure hours of a life; a telescope of the *Gregorian* construction;* a set of prisms, and other glasses for the experiment in light and colours; a set of artificial magnets; an electrical machine; and a pair of *Mr. Neale's* patent globes.

SECTION V.

Of forming a Taste in polite Learning and Arts.

TO say, that a gentleman has attained the utmost perfection of the human genius, who is ignorant of the politer sciences of criticism, poetry, oratory, and antiquities, and

* The best and largest instruments of this kind, beyond comparison, that have ever been made, are those constructed by *Mr. Short* of *Surry-street*, in the Strand, London.

of the elegant arts of painting, music, sculpture, and architecture, would undoubtedly be improper. And yet it may justly be affirmed, that a very moderate skill in them is sufficient; as that kind of knowledge is at best only the embellishment, not the substantial excellence of a character. Nor can it be denied, that many, especially men of fortune, do pursue the study of those elegancies to lengths inconsistent with the shortness and uncertainty of life, and with the awful and serious business to be done in it. Solid and useful knowledge, especially among the great, gives way almost entirely to taste. And even of that, a very great part is only affectation and cant, rather than true discernment. In music, for example, I think it must be owned, that there are few civilized nations in which there is so little true taste, as in *England*; the proof of which is, the extremely small number of our countrymen and women, who excel either in performance or composition. In *France* and *Italy*, on the contrary, and several other countries of *Europe*, there are very few towns, or even villages, in which there are not some able artists in music. And yet we know, that there is not a country in the world, in which musicians, especially foreigners, are so much encouraged as here. This cannot be ascribed to our natural taste for music; for that would appear in our excelling in the art. It must therefore be owing to an affectation of what we do not possess, which costs us a great many thousands a year, and must yield but very little entertainment. For the pleasure a person receives from music, or any of the other *beaux arts*, is proportionable to the taste and discernment he has in them.

Perhaps, the same might be said of some other elegancies as well as of music. But I shall only in general add, that whoever pursues what is merely ornamental, to the neglect of the useful business of life; and instead of considering such things only as ornaments and amusements, makes them his whole or chief employment, does not understand, nor act up to the true dignity of his nature.

On the study of classical learning and antiquities, I cannot help saying, that it is really a matter of no small concern, to see men of learning straining beyond all bounds of sense in heaping encomiums on the great writers of antiquity, which there is reason to think those great men

would blush to read. To hear those gentlemen, one would imagine the ancients all giants in knowledge, and the moderns, pigmies. Whereas it is much more probable, that the antiquity of the world was its youth, or immature age, and that the human species, like an individual, have gradually improved by length of time; and, having the advantage of the inquiries and observations of the past ages, have accordingly profited by them, and brought real and properly scientific knowledge to heights, which we have no reason to imagine the ancients had any conception of.

The whole advantage antiquity seems to have of the present times as far as we know, and it would be strange if we should reason upon what we do not know, is in the works of fancy. The style of the ancient orators and poets is perhaps superior to that of any of our productions, in grandeur and in elegance. Nor is it any wonder it should be so. In the popular governments of *Greece* and *Rome*, where almost every point was to be gained by dint of eloquence, and where kings were clients to private pleaders, it was to be expected, that the art of oratory should be cultivated, and encouraged to the utmost.

The very sound of the *Greek* and *Latin* gives the writings in those languages a sweetness and majesty, which none of our feeble, unmusical tongues can reach. How should an *English* or *French* poet have any chance of equaling the productions of those who wrote in a language which expressed the most common thoughts with more pomp of sound, than our modern tongues will lend to the most sublime conceptions?

Ton d'apameibomenos prosephe podas okys Achilleus. HOM.
 "The swift footed Achilles answered him."

Here is more grandeur of sound to express almost nothing, than *Milton* could find in the whole compass of our language to clothe the greatest thoughts that perhaps ever entered into an uninspired imagination. For what is there in the *Iliad*, stript of the majesty of the *Greek*, that can equal the following hymn to the Supreme Being, sung by the first parents of mankind in innocence:

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good
 "Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
 "This wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then!
 "Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heav'ns,
 "To us invisible, or dimly seen

"In these thy lowest works. Yet these declare
 "Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine:
 "Speak ye, who best can tell, ye son's of light!
 "Angels! for ye behold him, and with songs
 "And choral symphonies, day without night,
 "Circle his throne rejoicing. Ye in heav'n!
 "On earth join all ye creatures to extol,
 "Him first, him last, him midst, and without end," &c.

How would these thoughts shine in *Homer's Greek*! How would *Longinus* have celebrated such a passage in a venerable ancient! How would our *Daciers* and our *Popes* have celebrated it! Let us not therefore be imposed on by sound; but while we pay due praise to antiquity, let us not refuse it to such of the moderns as have deserved it even in those arts, in which the ancients have exhibited their utmost abilities.

But though it should be confessed, that the ancient poets, orators, and sculptors have in some respect outdone the moderns; when this is said, all is said, that can with truth be affirmed of their superiority to us. For in most parts of solid science, they were mere children: there physiology is egregious, trifling, and groundless hypothesis, drawn not so much from nature as from fancy. Their theology or mythology is a mixture of sense, mystery, fable, and impurity. Their ethics are well enough for what they have delivered. But it is a structure without connexion, and without foundation. Whoever has studied *Woolaston's Religion of Nature* delineated, will hardly think *Aristotle's Ethics*, or *Tully's Offices*, worth reading, for the sake of improvement in real and scientific knowledge of the foundation and obligations of morality. He who has digested *Dr. Clark's* noble work, will hardly have recourse to *Cicero, Of the Nature of the Gods*, for just ideas of the Supreme Being, and a rational scheme of religion. Who would name such philosophers as *Pliny*, or *Ælian*, with *Mr. Boyle*, or *Mr. Ray*? Who would think of comparing *Aristotle's Logic* with *Mr. Locke's*, or *Ptolemy's Astronomy* with *Sir Isaac Newton's*? There are many whole sciences known in our times, of which the ancients had not the least suspicion, and arts of which they have had no conception. All the discoveries made by those noble instruments, the telescope, the microscope, and the airpump; the phenomena of electricity; the circulation of the blood, and various other discoveries in anatomy;

the whole theory of light and colours; almost all that is known of the laws by which the machine of the world is governed; the methods of algebra and fluxions; printing, clocks, the compass, gunpowder, and I know not how many more, are the productions of the industry and sagacity of the moderns. It is therefore very unaccountable, that many studious men should express, on all occasions, such an unbounded and unreasonable admiration of the ancients, merely for the elegancies and sublimities, which appear in their works of fancy, which are likewise disgraced in many places by a trifling and childish extravagance, running often so far into the marvellous, as quite to lose sight of the probable. Witness *Virgil's* prophetic harpies, bleeding twigs, and one-eyed *Brobdingnagians*; *Homer's* speaking horses, scolding goddesses, and *Jupiter* enchanted with *Venus's* girdle; and *Ovid's* string of unnatural and monstrous fictions from the beginning to the end of his book!

Whoever may be disposed to question what is here said as a peculiar or new notion, may read Mr. *Locke* on the Conduct of the Understanding, and *Wotton's* and *Baker's* Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning; there he will find the subject discussed in a more copious manner, than the bounds of this treatise would allow.

It is therefore very necessary, that in cultivating a taste, people take care to value the ancients only for what is truly valuable in them; and not to prefer them, universally and in the gross, to the moderns, who by the advantage of succeeding to the labours of their ancestors, have acquired incomparably the superiority over them in almost all parts of real knowledge drawn from actual observation; in method and closeness of reasoning; in depth of inquiry; in more various ways, as well as more compendious methods of coming at truth; and, in general, in whatever is useful for improving the understanding; advantages as much superior to what serves only to refine the imagination, and work upon the passion, as it is of more consequence that a man receive improvement in true knowledge, than that he pass his life in a pleasing dream.

Besides the ancient historians mentioned under the article of history, whoever would form his taste upon the best models, must be in some measure acquainted with the

Greek poets, as *Homer, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, Callimachus, Theocritus, Aristophanes, Anacreon*. Their orators, as *Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Æschines*. The philosophers, whose works in that language are come down to us, are to be looked into, not so much on account of their sentiments, of which above, as their style and manner. The chief of them are, *Plato*, who also gives an account of the philosophy of *Socrates, Aristotle, Xenophon, Plutarch, Epictetus, Longinus, Jamblichus*, who gives an account of *Pythagoras, Theophrastus, Hierocles, Ælian*. To these may be added *Philo Judæus, Diogenes, Laertius*, and *Max Tyrius*. The greatest ancient philosophers, who wrote in *Latin*, are *Cicero, Pliny, Seneca, Lucretius, Quintillian, Lucius Apulcius, and Boethius*. The best *Latin* poets are *Virgil, Horace, Terence, Juvénal, Persius, Plautus, Lucretius, Seneca* the tragic poet, *Martial, Lucan, Statius, Ausonius, and Claudian*.

Whoever has a mind to look into the Fathers, after having got a little acquaintance with what is ascribed to *Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp*, and with the remains of *Clemens Alexandrinus, Iræneus, Cyprian, Tertullian, Justin martyr, Origen, Jerome, Augustin, Eusebius, and Lactantius*, or as many of them as he can conveniently look into, may rest contented with what he will have gained by that study.

There may be a few other ancient authors, *Greek* and *Latin*, which a gentleman may find his advantage in looking into. And there are great parts of most of those here mentioned, which it were better to pass over. There are, almost in all the ancient uninspired writers, numberless exceptionable and wrong-turned sentiments, of which the judicious reader's discernment will obviate the bad effects.

Useful books in criticism are *Hesychius, Suidas, Hedericus's* Lexicon, *Scapula* and *Constantine's* Lexicon; *Stephens's* Thesaurus; *Ainsworth's* Dictionary; *Potter's* *Greek*, and *Kennet's* *Roman Antiquities*; *Montfaucon's* *Paleographia Græca*, and *Antiquite Expliquee*; the various authors collected in *Gravius's* and *Gronovius's* Thesaurus; in *Sallengre's* *Novus Thesaurus*; in *Gruter's* *Fax Artium*; and a multitude of others enumerated by *Wasse* in his Memorial concerning the *Desiderata* in Learning, printed in *Bibliotheca Literaria, Lond. 1722*.

No. iii. Among the ancients, *Aristotle*, *Longinus*, and *Quintilian*. Among the *French*, *Dacier* and *Bossu*. And among the *English*, *Addison* and *Pope* are good critics.

I cannot here help making a remark upon the manner of most of those professed critics, who undertake to translate, comment, answer or write remarks upon authors. These gentlemen seem generally to run greatly into extremes either in praising or blaming. I own I cannot persuade myself that *Homer*, for example, understood the anatomy of the human body as perfectly as *Boerhaave*, merely from the circumstance of his wounding his heroes in so many different parts. Nor can I think that Mr. *Chambers* could have extracted his circle of the arts and sciences out of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, even with the help of *Pope's* and *Dacier's* notes into the bargain. On the other hand, I cannot help thinking that there is some of the genuine spirit of poetry in Sir *Richard Blackmore's* works, notwithstanding what the satirical Dean *Swift* has, in the bitterness of his wit, said against him. Nor does it clearly appear to me that all the heroes in the *Dunciad* deserve a place in the list of votaries of the goddess of Dulness.

I have made this remark for the sake of taking occasion to caution readers not to let themselves be misled by critics or commentators; but, after endeavouring to fix a set of rational, clear, and indisputable marks, whereby to judge of the real excellencies or blemishes of the works they read, whether ancient or modern, to read the critics, but to use their own judgment.

The best *English* poets are *Spencer*, *Milton*, *Shakspeare*, *Waller*, *Rowe*, *Addison* and *Pope*.

I mention only those whose writings are generally innocent. Wit or genius, when applied to the corrupting or debauching the mind or manners of the reader, ought to be doomed to infamy and oblivion. And it is the disgrace of our country and religion, that such stuff as the greatest parts of the works of a *Dryden*, or a *Congreve*, and such like, should be in print.

Among the *French* there are several good writers in the *Belles Lettres*, as *Corneille* and *Racine*, *Rollin*, *Dacier*, *Fenelon*, *Boileau* and *Moliere*, the best writer of comedy who has flourished since *Terence*; his charac-

ters being all well drawn, his moral always good, and his language chaste and decent.

To acquire a taste in painting, sculpture, and architecture, travel is the most effectual means. But such, whose convenience it does not suit to go abroad, may see some small collections of valuable paintings and statues in our own country, and may with advantage read on painting, and design, *Harris, Du Bos, Richardson, Fresnoy, Lairesse*, the Jesuit's Art of Perspective, *Des Piles, Roma Illustrata, Da Vinci, Gravesande* and *Ditton* on Perspective.

On architecture, *Palladio, de Chambray, Felibien, Sebastian, Le Clerk, Perrault, Freart* and *Evelyn*. And on statuary, *Alberti* and *Richardson*.

SECTION VI.

Of Travel.

THERE are three countries, of which it may be an advantage to a gentleman of fortune to see a little; I mean *Holland, France* and *Italy*. The first, with a view to commerce and police; the second to the elegance of life; and the last to curiosities in art, ancient and modern.

There is a pedantry in travel, as well as other accomplishments. And where there is not a direct view to real improvement, a great deal of time and money may be very foolishly spent in rambling over the world, and staring at strange sights.

In order to reap benefit from travel, it is absolutely necessary that a gentleman know well his own country before he sets out; that nothing he may meet with may be strange to him, but what is peculiar to the place he travels through, by which means he may save himself a great deal of otherwise lost labour. This will also enable him to determine immediately in what particulars our own country has the advantage of foreign parts, and the contrary. It will also be necessary, that he make himself master, before he sets out, of as much of the knowledge of foreign countries, and what may be worthy of his attention in them, as can be had in books, or conversation with those who have travelled, by which means he will go properly prepared to every place, and every object. A correspondence with men of abilities and interest in the places one is to go to,

ought also to be established, before he sets out, that no time may be lost in finding out such after his arrival.

The principal objects of inquiry of a traveller are evidently the characters and manners of different nations, their arts of government, connexions, and interests, the advantages or disadvantages of different countries, as to administration, police, commerce, and the rest, with the state of literature and arts, and the remains of antiquity. An account of what one has observed in each different country, with the remarks which occurred upon the spot, ought to be constantly kept.

Nothing sets forth to view more conspicuously the difference between a young man of sense and a fool, than travel. The first returns from foreign parts improved in easiness of behaviour, in modesty, in freedom of sentiment, in readiness to make allowances to those who differ from him, and in useful knowledge of men and manners. The other brings back with him a laced coat, a spoiled constitution, a gibberish of broken *French* and *Italian*, and an awkward imitation of foreign gestures.

One good consequence of an *English* gentleman's having seen other countries, if he has any understanding, will be, his returning home more than ever disposed to enjoy his own. For whoever rightly understands wherein the true happiness of a nation consists, will acknowledge, that these highly favoured lands, were they covered ten months in the year with snow, and boasted neither tree nor shrub, would have incomparably the advantage of *Italy*, with her orange-groves, her breathing statues, and her melting strains of music; of *France*, with all her gaudy finery and outside elegance; and of *Spain*, with her treasures from the New World. Who would compare with happy *Britain*, a country, in which even all these united, but which was deprived of that one, that first of blessings, the glory of Human Nature, without which, life is but a lingering death! I mean, the inestimable privilege of enjoying in peace whatever heaven has lent, of inquiring freely into sacred truth, and of worshipping the Almighty Father of All in sincerity and simplicity, according to the dictates of conscience, unbiassed and unterrified by dragoons, by racks, and fires, and merciless inquisitors?

SECTION VII.

Of the comparative Importance of the various Branches of Knowledge respectively, and with regard to different Ranks and Stations.

WE have thus taken a cursory view of science, and seen what is to be studied and learned, in order to acquire the distinguished and rare character of a man of general and universal knowledge. To be completely master of every one of the branches I have here treated of, only as far as they are already known, is what no one man ever will be capable of, much less of improving them by new discoveries and additions of his own. But a man of fine natural parts, a strong constitution, a turn to application, an easy fortune, a vacant mind, and who has had the advantage of an early introduction, in a free and rational manner, into the principles of the various parts of knowledge, and of a set of learned and communicative friends, and of travel; such a person may, in the course of a life, acquire a masterly knowledge of the fundamental and principal parts of science, so as to apply them with ease and readiness to his occasions for entertaining and instructing others, as well as enriching and aggrandizing his own mind, and perfecting his whole character. Such a person may also improve some particular parts of knowledge by his sagacity and industry.

To consider only one's own entertainment and advantage, one ought rather to desire a general knowledge in a variety of ways, than to carry any one particular science to great lengths. For the advantage of learning, the improvement of a single art or science is the most valuable to man, though he may not be at all a completely accomplished character.

The most important of all sciences, is ethics, with whatever is connected with them, as theology, history, the theory of government, and the like. Next to these physiology at large, or whatever comes under the head of pure and mixed mathematics. Inferior to these in importance are the politer arts of poetry, painting, architecture and the rest. And to possess ever so perfect a knowledge of languages only, I should reckon the lowest pitch of learning,

For persons of the mercantile ranks of life, the *Latin* and *French* languages, writing, arithmetic, and merchants' accounts, geography, history, and the theory of commerce, are the indispensable branches of learning. They may pursue the others to what lengths their circumstances and leisure will allow.

To accomplish a gentleman for the bench, or for the employment of a chamber-counsellor, a perfect knowledge of the theory of government, and foundations of society, is indispensably necessary. To which must be added an immense apparatus of knowledge of the several species of law (which in *England* is the most voluminous and unwieldy of all studies; our law being to the shame of justice, a chaos, not an universe) and almost of every thing else, about which mankind have any connexion, or intercourse with one another. As I cannot see the business of pleading at the bar, in any other light than that of a mischievous invention, calculated wholly for the purpose of disguising truth, and altogether incapable of being applied to any honest purpose, (for truth wants no colouring) I shall therefore say nothing farther on the head of law.

The physician ought to be furnished with a perfect knowledge of the whole body of Physiology. The main pillars, on which he is to erect his structure, are anatomy, chemistry, and botany. But the ablest and most successful of the faculty have always acknowledged, that experience is the only sure foundation for practice; and have advised students in that faculty, rather to neglect all other books, than those, which contain the history of diseases, and methods of cure, delivered by those who have been eminent in the therapeutic art.

As for divines, I cannot help, with great submission, remarking, that there is no order of men whatever, whose studies and inquiries ought to be more universal and extensive. Phylological learning has in my humble opinion, been too much honoured in being regarded as almost the only necessary accomplishment of the clergy. To form the important character of a teacher of Sacred Truth, a dispenser of Divine Knowledge; what superior natural gifts, what noble improvements are not necessary in our times, when the miraculous powers by which Christianity was first established have ceased! If it be the important

business of that sacred order of men to labour for the improvement of Human Nature, it seems highly necessary, that they perfectly understand Human Nature. If the reformation of mankind be their province, they ought to be acquainted with the ways of men, as they are to be learned from history, and by conversation. The prevailing vices of the times; the hindrances to amendment; the current errors in opinion; the secret springs of the mind, by which it is worked to good or bad purposes; the innocent stratagems, by which mankind are to be won, first to listen to, and then to follow advice; the gentle arts of touching their passions, and acting upon their minds, in such a manner as will suit their various casts and inclinations; these ought to be so thoroughly understood by a divine, that he may, both in the pulpit, and in conversation, (by which last, he may gain as many, or perhaps more proselytes to virtue, than any way) be completely furnished for the instruction and reformation of mankind. The works of nature hold forth distinctly the glorious Author of Nature. That knowledge ought therefore to be thought a necessary part of the learning of the sacred dispensers of religion, since just notions of God are the foundation of true religion. To enter deeply into the profound sense and noble beauties of Scripture, a considerable knowledge of the languages, in which the sacred books were penned, is absolutely necessary. For the true idea of preaching, is making mankind acquainted with Divine Revelation, as it stands in the Bible, from which every single doctrine or precept, to be communicated to the people, is to be drawn, and from no other fountain whatever. It is therefore greatly to be wished, that the too prevalent custom of taking a detached passage of Scripture as a motto, and declaiming upon the subject from the preacher's own funds, were changed for a judicious practical comment upon a connected portion of Holy Writ, in such a manner, that the audience might in time comprehend the general scheme of Revelation, and to read the Scriptures with understanding, so as to judge for themselves. To be duly qualified for this, a very great apparatus of critical learning, and knowledge of *Oriental Antiquity*, and *History*, civil and ecclesiastic, is necessary. A thorough knowledge of the obligations of morality being absolutely

necessary to a teacher of virtue, it is required, that he be a master in the science of ethics. And, as much more is to be done with mankind by affecting their passions, than by a cool address to their reason (though truth ought to be the basis of the pathetic) the principles of oratory are to be well understood by a preacher. Nor ought the embellishments of delivery to be neglected, as (I cannot help adding with concern) they are to a shameful degree. For while the mock hero of the theatre studies how to give the utmost force of utterance to every syllable of the fustian rant, which makes the bulk of our stage entertainments, the venerable explainer of the Divine will to mankind, treats of the beauty of virtue, the deformity of vice, the excellencies of a religion which has God himself for its author, the endless joys of heaven, and the hideous punishments of hell, and all in a manner so unmoved and unmoving, that, while the actor becomes the real character he represents, and commands every passion at his pleasure, the preacher can hardly gain attention; hardly seems himself (if we did not know it otherwise) to believe his own doctrines, or to care whether his audience do or not.

But to return; there is scarce any branch of knowledge which does not, one way or other, add a confirmation to revealed religion. Which shows, that if it were possible for a clergyman to master the whole circle of the sciences, he would find use and advantage from his acquisitions. And in conversation, what an ascendant would not a general knowledge of arts, of trade, of the various ways of life, give a reformer of manners over mankind, for their advantage, when he could enter into their ways, and deal with them upon their own terms?

Considering the variety of requisites for completely accomplishing a divine, one cannot help saying, with the apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But be it at the same time observed, and let this work, if it should remain, inform posterity, that, by the confession of all sober and judicious persons, and to the confusion of the unthinking opposers of religion, and its dispensers, no period, since the first ages of the church, could boast a set of clergy of all ranks and denominations superior to those of *Britain* at this present time, either in human learning, in knowledge of Scripture, or sanctity of manners. Which

things being so, what words shall be found equal to the atrociousness of their guilt, who have it in their power, but will not take the trouble, to remove from off the necks of the clergy the galling yoke of subscription to articles, creeds, and confessions, the impositions of men, in many particulars unintelligible, in more, incredible, and in all, superfluous? If Holy Scripture be, as declared in the articles of the church of *England*, the only, and the sufficient rule of faith.

The *Hebrew* original, and *Septuagint* translation of the Old Testament, the New in the original *Greek*, with *Beza's Latin*; and *Taylor's Hebrew Concordance*, and *Schmidus' Greek*, are the foundation of a clergyman's library.

Some of the best commentators of Scripture, are *Erasmus*, *Beza*, *Grotius*, and the authors in the collection called *Critici Sacri* abridged in *Poole's Synopsis*. The works of the following writers are also valuable, viz. *Mede*, *Patrick*, *Hammond*, the *Iratres Poloniæ*, *Vorstius*, *Raphellius*, *Elsner*, *Bos*, *Calmet*, *Whitby*, *Ainsworth*, *Newton*, *Locke*, *Clarke*, *Pyle*, *Pierce*, *Taylor*, *Benson*, *Lowman*, to which add *Fortuity Sacra*; *Knatchbull* on Select Texts, and many more.

Besides the books mentioned under the heads of polite learning, philosophy, and other parts of knowledge, which no gentleman ought to be without, and besides those recommended under the articles, ethics, and church history, the following ought by any means to have a place in the study of every divine; being the best helps for understanding those parts of knowledge, which are to him essential, viz. *Josephus*; *Philo Judæus*; *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ*; *Prideaux's* and *Shuckford's Connexions*; *Spencer* on the Laws of the *Jews*, *Grotius's*, *Locke's*, *Conybeare's*, *Leland's*, *Jenkins's*, *Foster's*, *Benson's*, *Lardner's*, *Lyttleton's*, *West's*, *Duchal's*, *Jortin's*, and *Chandler's* Defences of Christianity; *Clarke* on Natural and Revealed Religion; *Butler's* Analogy; *Rymer's* Representation of Revealed Religion; *Millar's* History of the Propagation of Christianity; *Law's*, *Edwards's*, and *Watts's* Surveys of the Divine Dispensations, and Revelation examined with candour.

It is with no small pleasure that all sincere lovers of

truth observe the greatest and best of men, in our later and more improved times, bravely asserting the noble and manly liberty of rejecting hypotheses in philosophy, and systems in religion; and daring to appeal, from conjecture in the former, and human authority in the latter, to the works of God in the natural world, and his word in Scripture, the only pure and uncorrupted fountains, from whence the candid and inquisitive mind may draw the wholesome stream of unsophisticated knowledge. That a worm of the earth should pretend to impose upon his fellow creature the poor invention of his troubled fancy for the sacred truth of God, while the blessed volume of Divine Revelation itself lies open to every eye, is a degree of presumption, which could scarce have been expected. And yet it is notorious, that, by means of human interposition, the Divine scheme has, especially in one church, been so egregiously perverted, as to be well nigh defeated of its gracious intention. But all societies, who have in any degree, infringed the freedom of inquiry, have violated truth, and injured the cause of religion. Nor only they, who have had power to back with threatenings and punishments their own invented and imposed doctrines, but all who have made Holy Scripture a subject of party zeal and have loaded the world with systems piled on systems, and confounded the understandings of mankind with subtle distinction, and voluminous controversies, are to be considered as nuisances in the world of letters and their works be left a prey to the book worm. A clergyman has no occasion to crowd his library with systematic or polemic lumber. Such authors may distract his understanding; but will not enlighten it. If he cannot in the Sacred books, with the help of the best commentators, read the truth of God, he will not find it in human systems and controversies.

People of fortune are peculiarly inexcusable, if they neglect the due improvement of their minds in the most general and extensive manner. And yet it is to be lamented, that no rank is more deficient in this respect than that of the rich and great. That they, who pretend to set themselves at the head of the world, should be obliged to own themselves generally inferior to those they call their inferiors in the very accomplishments which give the most

just pretensions to superiority! What can be more shameful! The man of business may plead for his excuse, that he has wanted the necessary leisure for improving himself by study; the man of narrow fortune, that he could not go to the expense of education, books, and travel; but what can a lord plead in excuse for his ignorance, except that he thought himself in duty bound to waste his time and his fortune, upon wenches, horses, dogs, players, fiddlers, and flatterers?

The proper and peculiar study of a person of high rank is the knowledge of the interest of his country. But a man of condition ought to be ignorant of no part of useful or ornamental knowledge.

I will conclude what I have to say on the several ranks of life, and the peculiar and indispensable scientific accomplishments of each respectively, by adding, what cannot be too often repeated, That a perfect knowledge of morality and christianity is the noblest endowment of every man and woman of every rank and order. A strong and thorough sense of the absolute necessity of universal virtue and goodness, as the only means of happiness, ought to be worked into the understanding, the will, and every faculty of every rational mind in the universe.

SECTION VIII.

Miscellaneous Cautions and Directions for the Conduct of Study.

I WILL add to what I have said on that part of the Dignity of Life, which consists in the improvement of the mind by knowledge, a few brief remarks, chiefly on the errors which people commonly run into in study, which are the causes of their failing of the end they have in view.

First, reading, or rather running through a multitude of books, without choice or distinction, is not the way to acquire real improvement in knowledge. It is only what we digest, and understand clearly, that is ours. And it is not possible, that an insatiable devourer of books can have time to examine, recollect, and dispose in his head all he

reads. The judgment of reading is, to make one's self master of a few of the best books on a subject ; in doing which, a man of a tolerable apprehension will have acquired clear notions of it, or at least of the great lines and principal heads of it.

Some men of abilities run into the error of grasping at too great an extent and variety of knowledge, without fixing upon one study, with a view to pursue it a competent length. Life is short and uncertain, and awful and important the work to be done in it. Every man has his proper business as a citizen, and his proper study as a man, to pursue. The knowledge more indispensably necessary to one's particular rank and profession, and that which every man ought to be completely master of, I mean, of his duty, and means of happiness, are absolutely to be made sure of. And this will not leave to any, but people of leisure and fortune, an opportunity of expatiating at large in pursuit of science. No man can hope to excel in a variety of ways. Few are able to excel in one single branch of knowledge. And by taking in too large a scope, it is no wonder that men can go but inconsiderable lengths in all, and accordingly become mere smatterers in every thing, knowing in nothing.

To avoid this error, the rule is easy. Be sure that you understand one thing, before you proceed to another : And take care that you allow for forgetfulness. What you understand pretty well now, a few years hence (if you drop that study) will not stand so clear in your mind as at present. What apprehension can you therefore expect to have, at some distance of time hence, of what you do not now clearly understand. The view in education is very different from that of study in mature life. In education, the business is to open the mind to receive the first principles of various knowledge, to furnish it with the instrumental sciences, to habituate it to application, and accustom it to exert itself with ease upon all kinds of researches, rather than to carry any one branch of knowledge to perfection, which is not indeed practicable at an immature age. The intention, on the contrary, in the study of the more manly parts of science, in adult age, is to furnish the mind with a comprehensive and distinct knowledge of whatever may be useful or ornamental to the understand-

ing. Therefore it is plain, quite different schemes are to be pursued in study at those two different periods of life. This necessary distinction is very little attended to. Accordingly the idea, which many educators of youth seem to have formed of their province, is, plunging a raw boy to a much greater depth in languages, than he will ever, at any period of life, be the better for, and neglecting the necessary work of laying an early foundation of general improvement. And on the other hand, the notion formed by many grown persons, of learning, is only the reading an infinite number of books; so that they may have it to say, they have read them, though they are nothing the wiser for it.

As some readers are for grasping at all science, so others confine their researches to one single article. Yet it is certain, that to excel in any single art or science, being wholly ignorant of all others, is not the complete improvement of the mind. Besides, some of the different parts of knowledge are so connected together, and so necessary to one another, that they cannot be separated. In order to a thorough understanding of morality, and religion (a study which might the best pretend to exclude all others, as being of infinitely greater consequence than all others) several collateral helps are necessary, as languages, history, and natural philosophy.

There is no part of knowledge, that has been singly set up for the whole improvement of the mind so much as classical learning. Time was when *Latin, Greek,* and *Logic* were the whole of education, and they are by some few narrow minds, which have had little culture of any other kind, thought so still. But it is to be hoped, that people will at last be wise enough to see, that, in order to the full improvement of the mind, it is not sufficient that one enter the porch of knowledge, but that he proceed from the study of words to that of things.

The pursuit of too many different and inconsistent studies at once is very prejudicial to thorough improvement. The human mind is so formed, that, without distinction, method, and order, nothing can be clearly apprehended by it. Many readers take a delight in heaping up in their minds a cumbrous mass of mere unconnected truths, as if a man should get together a quantity of stones, bricks, mortar, timbers, boards, and other materials, without any

design of ever putting them together into a regular building.

Some read by fits and starts, and, leaving off in the middle of a particular study or inquiry, lose all the labour they had bestowed, and never pursuing any one subject to a period, have their head filled only with incoherent bits and scraps.

To prevent a turn to rambling and sauntering, without being able to collect your thoughts, or fix them on any one subject, the studies of arithmetic, mathematics, and logic, in youth, ought to have been pursued. But, if you have missed of that advantage, you may constrain yourself at times to study hard for some hours, with a fixed resolution, upon no account whatever to give over, till the time is out. By this means you will come at length to be able to bear the fatigue of close application. But after forty years of age, never think of going on with study, when it goes against the grain; nature at that time of life, will not be thwarted.

With some men, study is mere inquiry, no matter about what. And a discovery is to them the same, whether it be of an important truth, or of somewhat merely curious, or perhaps not even entertaining to any but such dull imaginations as their own. Such readers resemble that species of people, which the *Spectator* distinguishes by the title of *Quidnuncs*, who pass their lives in inquiring after news, with no view to any thing, but merely hearing somewhat new.

Were the works of the learned to be retrenched of all their superfluities and specious trifling, learning would soon be reduced into a much narrower compass. The voluminous verbal critics, laborious commentators, polemical writers, whose works have, for several centuries, made the presses groan, would then shrink into sixpenny pamphlets, and pocket volumes.

Such a degree of laziness as will not allow one to inquire carefully into the sense of an author; impatience, inattention, rambling, are dispositions in a reader, which effectually prevent his improvement, even though he should upon the whole spend as much time over his books, as another, who shall actually become extensively learned.

Some consider reading as a mere amusement, so that,

to them, the most diverting book is the best. Such readers having no view to the cultivation of their understanding, there is no need to offer them any directions for the conduct of study. The very great number of novels and tales, which are continually publishing, encourage in people a trifling and idle turn of mind, for which the present age is eminently remarkable, which makes any direct address to their understandings unacceptable; and nothing can please or gain their attention, that is not seasoned with some amusement, set off in some quaint or artificial manner, or does not serve to execute some silly passion.

There is nothing more difficult, than to come at a right judgment of our own abilities. It is commonly observed, that ignorant people are often extremely conceited of their own fancied knowledge. An ignorant person, having no manner of notion of the vast extensiveness of science, concludes he has mastered the whole, because he knows not, that there is any thing to be learned beyond the little he has learned. But it will take many years study only to know how much there is to be studied and inquired into, and to go through what is already known; and the most learned, best know, how much beyond all that is known, is quite out of reach of human sagacity. There is indeed an infinity of things, in the strictest sense of the word, of which we cannot even know our own ignorance, not being at all within the reach of our ideas in our present state.

That a young person may not run into the egregious, though common error, at the time of life, of fancying himself the most knowing person in the world, before he has gone half way through the first principles, or rudiments of knowledge, let him converse with a person eminent in each branch of science, and learn from him what labour he must bestow, what books he must read, what experiments he must try, what calculations he must go through, what controversies he must examine, what errors he must avoid, what collections he must make, what analogical reasonings he must pursue, what close resemblance in subjects he must distinguish from one another, and so forth. And after he has gone through all that an able master in each science has prescribed, and has learned all that is to be learned, and seen that all our learning is but ignorance, then let him be proud of his knowledge, if he can.

The universal smatterer knows nothing to the bottom. The man of one science, on the contrary, makes that every thing, solves all difficulties by it, resolves all things into it; like the musician and dancing master in *Moliere* who labour to prove, that the welfare of states, and happiness of the world, depend wholly on the cultivation of those two elegancies.

Some men seem to have minds too narrow to apprehend any subject without first cramping and hampering it. Nothing great or generous can find room in their souls. They view things bit by bit, as one who looks through a microscope. A man of such a character may know some subjects more minutely than one who is universally allowed to be a great man, and yet such a one must be acknowledged to be a person of very mean accomplishments. For it is not having a heap of unanimated knowledge in one's head, but having the command of it, and being capable of applying and exerting it in a masterly manner, that denominates a truly great and highly accomplished mind.

Men's natural tempers have a very great influence over their way of thinking. Sanguine people, for example, see every thing very suddenly, and often very clearly in one light. But they do not always take time to view a complex subject on all sides, and in every light; without which, it is impossible to determine any thing about it with certainty. These tempers, when joined with weak judgments, make wild work in matters of inquiry and learning. For through haste and eagerness, they lay false foundations, or raise superstructures upon nothing. Sanguine tempers, however, are generally found to be the fittest for action, and without a considerable degree of zeal and warmth, men seldom carry any great design into execution.

Men of cold saturnine tempers are generally slow and laborious in their researches, doubtful and undetermined in their opinions, and awkward at applying their discoveries and observations for the general advantage of knowledge, and of mankind. But if the miner did not dig up the ore, the curious artist could not fashion the metal into utensils and instruments necessary in life. The laborious searcher after knowledge is necessary to the man of genius.

For it is from him that he has the materials he works upon, which he would not himself bestow the drudgery of searching after. For a laborious turn is very rarely found to accompany brightness of genius.

Some people's reading never goes beyond the bulk of a pamphlet, who do not for all that quit their pretensions to disputing and arguing. But conversation alone does not go deep enough to lay a solid foundation of knowledge; nor does reading alone fully answer the purpose of digesting and rendering our knowledge useful. Reading is necessary to get at the fundamental principles of a science. And the careful perusal of a few capital books is sufficient for this purpose. Afterwards to talk over the subject with a set of intelligent men, is the best method for extending one's views of it. For in an evening's conversation, you may learn the substance of what each of your friends has spent many months in studying.

If you can find one or more ingenious, learned, and communicative friends, with whom to converse upon curious and useful subjects, to hear their opinions, and ask the advice, especially of those who are advanced in life, and, having been at the seat of the muses, are qualified to direct you the shortest way thither; if you can find in the place where you live, such a set of friends, with whom to converse freely and without the trammels of systematic or academic rules, you will find more improvement, in a short time, from such society, than from twenty years solitary study.

Some choose only to read on what they call the orthodox side, that is, books in defence of those opinions which the bulk of people receive without examining. They conclude, a great number of people cannot be in the wrong. Others take for granted, that whatever is generally received, must be wrong. Such readers are sure to peruse whatever comes out against articles, or creeds, or religion in general. But they do not take the pains to give the defenders of them the hearing. And yet there is no doubt, but prejudice is equally wrong on either side; and in our times, there are almost as many prejudiced against, as in favour of, formerly received opinions. There is nothing commendable in believing what is true, unless that belief be the effect of examina-

tion. Nor is there any merit in opposing error, if such opposition is accidental, and the effect of prejudice.

In establishing a set of principles, most people let themselves be biassed by prejudice, passion, education, spiritual guides, common opinion, supposed orthodoxy, or almost any thing. And after having been habituated to a particular way of thinking which they took up without examination, they can no more quit it, than they can change the features of their faces, or the make of their persons. To come at truth, one ought to begin with throwing out of his mind every attachment to either side, and bring himself to an absolute indifference which is true, or which false. He who wishes an opinion to be true, is in danger of being misled into the belief of it upon insufficient grounds; and he who wishes it to be false, is likely to reject it in spite of sufficient evidence for its truth. To observe some men studying, reading, arguing, and writing wholly on one side, without giving the other a fair hearing, making learning a party affair, and stirring up faction against truth, one would imagine, their minds were not made like those of most rational beings, of which truth is the proper object; but that it gave them a pleasure to be deceived.

Though it is the business and the very character of a wise man, to examine both sides, to hear different opinions, and search for truth even among the rubbish of error; yet there are numberless books, which I cannot think the shortness and uncertainty of life, that leaves no room for tedious trifling, will admit of examining with the care that must be bestowed in trying to find out the author's meaning, and to learn somewhat from him. As some writers, so to speak, never go deep enough to draw blood of a subject; so others refine and subtilize away all that the understanding can lay hold of. The logicians and metaphysicians, with their substantial forms, and intentional species; the *Malebranches* and *Behmens*! What fruit there is to be got from reading such writers, is to me, inconceivable. For the fate of all such refinements is, to be found partly unintelligible, partly absurd, and partly of no manner of consequence toward the discovery of any new truth.

Some men have the misfortune of an awkward, and as

it were a left-handed way of thinking and apprehending things. A great thought in such minds is not a great thought. For what is in itself clear and distinct, to such men appears dim and confused. Those gentlemen are mightily given to finding difficulties in the clearest points, and are great collectors of arguments *pro* and *con*. But their labours have no tendency to give either themselves or others satisfaction in any one subject of inquiry. It seems to be their delight to darken, rather than enlighten.

Want of education, or of so much culture as is necessary for habituating the mind to wield its faculties, is the same sort of disadvantage, for finding out and communicating intricate truth, as a raw recruit's never having learned the military exercise, is for his performing the movements properly in a review or a battle. It is therefore matter of compassion to see silly people, without the least improvement by education, without the advantage even of first principles, striking slap-dash at points of science, of which they do not so much as understand what it is they would affirm or deny; disputing and confuting against those, who have spent their lives in a particular study; pretending, perhaps the first moment they ever thought of a subject, to see through the whole of it; taking upon them to make use of arguments, a sort of tools, which they have no more command of than I should of the helm of a ship, in a tempest. The shortest way of finishing a dispute with people, who will be meddling with what you know to be out of their depth, is to tell them, what reading and study you have bestowed upon it, and that still you do not think yourself sufficiently master of the subject. If your antagonist has any modesty, he must be sensible, that it is arrogance in him to pretend, without all the necessary advantages, to understand a subject better than one, who has had them.

Men of business, and men of pleasure, even if they have had their minds in their youth opened by education, and put in the way of acquiring knowledge, are generally found afterwards to lose the habit of close thinking and reasoning. But no one is less capable of searching into, or communicating truth, than he who has been from his earliest youth brought up, as most of the great are, in pleasure and folly.

There is no single obstacle, which stands in the way of more people in the search of truth, than pride. They have once declared themselves of a particular opinion; and they cannot bring themselves to think they could possibly be in the wrong. Consequently they cannot persuade themselves of the necessity of re-examining the foundations of their opinions. To acknowledge, and give up their error, would be a still severer trial. But the truth is, there is more greatness of mind in candidly giving up a mistake, than would have appeared in escaping it at first, if not a very shameful one. The surest way of avoiding error, is, careful examination. The best way of leaving room for a change of opinion, which should always be provided for, is to be modest in delivering one's sentiments. A man may, without confusion, give up an opinion, which he declared without arrogance.

The case of those, whose secular interests have engaged them to declare themselves of a certain party; where conscience is not allowed to speak loud enough to be heard on the side of candid and diligent examination, is the most remediless of any. Those men have nothing for it but to find out plausible arguments for their pre-established opinions, find themselves obliged not to examine whether their notions be true; but to contrive ways and means to make them true in spite of truth itself. If they happen to be in the right, so much the better for them. If in an error, having set out with their backs upon truth, the longer they travel, the farther they are from it; the more they study, the more they are deceived.

There are some men of no settled way of thinking at all; but change opinions with every pamphlet they read. To get rid of this unmanly fickleness, the way is, to labour to furnish the mind early with a set of rational well grounded principles, which will, generally speaking, lead to reasonable consequences. Take for an example the following one among many. "The only end of a true religion must be to perfect the human nature, and lead mankind to happiness." The reader must perceive at once, that such a fundamental principle will serve to discover and expose almost all the errors and absurdities of false religions, and those which may be introduced into the true. And so of other general principles.

Artful declamations have often fatal effects in misleading weak readers from the truth. A talent at oratory is therefore a very mischievous weapon in the hands of an ill-disposed man. It is the wisdom of a reader, when he has productions of genius put into his hands, to examine all the peculiar notions he finds in such writings, stripping them of their ornaments to the bare thought; which, if it will stand the test of cool reason, is to be received; if not, the style it is clothed in ought to gain it no favour; but it ought to be rejected with indignation. Wit, humour, and raillery, have done infinite mischief among superficial readers. Of which talents some authors have such a command, as to be capable of working up unthinking and unprincipled people to believe or practice whatever they please.

Strive to understand things as they are in themselves. Do not think of conceiving of them otherwise than according to their real natures. Do not labour to explain religion by chemistry, to reduce morals to mathematical certainty, or to think of eternal rectitude as an arbitrary or factitious constitution. The nature of things will not be forced. Bring your understanding to them. Do not think of reducing them to your hypothesis; unless you be indifferent about true knowledge, and mean only to amuse yourself with a *jeu d'esprit*.

In reading, labour to get into the full sense of the author's principal terms, and the truths affirmed in his propositions. After that, observe whether he proves, or only affirms roundly; whether what he says is built on fancy, or on truth, and the nature of things. And do not pretend to believe him one hair's breadth beyond what you understand: you cannot if you would.

In conversation, or writing, if you mean to give or receive information, accurately define your terms. Keep to the original sense you affixed to them. Use no tautology. Think in time what objections may be made to what you are going to urge. Let truth be your sole view. Despise the pleasure of conquering your antagonist. Pronounce modestly, so as to leave room for a retreat. Keep yourself superior to passion and peevishness. Yield whatever you can, that your antagonist may see you do not dispute for contention's sake. When you have argued

the matter fully, and neither can bring over the other, drop the subject amicably, mutually agreeing to differ.

If you would thoroughly re-examine a subject of importance, fancy it to be quite new to you before you begin to inquire into it. Throw out of your mind all your former notions of it; and put yourself in the place of an honest *Indian*, to whom a missionary is explaining the christian religion. Take every single thought to pieces, and reduce every complex idea to its simples. Get into the author's precise sense in every general term he uses. Strip his thoughts bare of all flourishes. Turn ever single point, in every complicated subject, all the ways it is capable of. View ever minute circumstance that may have any weight, not in one, but in all lights. Throw out of your mind every desire or wish, that may bias you either for or against the proposition. Shake off every prejudice, whether in favour of or against the author. Let the merit of every single argument be duly weighed; and do not let yourself be too strongly influenced by one you understand fully, against another, which you do not so clearly see through; or by one you are familiar with, against one that may be new to you, or not to your humour. The weight is of more consequence than the number of argument. Labour above all things to acquire a clear methodical, and accurate manner of thinking, speaking, or writing. Without this, study is but fruitless fatigue, and learning useless lumber.

Do not form very high or very mean notions of persons or things, where a great deal is to be said on both sides. Whatever is of a mixed nature ought to be treated as such. Judging of truth in the lump will make wild work. If an author pleases you in one place, do not therefore give yourself up implicitly to him. If he blunders in one place, do not therefore conclude that his whole book is nonsense. Especially if he writes well in general, do not imagine, from one difficult passage, which you cannot reconcile with the rest, that he meant to contradict his whole book; but rather conclude that you misunderstand him. Perhaps mathematics is the only science on which any author has, or can write, without falling into mistakes.

Take care of false associations. Error may be ancient; truth of late discovery. The many may go wrong, while the few are in the right. Learning does not always imply

judgment in an author, or soundness in his opinions. Nor is all vulgar error that is believed by the vulgar. Truth stands independent of all external things. In all your researches, let that be your object.

Take care of being misled by words of no meaning, of double meaning, or of uncertain signification. Regard always in an author the matter more than the style. It is the thought that must improve your mind. The language can only please your ear. If you are yourself to write or to preach, you will do more with mankind by a fine style than deep thought. All men have ears and passions; few strong understandings to work upon.

If you give yourself up to a fantastical, overheated, gloomy, or superstitious imagination, you may bid farewell to reason and judgment. Fancy is to be corrected, moderated, restrained, watched, and suspected, not indulged and let loose. Keep down every passion, and in general, every motion of the mind, except cool judgment and reflection, if you really mean to find out truth. What matter whether an opinion be yours, or your mortal enemy's? If it be true, embrace it without prejudice; if false, reject it without mercy: truth has nothing to do with your self-love, or your quarrels.

The credulous man believes without sufficient evidence. The obstinate doubts without reason. The sanguine is convinced at once. The plegmatic withholds his assent long. The learned has his hypothesis. The illiterate his prejudice. The proud is above being convinced. The fickle is not of the same opinion two days together. Young people determine quickly. The old deliberate long. The dogmatist affirms as if he went upon mathematical demonstration. The sceptic doubts his own faculties, when they tell him that twice two are four. Some will believe nothing in religion that they cannot fully understand. Others will believe nothing to a point of doctrine, though the bare proposition be ever so clear, if it be possible to start any difficulty about the modes of it. Fashion, the only rule of life among many, especially almost universally in the higher ranks, has even a considerable influence in opinion, in taste, in reading, and in the methods of improving the mind. It runs through politics, divinity, and all but the mathematical sci-

ences. And there are a set of people at this day weak enough to think of making even them yield to it, and of new modelling and taking to pieces a system of philosophy founded in demonstration.

Parents may have misled us; teachers may have misinformed us; spiritual guides in many countries do notoriously mislead the people, and in all are fallible. The ancient philosophers differed among themselves in fundamentals. The fathers of the church contradict one another, and often contradict both scripture and reason. Popes and councils have decreed against one another. We know our ancestors to have been in the wrong in innumerable instances: and they had the better of us in some. Kings repeal the edicts of their predecessors; and parliaments abrogate acts of former parliaments. Good men may be mistaken. Bad men will not stick to deceive us. Here is therefore no manner of foundation for implicit belief. If we mean to come at truth, there is but one way for it; to attend to the cool and unprejudiced dictates of reason, that heaven-born director within us, which will never mislead us in any affair of consequence to us, unless we neglect to use its assistance, or give ourselves up to the government of our passions or prejudices. More especially we of this age and nation, who have the additional advantage of divine revelation, which also convinces us of its authority by reason, should be peculiarly unjustifiable in quitting those sacred guides, to whose conduct heaven itself has entrusted us, and of which the universal freedom of the present happy times allows us the use without restraint, and giving ourselves up to be led blindfold by any other. And, besides reason and revelation, there is no person or thing in the universe, that ought to have the least influence over us in our search after truth.

All the operations of the mind become easy by habit. It will be of great use to habituate yourself to examine, reflect, compare, and view, in every light, all kinds of subjects. Mathematics in youth, rational logic, such as Mr. *Locke's*, and conversation with men of clear heads, will be of great advantage to accustom you to readiness and justice in reasoning. But carefully avoid disputing for disputing's sake. Keep on improving and enlarging your views in a variety of ways. One part of knowledge is con-

ected with, and will throw a light upon another. Review from time to time your former inquiries, especially in important subjects. Try whether you have not let yourself be imposed upon by some fallacy. And if you find so, though you have published your opinion through all *Europe*, make not the least hesitation to own your mistake, and retract it.—Truth is above all other regards. And it is infinitely worse to continue obstinately in a mistake, and be the cause of error in others' than to be thought fallible, or, in other words, to be thought a mortal man. In examining into truth, keep but one single point in view at a time ; and when you have searched it to the bottom, pass on to another, and so on, till you have gone through all, and viewed every one in every different light. At last, sum up the collective evidence on both sides. Balance them against one another, and give your assent accordingly, proportioning your certainty or persuasion to the amount of the clear and unquestionable evidences upon the whole.

In reasoning there is more probability of convincing by two or three solid arguments closely put, than by as many dozen inclusive ones, ill digested, and improperly ranged. I know of no way of reasoning equal to the *Socratic*, by which you convince your antagonist out of his own mouth. I could name several eminent writers, who have so laboured to establish their opinions by a multiplicity of arguments, that, by means of over-proving, they have rendered those doctrines doubtful, which, with a third part of the reasoning bestowed by them, would have appeared unquestionable.

Of all disputants, those learned controversial writers are the most whimsical, who have the talents of working themselves up in their closets into such a passion, as to call their antagonist's names in black and white ; to use railing instead of reasoning, and palm off the public with *rogue*, *rascal*, *dog*, and *blockhead*, for solid confutations, as if the academy, at which they had studied, had been that of *Billingsgate*.

If one thinks he is in the right, it can be no great matter with how much modesty and temper he defends truth, so he does not give it up. And if he should be found afterwards to have been in the wrong, which in most disputable points is always to be apprehended, his modest

defence of his opinion will gain him, with all reasonable people, a pardon for his mistake. There are so many sides, on which most subjects may be viewed, and so many considerations to be taken in, that a wise man will always express himself modestly even on those subjects which he has thoroughly studied. Nor can there be any danger, but contrariwise great advantage, in hearing the opinion of others, if one converses with men of judgment and probity; and those of contrary characters are not fit for conversation.

It is remarkable, and quite contrary to what one would expect, that young people are more positive in affirming, and more given to dispute, than the aged and experienced. One would think it should be natural for youth to be diffident of itself, and inclinable to submit to the judgment of those who have had unquestionably superior advantages for information. But we find on the contrary, that a young person viewing a subject only from one side, and seeing it in a very strong and lively manner, is, from the sanguine temper natural to that time of life, led to dispute, affirm, and deny, with great obstinacy and arrogance. This is one of the most disagreeable and troublesome qualities of youth, otherwise so amiable and engaging. It is the business and effect of prudence to correct it.

The abilities of men, taken upon an average, are so very narrow, that it is in vain to expect that the bulk of a people should be very knowing. Most men are endowed with parts sufficient for enabling them to provide for themselves and their families, and secure their future happiness. But as to any thing greatly beyond the common arts of life, there are few that have either capacity or opportunity of reaching it. Human knowledge itself very probably has its limits, which it never will exceed, while the present state lasts. The system of the world, for example, was originally produced, and has been since conducted, by a wisdom too profound for human capacity to trace through all his steps. History, at least profane, beyond the two thousand years last past, is come down to us so defective, and so mixed with fable, that little satisfaction is to be had from it. And the history of succeeding ages is far enough from being unexceptionably authenticated; though this is not denying, that physiology and history are

still highly worthy our attention and inquiry. What I have said of these two considerable heads of study may be affirmed in some degree of most branches of human knowledge, mathematics and mathematical science excepted. It is the goodness of the Author of our being, as well as the excellence of our nature, and the comfort of our present state, that the knowledge of our duty, and means of happiness, stands clear and unquestionable to every sound and unprejudiced mind; that the difference between right and wrong is too obvious, and too striking, to escape observation, or to produce difficulty or doubt; unless where difficulties are laboriously sought after, and doubts industriously raised; that where we most need clearness and certainty, there we have the most of them; that where doubts would be most distracting, there we must raise them before we can be troubled with them, and that where we most need full proof to determine us, there we have superabundant. For with respect to our duty and future expectations, our own hearts are made to teach us them: and, as if the internal monitor, Conscience, was not sufficient, Heaven itself descends to illuminate our minds, and all Nature exerts herself to inculcate this grand and important lesson, That Virtue leads to happiness, and Vice to destruction. Of which subject more fully in the following book.

THE
DIGNITY
OF
HUMAN NATURE.

BOOK III.

OF VIRTUE.

INTRODUCTION.

AS the human species are to exist in two different states, an embodied, and a spiritual; a mortal life on earth, and an immortal hereafter; it was to be expected, that there should be certain peculiar requisites for the dignity of each of the two different states respectively; and that, at the same time, there should be such an analogy between that part of the human existence, which was to be before death, and that which was to be after it, as should be suitable to different parts of the same scheme; so that the latter should appear to be the sequel of the former, making in the whole the complete existence of the creature, beginning with the entrance into this mortal life, but knowing no end.

In the two parts of the Dignity of Human Nature, which we have already considered, to wit, Prudence, and Knowledge, it is evident, that the immediate view is to the improvement and embellishment of life, and for diffusing happiness through society; at the same time that many, if not the greatest part, of the directions given for the conduct of life, and of the understanding, are likewise useful with a view to the future and immortal state. And

indeed there is nothing truly worthy of our attention, which does not some way stand connected with futurity.

The two parts of the subject which still remain, I mean, of Morals, and Revealed Religion, do most immediately and directly tend to prepare us for a future state; but, at the same time, are highly necessary to be studied and attended to, if we mean to establish the happiness even of this present mortal life upon a sure and solid foundation. But every one of the four, and every considerable particular in each of them, is absolutely necessary for raising our nature to that perfection and happiness, for which it is intended.

The Dignity of Human Nature will, in the following books, appear more illustrious than the preceding part of this work represents it. So that the subject rises in its importance, and demands a higher regard. Might the abilities of the writer improve accordingly. Might the infinite Author of the universal œconomy illuminate his mind, and second his weak attempt to exhibit in one view the whole of what mankind have to do, in order to their answering the ends which the Divine Wisdom and Goodness had in view, in placing them in a state of discipline and improvement for endless perfection and happiness.

To proceed upon a solid and ample foundation in the following deduction of morals, it seems proper to take an extensive prospect of things, and begin as high as possible.

First, it may be worth while briefly, and in a way as little abstract or logical as possible, to obviate a few artificial difficulties that have been started by some of those deep and subtle men, who have a better talent at puzzling than enlightening mankind. One of those imaginary difficulties is, The possibility of our reason's deceiving us. "Our reason," say those profound gentlemen, "tells us, that twice two are four. But what if our reason imposes upon us in this matter? How, if in the world of the moon, two multiplied by two should be found to make five? Who can affirm that this is not the case? Nothing indeed seems to us more unquestionable than the proportions among numbers, and geometrical figures. So that we cannot (such is the make of our minds) so

much as conceive the possibility that twice two should, in any other world, or state of things, make more or less than four, or that all the angles of a plain triangle should be either more or less than exactly equal to two right ones. But it does not follow, that other beings may not understand things in a quite different manner from what we do."

It is wonderful how any man should have hit upon such an unnatural thought as this; since the very difficulty is founded upon a flat contradiction and impossibility. To say, I am convinced that twice two are four, and at the same time to talk of doubting whether my faculties do not deceive me, is saying, that I believe twice two to be four, and at the same time I doubt it; or rather, that I see it to be so, and yet I do not see it to be so. A self-evident truth is not collected, or deducted, but intuitively perceived, or seen by the mind. And other worlds, and other states of things, are wholly out of the question. The ideas in my mind are the objects of the perception of my mind, as much as outward objects of my eyes. The idea of two of the lunar inhabitants is as distinct an object in my mind, so far as concerns the number, as that of two shillings in my hand. And I see as clearly, that twice two lunar inhabitants will make four lunarians, as that twice two shillings will make four shillings. And while I see this to be so, I see it to be so, and cannot suspect it possible to be otherwise. I may doubt the perceptions of another person, if I cannot myself perceive the same object: But I cannot doubt what I myself perceive, or believe that to be possible, which I see to be impossible.

It is therefore evident, that to question the information of our faculties, or the conclusions of our reason, without some ground from our faculties themselves, is a direct impossibility. So that those very philosophers, who pretend to question the informations of their faculties, neither do, nor can really question them, so long as they appear unquestionable.

To be suspicious of one's own judgment in all cases where it is possible to err, and to be cautious of proceeding to too rash conclusions; is the very character of wisdom. But to doubt, or rather pretend to doubt, where reason

sees no ground for doubt, even where the mind distinctly perceives truth, is endeavouring at a pitch of folly, of which Human Nature is not capable.

If the mind is any thing, if there are any reasoning faculties, what is the object of those reasoning faculties? Not falsehood; For falsehood is a negative, a mere nothing, and is not capable of being perceived, or of being an object of the mind. 'If therefore there is a rational mind in the universe, the object of that mind is truth. If there is no truth, there is no perception. Whatever the mind perceives, so far as the perception is real, is truth. When the reasoning faculty is deceived, it is not by distinctly seeing something that is not, for that is impossible; but either by not perceiving something, which if perceived, would alter the state of the case upon the whole, or by seeing an object of the understanding through a false medium. But these, or any other causes of error, do by no means affect the perception of a simple idea; nor the perception of a simple relation between two simple ideas; nor a simple inference from such simple relation. No mind whatever can distinctly and intuitively perceive, or see twice two to be five: Because that twice two should be five, is an impossibility and self-contradiction in terms, as much as saying that four is five, or that a thing is what it is not. Nor can any mind distinctly perceive, that if two be to four as four is to eight, therefore thrice two is four, for that would be distinctly perceiving an impossibility. Now an impossibility is what has no existence, nor can exist. And can any mind perceive, clearly perceive, what does not exist?

To perceive nothing, or not to perceive, is the same. So that it is evident, so much of any thing as can really be perceived, must be real and true. There is therefore either no object of mind, no rational faculties in the universe; or there is a real truth in things which the mind perceives, and which is the only object it can perceive, in the same manner as it is impossible for the eye to see absolute nothing, or to see, and not see, at the same time.

The only point therefore to be attended to, is to endeavour at clear perceptions of things, with all their circumstances, connexions, and dependencies; which requires more and more accuracy and attention, according as the

conclusion to be drawn arises out of more or less complex premises; and it is easy to imagine a mind capable of taking in a much greater number and variety of particulars, than can be comprehended by any human being, and of seeing clearly through all their mutual relations, however minute, extensive, or complicated. To such a mind all kinds of difficulties in all parts of knowledge, might be as easy to investigate, as to us a common question in arithmetic, and with equal certainty. For truths of all kinds are alike certain and alike clear to minds, whose capacities and states qualify them for investigating them. And what is before said with regard to our safety in trusting our faculties in mathematical or arithmetical points, is equally just with respect to moral and all other subjects. Whatever is a real, clear and distinct object of perception, must be some real existence. For an absolute nothing can never be an object of distinct perception. Now the differences, agreements, contrasts, analogies, and all other relations obtaining among moral ideas, are as essentially real, and as proper subjects of reasoning, as those in numbers and mathematics. I can no more be deceived, nor bring myself to doubt a clear moral proposition, or axiom, than a mathematical one. I can no more doubt, whether happiness is not preferable to misery, than whether the whole is not greater than any of its parts. I can no more doubt, whether a being who enjoys six degrees of happiness, and at the same time labours under one degree of misery, is not in a better situation than another, who enjoys but three degrees of happiness, and is exposed to one of misery, supposing those degrees equal in both, than I can doubt whether a man, who is possessed of six thousand pounds and owes one, or another, who is worth only three thousand pounds and owes one, is the richer. And so of all other cases, where our views and perceptions are clear and distinct. For a truth of one sort is as much a truth, as of another; and when fully perceived, is as incapable of being doubted of or mistaken.

Yet some have argued, that though, as to numbers and mathematics, there is a real independent truth in the nature of things, which could not possibly have been otherwise, it is quite different in morals. Though it was impossible in the nature of things, that twice two should be five,

it might have been so contrived, that, universally, what is now virtue should have been vice, and what is now vice should have been virtue. That all our natural notions of right and wrong are wholly arbitrary and factitious; a mere instinct or taste, very suitable indeed to the present state of things: but by no means founded *in rerum natura*, and only the pure effect of a positive ordination of Divine Wisdom, to answer certain ends.

It does not suit the design of this work to enter into any long discussion of knotty points. But I would ask those gentlemen, who maintain the above doctrine, whether the Divine scheme in creating an universe, and communicating happiness to innumerable beings, which before had no existence, was not good, or preferable to the contrary? If they say, there was no good in creating and communicating happiness, they must show the wisdom of the infinitely-wise Creator in choosing rather to create than not. They must show how (to speak with reverence) he came to choose to create a world. For since all things appear to him exactly as they are, if it was not in itself wiser and better to create than not, it must have appeared so to him, and if it had appeared so to him, it is certain he never had produced a world.

To this some answer, that his creating a world was not the consequence of his seeing it to be in itself better to create than not; but he was moved to it by the benevolence of his own nature, which attribute of goodness or benevolence is, as well as benevolence in a good man, according to their notion of it, no more than a taste or inclination, which happens, they know not how, to be in the Divine Nature; but is in itself indifferent, and abstracting from its consequences, neither amiable nor odious, good nor bad. To this the reply is easy, to wit, That there is not, nor can be, any attribute in the Divine Nature, that could possibly have been wanting; or the want of which would not have been an imperfection: for whatever is in his nature, is necessary, else it could not be in his nature; necessity being the only account to be given for his existence and attributes. Now what is in its own nature indifferent, cannot be said to exist necessarily; therefore could not exist in God. To question whether goodness or benevolence in the Divine Nature is neces-

sary or accidental, is the same, as questioning whether the very existence of the Deity is necessary or accidental. For whatever is in God, is God. And to question whether the Divine attribute of goodness is a real perfection, or a thing indifferent, that is, to doubt, whether the Divine Nature might not have been as perfect without, as with it, comes to the same as questioning, whether existence is a thing indifferent to the Deity, or not. His whole nature is excellent; is the abstract of excellence; and nothing belonging to him is indifferent. Of which more hereafter.

It is therefore evident, that the benevolence of the Divine Nature is in itself a real excellence or perfection, independent of our ideas of it, and cannot, without the highest absurdity, not to say impiety, be conceived of, as indifferent. It is also evident, that it must have been upon the whole better that the universe should be created, and a number of creatures produced (in order to be partakers of various degrees and kinds of happiness) than not; else God, who sees all things as they are, could not have seen any reason for creating, and therefore would not have created them.

Let it then be supposed, that some being should, through thoughtlessness and voluntary blindness at first, and afterwards through pride and rebellion, at length work up his malice to that degree, as to wish to destroy the whole creation, or to subject millions of innocent beings to unspeakable misery; would this likewise be good? Was it better to create than not? and is it likewise better to destroy than preserve? Was it good to give being and happiness to innumerable creatures? and would it likewise be good to plunge innumerable innocent creatures into irrecoverable ruin and misery? If these seeming opposites be not entirely the same, then there is in morals a real difference, an eternal and unchangeable truth, proportion, agreement, and disagreement, in the nature of things (of which the Divine Nature is the basis) independent on positive will, and which could not have been otherwise; being no more arbitrary or factitious, than what is found in numbers or mathematics. So that a wickedly disposed being would, so long as he continued unreformed, have been as really so in any other state of things. and in any other world, as in this in

which we live ; and a good being would have been equally amiable and valuable ten thousand years ago, and in the planet *Jupiter*, as upon earth, and in our times ; and the difference between the degrees of goodness and malignity are as determinate, and as distinctly perceived by superior beings, as between a hundred, a thousand, and a million ; or between a line, a surface, and a cube.

Nothing is more evident, than that we can enter a very great way into the Divine scheme in the natural world, and see very clearly the wisdom and contrivance, which shine conspicuous in every part of it. I believe nobody ever took it into his head to doubt, whether the inhabitants of any other world would not judge the sun to be proper for giving light, the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, and so forth. No one ever doubted whether the angel *Gabriel* conceived of the wisdom of God in the natural world, in any manner contrary to what we do. Why then should people fill their heads with fancies, about our perceptions of moral truth, any more than of natural ? There is no doubt, but we have all our clear and immediate ideas, by our being capable of seeing, or apprehending (within a certain limited sphere) things as they are really and essentially in themselves. And we may be assured, that simple truths do by no means appear to our minds in any state essentially different from or contrary to that in which they appear to the mind of the angel *Gabriel*.

That there is a possibility of attaining certainty, by sensation, intuition, deduction, testimony, and inspiration, seems easy enough to prove. For, first, where sensation is, all other arguments or proofs are superfluous. What I feel I cannot bring myself to doubt, if I would. I must either really exist or not. But I cannot even be mistaken in imagining I feel my own existence ; for that necessarily supposes my existing. I feel my mind easy and calm. I cannot, if I would, bring myself to doubt, whether my mind is easy and calm. Because I feel a perfect internal tranquility ; and there is nothing within or without me to persuade me to doubt the reality of what I feel ; and what I really feel, so far as I really feel it, must be real ; it being absurd to talk of feeling or perceiving what has no real existence.

Again, there is no natural absurdity in supposing it pos-

sible for a human or other intelligent mind, to arrive at a clear and distinct perception of truth by intuition. On the contrary, the supposition of the possibility of a faculty of intelligence necessarily infers the possibility of the existence of truth, as the object of intelligence, and of truth's being in the universe capable of understanding truth, there must be truth for that being to understand; and that truth must be within the reach of his understanding. But as it is self-evident, that there are an infinite number of ideal, or conceivable truths, it is likewise evident, there must be an infinitely comprehensive understanding, which perceives this infinity of truths. To talk of a truth perceivable by no mind, or that never has been the object of any perceptive faculty, would be a self-contradiction. Mind is the very *substratum* of truth. An infinite mind of infinite truth. That a finite understanding may attain a finite perception of truth, is necessary to be admitted, unless we deny the possibility of the existence of any finite understanding. For an understanding capable of attaining no degree of knowledge of truth, or an understanding which neither did nor could understand or perceive any one truth, is a contradiction in words. Proceeding in this train of reasoning, we say, Either there is no such thing as intuition possible, or it must be possible by intuition to perceive truth; there is no such thing as sensation possible, or it must be possible for the mind to perceive real objects. That what we actually and really apprehend by intuition and sensation, must be somewhat real, as far as actually and really apprehended; it being impossible to apprehend that which is not. Now, the evidence of the reality of any existence, or the truth of any proposition, let it be conveyed to the mind by deduction, by testimony, by revelation, or if there were a thousand other methods of information, would still be reducible at last to direct intuition; excepting what arises from sensation. The mind, in judging of any proposition, through whatever channel communicated to it, or on whatever argument established, judges of the strength of the evidence; it makes allowance for the objections; it balances the arguments, or considerations of whatever kind, against one another, it sees which preponderates. And supposing this to be done properly, it sees the true state of the case, and determines accordingly;

nor can it possibly determine contrary to what it sees to be the true state of the case.

When, for example, I consider in my own mind, on one hand, the various evidence from authors and remains of antiquity, that there was formerly such a state as the *Roman*, which conquered great part of this side of the globe; and on the other, find no reason for doubting of the existence of such a state in former times, I find it as reasonable to believe it, and as impossible to doubt it, as to doubt the solution of a question in numbers or quantity, which I had proved by arithmetic, vulgar and decimal, and by Algebra. And so of other instances. So that, though it would not be proper to say, I see, by intuition, the truth of this proposition, "There was once such a city as *Rome*;" yet I may with the utmost propriety say, I see such a superabundance of evidence for the truth of the proposition, and at the same time see no reason to think that any valid objections can be brought against it, that I intuitively see the evidence for it to be such as puts it beyond all possibility of being doubted by me, and feel that, though I should labour ever so much to bring myself to question it, I absolutely cannot; nor can I conceive it possible that it should appear questionable to any person, who has fairly considered it.

Suppose, in the same manner, (in a point which has been disputed) a man, of a clear head, to have thoroughly examined all the various evidences for the christian religion, allowing to every one its due weight, and no more; suppose him to have attentively considered every objection against it, allowing, likewise, to every one impartially its full force; suppose the result of the whole inquiry to be his finding such a preponderancy of evidence for the truth of christianity, as should beyond all comparison overbalance the whole weight of the objections against it; I say, that such a person would then intuitively see the evidence for christianity to be unsurmountable; and could no more bring himself to doubt it, than to doubt whether all the angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones; nor to conceive the possibility of any other person's doubting it, who had fairly considered both sides of the question.

In the same maner a person, who should carefully examine the arguments in a system of ethics, and should

clearly and convincingly perceive the strength of each, the connexion of one with another, and the result of the whole; might in the strictest propriety of speech be said to see intuitively the truth and justness of that system of ethics.

If so, then it is plain, that certainty is, in the nature of things, equally attainable upon all subjects, though beings of no limited capacity may not, in our present imperfect state, be capable of attaining it. In the same manner as the truth of the most obvious axiom in arithmetic or geometry, may lie out of the reach of an infant, or an idiot; which appears self-evident to the first glance of any mind that is capable of putting two thoughts together. How comes it to pass, that the truth of such an axiom as the following appears immediately incontestable: That if from equal quantities equal quantities be subtracted, equal quantities will remain? How comes, I say, the truth of this axiom to appear at once, while moral doctrines furnish endless dispute? The obvious answer is, from the simplicity of the terms of the proposition, and of what is affirmed of them, which leaves no room for ambiguity or uncertainty; and from the narrowness of the subject to be considered, or the smallness of the number of ideas to be taken in, which prevents all danger of puzzling, or distracting the understanding, and rendering the result or conclusion doubtful. Suppose the arguments for christianity to be exactly one thousand, and the objections against it exactly one hundred: Suppose an angelic, or other superior understanding, to perceive intuitively the exact state of each; and to see distinctly the hundred objections to be surmountable, or not valid, and the arguments to every one solid and conclusive; I say, that such a being would intuitively see the truth of christianity in the same manner as a human mind sees the truth of any complex demonstration in *Euclid*.

It is therefore certain, that all evidence whatever is to be finally tried by, and reduced to intuition, except that which we have from sensation: That truth of all kinds is equally capable of being intuitively perceived, and of being ascertained to minds fitted for receiving and examining it: That moral truth is in no respect naturally more vague or precarious than mathematical; but equally fixed, and equally clear, to superior minds; and probably

will be so hereafter to those of the human make, who shall attain to higher improvements in future states: And that in the mean time our duty is to examine carefully, and to act upon the result of candid inquiry.

That we are, in some instances of inconsiderable importance to our final happiness, liable to error, is no more than a natural consequence of the imperfection of our present state, and the number of particulars necessary to be taken in, in order to find out the true state of things upon the whole. But this, so far from proving the impossibility of coming at truth, or that we are exposed to irremediable error, shows, that truth is certainly to be attained by such intelligent beings as shall with proper advantages of capacity and means, set themselves to the finding it out with sincerity and diligence.

The amount of what has been said on moral certainty is briefly as follows, viz.

That it is self-contradictory to talk of doubting the perceptions of our faculties, it being impossible to perceive a truth clearly, and yet to doubt it.

That our simple ideas being the immediate objects of our understandings, and being level to direct intuition, are capable of being with the greatest exactness examined and compared, in order to finding the truth or falsehood, of any proposition, whose terms are not too complex, or otherwise out of the reach of our faculties. And that whatever the understanding clearly determines, after mature examination, to be truth, it is impossible to doubt.

That whatever any mind really perceives must be real, as far as perceived. That therefore, there must be real truth perceivable, else there could be no perceptive faculty in the universe; since falsehoods and impossibilities are not in the nature of things perceivable, being non-entities.

That all kinds of truths appear equally certain to minds capable of investigating them. That moral truth is in its own nature no more vague or precarious, than mathematical; though in some instances more difficultly investigated by our narrow and defective faculties.

That there must be in the nature of things, (the basis of which is the Divine Nature) an eternal, essential, and unchangeable difference in morals; that there is a real,

not a factitious, or arbitrary, good and evil, a greater and less preferableness in different characters and actions. That, accordingly; if it had been in the nature of things no way better that an universe should be created, than not; it is evident, God, who sees all things as they are, would not have seen any reason for creating an universe, and therefore would not have exerted his power in the production of it.

That the divine attribute of benevolence, is in its own nature, really and essentially, and without all regard to the notions of created beings, and exclusive of all consequences, a perfection; not an indifferent property, as some pretend. For that nothing either evil or indifferent can be conceived of as existing necessarily; but the divine benevolence and all the other attributes of his nature exist necessarily.

That if it was proper or good, to create an universe of beings capable of happiness, it must on the contrary be improper, or morally wicked, to endeavour to oppose the divine scheme of benevolence, or to wish innocent beings condemned to misery. There is therefore an eternal and essential, not a factitious, or arbitrary, good and evil in morals; and the foundation of moral good is in the necessary and unchangeable attributes of the Divine Nature.

That certainty is in the nature of things attainable by sensation. That reality must be the object of sensation, it being impossible to feel what has no existence. That it is impossible to doubt what we perceive by sensation.

That certainty is in the nature of things attainable by intuition. That the existence of intelligence necessarily supposes that of truth, as the object of understanding. That truth is a Divine Attribute; therefore must exist necessarily. That every intelligent mind must be supposed capable of intuitively perceiving truth. And that we find by experience, we cannot even force ourselves to doubt the truths we intuitively perceive.

That such certainty is in the nature of things attainable in subjects of which we receive information by deduction, testimony, and revelation, as renders it impossible for the mind to hesitate or doubt. For that the sum, or result, of all kinds of evidence, however complex and

various, except what arises from sensation; is the object of direct intuition.

To conclude this introduction: were our present state much more disadvantageous than it is; and did we labour under much greater difficulty and uncertainty, than we do, in our search after truth; prudence would still direct us upon the whole, what course to take. The probability of safety in the main would still be upon the side of virtue: and there would still be reason to fear that vice and irregularity would end ill. This alone would be enough to keep wise and considerate beings to their duty, as far as known. But our condition is very different; and our knowledge of all necessary truth sufficiently clear, extensive and certain.

SECTION I.

The Being and Attributes of God established as the Foundation of Morality.

NOTHING is more indisputable than that something now exists. Every person may say to himself, "I certainly exist; for I feel that I exist. And I could neither feel that I exist nor be deceived in imagining it, if I was nothing. If, therefore, I exist, the next question is, How came I to be?" Whatever exists, must owe its being, and the particular circumstances of it, to some cause prior to itself, unless it exists necessarily. For a being to exist necessarily, is to exist so as that it was impossible for that being not to have existed, and that the supposition of its not existing should imply a direct contradiction in terms. Let any person try to conceive of space and duration as annihilated or not existing, and he will find it impossible, and that they will still return upon his mind in spite of all his efforts to the contrary. Such an existence therefore is necessary, of which there is no other account to be given, than that it is the nature of the thing to exist; and this account is fully satisfying to the mind.

Whatever difficulty we may find in conceiving of the particular *modus* of a necessary existence; an existence which always was, and could not but be; always continu-

ing, but which never had a beginning ; as all the difficulty of such conceptions evidently arises from the narrowness of our finite and limited minds, and as our reason forces us upon granting the reality and necessity of them, it would be contradicting the most irresistible convictions of our reason to dispute them ; and it is indeed out of our power to dispute them.

To have recourse to an infinite succession of dependant causes, produced by one another from eternity, and to give that as an account of the existence of the world, will give no satisfaction to the mind, but will confound it with an infinite absurdity. For if it be absurd to attempt to conceive of one single dependent being, produced without a cause, or existing without being brought into existence by some pre-existing cause, it is infinitely more so to try to conceive of an infinite series of dependent beings existing without being produced by any original and uncreated cause ; as it would be more shocking to talk of a thousand links of a chain hanging upon nothing, than of one.

That the material world is not the first cause, is evident ; because the first cause, existing necessarily, without which necessity he could not possibly exist as a first cause, must be absolutely perfect, unchangeable, and every where the same, of which afterwards. This we see is by no means to be affirmed of the material world ; its form, motion, and substance, being endlessly various, and subject to perpetual change. That nothing material could have been the necessarily existent first cause is evident, because we know that all material substances consist of a number of unconnected and separable particles : which would give, not one, but a number of first causes, which is a palpable absurdity. And that the first cause cannot be one single indivisible atom is plain, because the first cause, being necessarily existent, must be equally necessary throughout infinite space.

That chance, which is only a word, not a real being, should be the cause of the existence of the world, is the same as saying, that nothing is the cause of its existence, or that it neither exists necessarily, nor was produced by that which exists necessarily and therefore does not exist at all. Therefore, after supposing ever so long a

series of beings producing one another, we must at last have recourse to some First Cause of all, himself uncaused, existing necessarily, or so, as that the supposition of his not existing would imply a contradiction. The first cause we call, God.

The first cause must of necessity be one, in the most pure, simple, and indivisible manner. For the first cause must exist necessarily, that is, it is a direct absurdity to say, that something now exists, and yet there is no original first cause of existence. Now when to avoid this absurdity, we have admitted one independent, necessarily existent first cause, if we afterwards proceed to admit another first cause, or number of first causes, we shall find, that all but one are superfluous. Because one is sufficient to account for the existence of all things. And as it will evidently be no contradiction to suppose any one out of a plurality not to exist, since one alone is sufficient; it follows, that there can be but one single first cause.

Besides, it will be made evident by and by, that the first cause must be absolutely perfect in every possible respect, and in every possible degree. Now that which ingrosses and swallows up into itself all possible perfection, or rather is itself absolute perfection, can be but one; because there can be but one absolute Whole of perfection.

We may possibly, through inattention, commit mistakes with respects to what are, or are not, perfections, fit to be ascribed to the first cause, as some of the heathens were absurd enough to ascribe even to their supreme deity, attributes which ought rather to be termed vices than virtues. But we can never mistake in ascribing to the Supreme Being all possible, real, and consistent perfections. For a being, who exists naturally and necessarily, must of necessity exist in an infinite and unbounded manner; the ground of his existence being alike in all moments of duration, and all points of space. Whatever exists naturally and necessarily in the east, must of course exist naturally and necessarily in the west, in the south, and in the north, above and below, in former, present and in future times. Whatever exists in this manner, exists in a perfect manner. Whatever exists in a perfect manner, in respect of extent and duration, must evidently be perfect in every other respect of which

its nature is capable. For the whole idea of such a being is by the supposition natural and necessary ; a partial necessity being an evident absurdity. That the first cause therefore should be deficient in any one perfection consistent with the nature of such a Being as we must conclude the first cause to be, is as evident a contradiction as to say, that the first cause may naturally and necessarily exist in the east, and not in the west, at present, but not in time past or to come. For suppose it were argued, that the first cause may not be infinite, for example, in wisdom ; I ask first, Whether wisdom can be said to be a property unsuitable to the idea of the first cause ? This will hardly be pretended. No one can imagine it would be a more proper idea of the first cause, to think of him as of a being utterly void of intelligence, than as infinite in knowledge. It is evident that of two beings, otherwise alike, but one of which was wholly void of intelligence, and the other possessed of it, the latter would be more perfect than the former, by the difference of the whole amount of the intelligence he possessed. On the other hand, of two beings otherwise alike, but one of which laboured under a vicious inclination, which occasioned a deviation from, or deficiency of moral perfection, and the other was wholly clear of such imperfection, the latter would be a more perfect nature than the former, by the difference of the whole amount of such negative quantity, or deficiency. Which shows the necessity of ascribing to the Supreme Being every possible real perfection, and the absurdity of supposing the smallest imperfection or deficiency to be in his nature.

If it be evident then that wisdom, in any, the lowest degree, is an attribute fit to be ascribed to the first cause, and if whatever is in the first cause, is in him naturally and necessarily, that is, could not but have been in him, it is obvious, that such an attribute cannot be in him in any limited degree, any more than he can naturally and necessarily exist in one point of space, and not through all. It is an evident contradiction to suppose the first cause existing naturally and necessarily, and yet limited, either as to his existence or perfections ; because it is plain, there can be nothing to limit them, which is the same as saying, that they must be unlimited. Farther, whatever is in the nature or essence of the first cause, must be in him natu-

rally and necessarily; that is, is an essential attribute of his nature, or could not but have been in his nature; for if it had been possible that his nature could have been without any particular attribute, it certainly would, by the very supposition. Now, whatever is necessarily an attribute of Deity, is Deity. And limited Deity is a contradiction as much as limited infinity. For infinity is unbounded, knowledge is unbounded, power is unbounded, goodness is unbounded. These and the rest are the necessary attributes of Deity. And as they are in him, they together form the idea of Supreme Deity. The Deity, or First Cause, must therefore be possessed of every possible perfection in an infinite degree; all those perfections being naturally infinite, and there being nothing to limit the Deity, or his perfections.

We cannot therefore avoid concluding, that the first cause is possessed of infinite intelligence, or knowledge, that his infinite mind is a treasure of an infinity of truths, that he has ever had at all moments from all eternity, and ever will to all eternity have in his view, and in actual contemplation, all things that ever have existed, that do now, or ever shall exist, throughout infinite space and duration, with all their connexions, relations, dependences, gradations, proportions, differences, contrasts, causes, effects, and all circumstances of all kinds, with the ideas of all things which are merely possible, or whose existence does not imply a contradiction, though they have never actually existed, with all their possible relations, connexions, and circumstances, whose idea is conceivable. In one word, the Divine mind must comprehend all things that by their nature are capable of being known or conceived.

From the same necessary connexion between the infinity of the first cause in one particular, and in all, we cannot avoid concluding, that he must be infinite in goodness, it being self-evident, that goodness or benevolence must in any state of things be a perfection, and the want of any degree of it a deficiency. To be infinite in goodness is to possess such benevolence of nature, as no conceivable or possible measure of goodness, can exceed, or which can never be satisfied with exerting itself in acts of goodness, in a manner suitable to propriety and rectitude.

Here a proper distinction ought to be made between

goodness and mercy. Though it is demonstrably certain, that the Supreme Being is infinite in goodness, we must not imagine he is infinite in mercy. Because we can suppose innumerable cases, in which mercy to particulars would imply a defect of goodness upon the whole. In such cases, it is evident, that the greatest goodness, upon the whole, will appear in refusing mercy to particulars; not in granting it. We must therefore conclude, that mercy will certainly be refused to all such offenders, whom justice and goodness to the whole require to be punished. Thus the divine goodness is not boundless in its extent, but only regulated in its exertion by wisdom and justice.

From the same necessity for concluding that the first cause must be uniformly, and in all consistent respects infinite, we must conclude, that he is possessed of an infinite degree of power; it being evident, that power is a perfection, and preferable to weakness. Infinite power signifies a power at all moments from eternity to eternity, and throughout all space, to produce or perform whatever does not either in the nature of the thing imply an express contradiction, as making something to be, and not to be at the same time, or opposers of the other perfections of his nature, as the doing something unjust, cruel, or foolish. And indeed all such things are properly impossibilities. Because it is altogether as impossible that a Being unchangeably just, good, and wise, should ever change so as to act contrary to his essential character, as that a thing should be and not be at the same time.

From the same necessity of concluding upon the uniform and universal infinity of the first cause, we cannot avoid concluding, that he is infinite in justice and truth, it being self-evident, that truth is a perfection, and preferable to falsehood. The divine nature must be the very standard of truth; he must be entirely master of the exact state of all things, and of all their relations and connexions; he must see the advantage of acting according to the true state of things, and the right state of the case, rather than according to any false or fictitious one; and must perceive, more generally and universally than any creature, that the consequence of universal truth must be universal order, perfection, and happiness; and of uni-

versal falsehood and deception, universal misery and confusion.

If there be any other natural or moral perfections, for which we have no names, and of which we have no ideas, it is evident, not only that they must be in the divine nature; but that they must exist in Him in an unlimited degree. Or, to speak properly, every possible and consistent perfection takes its origin from its being an attribute of the Divine Nature, and exists by the same original necessity of nature, as the infinite mind itself, the *substratum* of all perfection exists. So that the necessity of existence of the moral perfections of the Deity is the very same as that of the natural. Try to annihilate space, or immensity, in your mind; and you will find it impossible. For it exists necessarily; and is an attribute of Deity. Try to annihilate the idea of rectitude in your mind; and you will find it equally impossible; the idea of rectitude, as somewhat real, will still return upon the understanding. Rectitude is therefore a necessary attribute of Deity; and all the divine moral attributes, of which we have any ideas, are only rectitude differently exerted. And the rectitude of the Divine Nature is the proper basis and foundation of moral good in the disposition or practice of every moral agent in the universe; or in other words, virtue, in an intelligent and free creature, of whatever rank in the scale of being, is nothing else than a conformity of disposition and practice to the necessary, eternal, and unchangeable rectitude of the Divine Nature.

Of every positive simple idea that can enter into our minds, it may be said, that it is either something belonging to the Divine Nature (to speak according to our imperfect way) or it is a work of his, or of some creature of his. We do not say, God, made immensity or space, duration, or eternity, truth, benevolence, rectitude, and the rest. But these are clear, positive, simple ideas in our minds. Therefore they must exist. But if they exist, and yet are not made by God, they must be necessarily existent. Now we know, that nothing exists necessarily, but what is an attribute of Deity, that is, one of our imperfect and partial conceptions of his infinite nature, which engrosses and swallows up all possible perfections.

Though we have here treated of the perfections of the

first cause separately, and one after the other, we are not to form to ourselves an idea of the Supreme Being, as consisting of separable or discernible parts, to be conceived of singly, and independently on one another. In treating of the human mind, we say it consists of the faculties of understanding, will, memory, and so forth. But this evidently conveys a false idea of the mind. It is the whole mind that understands, wills, loves, hates, remembers, sees, hears, and feels, and performs all the other functions of a living agent. And to conceive of its faculties as separable from or independent on one another, is forming a very absurd notion of mind which cannot be considered as consisting of parts, or as capable of division. When we say whatever is an attribute of Deity is a Deity itself, which is demonstrably true, we ought to understand it in the same manner as when we say, that whatever is a faculty of the human mind is the mind itself. Thus, through immensity alone, truth alone, infinite power or wisdom alone, though no one of these perfections alone is the full and complete idea of Deity, any more than understanding alone, will alone, or memory alone, is of the human mind, yet all the first, together with the other attributes, as they subsist in the Divine mind, are Deity, and all the latter, with the other mental powers, are the human mind, and yet neither the former nor the latter can be conceived of as divisible or made up of parts.

As the necessary existence and absolute perfection of God render it proper and reasonable to ascribe to him the creation of the universe; so his omnipresence, infinite power, and wisdom, make it reasonable to conclude that he can, with the utmost facility, without interruption, for infinite ages, conduct and govern both the natural and moral world. Though the doctrine of providence is found in the writings of the wise heathens, and is therefore commonly considered as a point of natural religion: yet, as revelation only sets it in a clear and satisfactory light, I shall put off what I have to say upon it to the fourth book.

Our being utterly incapable of forming any shadow of an idea adequate to the true nature and essence of the Supreme Being, is no more an objection against the certainty of his existence, than the impossibility of our conceiving of infinite beginningless duration, is against its reality.

What our reason compels us to admit, must not be rejected, because too big for our narrow minds to comprehend, nor indeed can we reject it, if we would.

Let us therefore do our utmost to conceive of the Supreme Being, as the one independent, necessarily existent, unchangeable, eternal, immense, and universal mind, the foundation, or *substratum* of infinite space, duration, power, wisdom, goodness, justice, and every other possible perfection; without beginning, without end, without parts, bounds, limits, or defects; the cause of all things, himself uncaused; the preserver of all things, himself depending on no one; the upholder of all things, himself upheld by no one; from all moments of eternity, to all moments of eternity; enjoying the perfection of happiness, without the possibility of addition or diminution; before all, above all, and in all; possessing eternity and immensity, so as to be at once and for ever fully master of every point of the one, and moment of the other, pervading all matter, but unaffected by all matter; bestowing happiness on all, without receiving from any; pouring forth without measure his good gifts, but never diminishing his riches: let us in a word think of him as the All, the Whole, the Perfection of Perfection.

While we view his adorable excellences according to our limited and partial manner, let us take care not to conceive of him as made up of parts, who is the most perfect unity. While we consider, in succession, his several attributes of power, wisdom, goodness, and the rest, let us take care not to form a complex or compounded idea of him, whose essence is absolutely pure and simple. We are not to think of various attributes and then superadd the idea of God to them. The perfection or abstract of wisdom, power, goodness, and every other attribute, in one simple idea, in the one Universal Mind, which fills infinitude, is the most perfect idea we can form of incomprehensible Deity.

Here is a Deity truly worthy to be adored! What are the *Jupiters* and *Junos* of the heathens to such a God? What is the common notion of the object of worship; a venerable personage sitting in heaven, and looking down upon the world below with a very acute and penetrating eye (which I doubt is the general notion among the unthinking part of christians) what is such a God to the immense and unlimited nature we have been considering!

SECTION II.

An Idea of the Divine Scheme in Creation. The happiness of conscious Beings, the only End for which they were brought into Existence. Happiness, its foundation. Universal Concurrence of all Beings, with the Divine Scheme absolutely necessary to universal Happiness.

SO far we have gone upon a rational foundation in establishing the existence of God, and his being possessed of all possible perfections. From the absolute and unchangeable perfection and happiness of God, it appears, as observed above, that his design, in creating, must have been, in consistency with wisdom and rectitude, to produce and communicate happiness. This must be kept in view throughout the whole of the scheme. When we think of the Creator as laying the plan of his universe, we must endeavour to enlarge our ideas so, as to conceive properly of what would be worthy of an infinitely capacious and perfect mind, to project. No partial, unconnected, or inconsistent design would have suited Infinite Wisdom. The work of a God must be great, uniform, and perfect. It must, in one word, be an Universe.

In such a plan, where all was to be full, and no void, or chasm, it is evident, there must be an extensive variety, and innumerable different degrees of excellence and perfection in things animate and inanimate, suitable to the respective places to be filled by each, higher or lower, rising one above another by a just and easy gradation.— This we can accordingly trace in the small part of the scale of being, which our observation takes in. From crude, unprepared dust, or earth, we proceed to various *strata* impregnated with some higher qualities. From thence to pebbles, and other fossil substances, which seem to be endowed with a sort of vegetative principle. Next we proceed from the lowest and simplest of vegetables, up to the highest and most curious; among which the sensitive plant seems to partake of something like animal life. As the polype and some other reptiles, seem to descend a little, as if to meet the vegetable creation. Then we come to animals endowed with the sense of feeling and tasting only,

as various shell-fish. After them follow such as have more senses, till we come to those that possess somewhat analogous to human faculties, as the faithfulness of dogs, the generous courage of the horse, the sagacity of the elephant, and the mischievous low cunning of the fox and ape. Suppose a human creature, of the meanest natural abilities, from its birth deprived of the faculty of speech, how much would it be superior to a monkey? How much is a *Hottentot* superior? From such a human mind we may proceed to those which are capable of the common arts of life; and from them onward to such as have some degree of capacity for some one branch of art or science. Then we may go on to those, who are endowed with minds susceptible of various parts of knowledge. From which there are a great many degrees of natural capacities, rising one above another, before we reach such a divine spirit as that of a *Newton*. Perhaps some of the lower orders of angelic natures might not be raised above him at a much greater distance, than he was above some of his species.

Even among the inhabitants of different elements there is an analogy kept up. Various species of fishes approach very nearly to beasts, who live on dry land, in form and constitution. Several species unite the aquatic and terrestrial characters in one. The bat and owl join the bird and beast kinds; so that the different natures run almost into another; but never meet so closely, as to confound the distinction.

Thus, so far as we can trace the divine plan of creation, all is full, and all connected! And we may reasonably conclude, that the same uniformity amidst variety takes place through the universal scale of being above our species, as well as below it, in other worlds as well as ours. This was to be expected in an universal system planned by one immense and all-comprehending mind.

Considering the unbounded and unlimited perfections of the first cause, who has existed from eternity, has had an infinite space to act in, an infinity of wisdom to suggest schemes, and infinite power to put those schemes in execution for effecting whatever infinite goodness might excite him to propose: considering these things, what ideas may we form of the actual exertion of such perfections; What may they not have produced; what may they not

be every moment producing ; what may they not produce throughout an endless eternity ! There is no determinate time we can fix for infinite wisdom, power, and goodness to have begun to exert themselves in creating, but what will imply an eternity past, without any exertion of creating power. And it is not easy to suppose Infinite Goodness to have let an eternity pass without exerting itself in bringing any one creature into existence. Whither then does this lead us ; There is no point in eternity past, in which we can conceive, that it would have been improper for infinite wisdom, power, and goodness to have been exerted. And he, who from all eternity has had power, in all probability has from all eternity had will or inclination to communicate his goodness. Let us try to imagine then, what may be the whole effect of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness exerted through an infinite duration past, and in an unbounded space. What ought to be the number of productions of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, throughout immensity and eternity ? What may we suppose the present degree of perfection of beings, who have existed from periods distant from the present beyond all reach of human numbers, and have been constantly improving ? What degrees of knowledge, of power, of goodness, may such beings have by this time acquired ? Let readers, who have accustomed themselves to such trains of thinking, pursue these views to their full extent. To add here all that may be deduced from such considerations, may not be necessary.

It is afterwards demonstrated, that the happiness of the proper creature was the sole view, which the Divine Wisdom could have in producing an universe. Now, happiness being a primary or simple idea, it neither needs, nor is capable of any explanation, or of being expressed, but by some synonymous term, which likewise communicates a simple idea, as satisfaction, pleasure, or such like. But it is of good use to understand what makes real happiness, and how to attain it. The foundation or ground of happiness, then, is “ A conscious being’s finding itself in that state, and furnished with all those advantages, which are the most suitable to its nature, and the most conducive to its improvement and perfection.”

Here is a subject for an angel to preach upon, and the

whole human race to be his audience. It is the very subject, which the ambassador of heaven came to this world to treat of, and explain to mankind.

Happiness is no imaginary or arbitrary thing. It is what it is by the unalterable nature of things, and the Divine Ordination. In treating of such subjects, it is common to speak of the nature of things separately from the positive will of the Supreme Being. To understand this matter rightly, it is necessary to remember, that in the nature of things, the Divine Nature is included, or rather is the foundation of all. Thus when it is here said, that happiness is fixed according to the unalterable nature of things, as well as determined by the positive will of God, the meaning is, that the Supreme Being, in determining what should be the happiness of the creature, and how he should attain it, has acted according to the absolute rectitude of his own nature.

But to return, no creature is, or can be so formed, as to continue steadily and uniformly happy, through the whole of its existence, at the same time that it is in a state unsuitable to its nature, and deprived of all the advantages necessary for its improvement and perfection. It is a direct and self-evident impossibility, that such a creature should be. Were the foundation of happiness dependent upon the respective imaginations of different creatures, what occasion for all the pompous apparatus we know has been made for preparing the human species for happiness? Had it been possible, or consistent with the Divine perfections and nature of things, that mere fancy should have been a foundation for happiness, there had needed no more than to have lulled the creature into a pleasing delusion, a golden dream; out of which he should never have waked. And there is no doubt, but, if the happiness of our species and other rational agents could, properly, have been brought about in this, or any other less laborious manner, than that which is appointed, there is not the least doubt, I say, but the unbounded wisdom and goodness of the Governor of the world, who brought them into being on purpose for happiness, and cannot but choose the easiest and best ways for gaining his ends, would have brought them to happiness in such a way. But it is evident, that then man could not have been man, that is,

an intelligent, free agent; therefore could not have filled his place in the scale of being; for as he stands in the place between angles and brutes, he must have been exactly what he is, or not have been at all. An infinitely perfect author, if he creates at all, will necessarily produce a work free from chasms and blunders. And to think of the God of truth as producing a rational, intelligent creature, whose whole happiness should be a deception; what can be conceived more absurd or impious? If such a creature is formed for contemplating truth, could he likewise have been brought into existence, to be irresistibly led into a delusion? To what end a faculty of reasoning, to be, by his very make and state, drawn into unavoidable error?

Besides all this, let any man try to conceive in his own mind the possibility of bringing about a general and universal happiness upon any other footing, than the concurrence of all things, in one general and uniform course, to one great and important end; let any man try to conceive this, I say, and he will find it in vain. If the foundation of universal happiness be, Every being's finding itself in such circumstances as best suits its nature and state, is it possible, that every being should find itself in those circumstances, if every being acted a part unsuitable to its nature and state? On the contrary, a deviation from that conduct, which suits a reasonable nature, is the very definition of moral evil. And every deviation tends to produce disorder and unhappiness. And every lesser degree of such deviation tends to draw on greater, and this deviation into irregularity would in the end produce universal unhappiness; but that it is over-ruled by superior Wisdom and Goodness. So that, instead of the sophistical maxim, "That private vices are public benefits," we may establish one much more just; "That the smallest irregularities, unrestrained, and encouraged, tend to produce universal confusion and misery."

In consequence of the above account of the true foundation of happiness, it is plain, that different natures will require a different provision for their happiness. The mere animal will want only what is necessary for the support of the individual, and the species. Whatever is superadded to that, will be found superfluous and useless, and will

go unenjoyed by the animal. But for a higher nature, such as that of man, another sort of apparatus must be provided. Inasmuch as he partakes of the animal, as well as the rational nature, it is plain he cannot be completely happy with a provision made for only one half of his nature. He will therefore need whatever may be requisite for the support and comfort of the body, as well as for the improvement of the mind. For the happiness of an angel, or other superior power, a provision greatly superior, and more sublime, than all that we can conceive, may be necessary. And the higher the nature, the more noble a happiness it is capable of. The perfect happiness enjoyed by the Supreme Being is the necessary consequence of the absolute and unlimited perfection of his nature.

The supreme mind, in laying the plan of an universe, must evidently have proposed a general scheme, which should take in all the various orders of being; a scheme in which all, or as many as possible of the particulars should come to happiness, but in such a manner, as that the happiness of the whole should be consistent with that of individuals, and that of individuals with that of the whole, and with the nature of things, or, more properly, with the Divine Rectitude. We cannot imagine Infinite Wisdom proposing a particular scheme for every individual, when the end might be gained by a general one. For, to gain various ends by one means, is a proof of wisdom. As, on the contrary, to have recourse to different means, to gain an end, which might have been obtained by one, is of weakness.

Let the universal plan of things have been what it would, it is evident, that, in order to general and universal perfection, it is absolutely necessary, that in general, all things inanimate, animate and rational, concur in one design, and co-operate, in a regular and uniform manner, to carry on the grand view. To suppose any one part or member to be left out of the general scheme, left to itself, to proceed at random, is absurd. The consequence of such an error must unavoidably be, a confusion in the grand machinery, extending as far as the sphere of such a part or member extended. And it is probable that no created being, especially of the lowest ranks, has extensive enough views of things, to know exactly the part it ought to act, it is plain,

that proper means and contrivances must have been used by Him who sees through the whole, for keeping those beings to their proper sphere, and bringing them to perform their respective parts, so as to concur to the perfection and happiness of the whole.

The inanimate is the lowest part of the creation, or the lowest order of being. As it is of itself incapable of happiness it is plain that all it is fit for, is to contribute to the happiness of beings capable of enjoying it. To make inanimate matter perform its part in the grand scheme, nothing will answer, but superior power or force, as, by the very supposition of its being inanimate, it is only capable of being acted upon, not of acting. So that every motion, every tendency to motion, in every single atom of matter in the universe, must be affected by the agency of some living principle. And without being acted by some living principle, no one atom of matter in the universe could have changed its state from motion to rest, or from rest to motion; but must have remained for ever in the state it was first created in.

The Supreme Mind being, as we have seen universally present in every point of infinite space, where there is or is not, any created being, material, or immaterial, must be intimately present to every atom of matter, and every spiritual being, throughout the universe. His power is, as we have seen, necessarily infinite, or irresistible; and his wisdom perfect. It is therefore evidently no more, nor so much, for a Being, endowed with such an advantageous superiority over the material creation, to actuate the vast universe, as for a man to move his finger or eye-lid. His presence extending through infinitude, puts every atom of matter in the universe within his reach. His power being irresistible, enables him to wield the most enormous masses, as whole planets at once, with any degree of rapidity, with as little difficulty, or rather infinitely less, than a man can the lightest ball. And his wisdom being absolutely perfect, he cannot but know exactly in what manner to direct, regulate, and actuate the whole material machine of the world, so as it may the best answer his various, wise, and noble purposes. And it is certain, that all the motions and revolutions, all the tendencies and inclinations, as they are commonly, for want

of better terms, called; all the laws of nature, the cohesion of bodies, the attraction and gravitation of planets, efflux of light from luminous bodies, with all the laws they are subject to, must be finally resolved into the action of the Supreme Being, or of beings employed by him, whatever intervening instrumentality may be made use of. Thus the inanimate creation is wrought to the Divine purpose by superior power, or force.

To bring the animal, irrational natures to perform their part in the general scheme, it was necessary to endow them with a few strong and powerful inclinations, or appetites, which should from time to time solicit them to ease the pain of desire by gratifying them; and to give them capacity enough to consult their own preservation by means fit for the purpose, which are easily found. Besides instinct, they seem to be endowed with a kind of faculty in some measure analogous to our reason, which restrains and regulates instinct, so that we observe, they show something like thought and sagacity in their pursuit of their gratifications, and even show some traces of reflection, gratitude, faithfulness, and the like. Their apprehensions being but weak, and their sphere of action narrow, they have it not generally in their power, as creatures of superior capacities, and endowed with extensive liberty, to go out of the tract prescribed them, and run into irregularity. By these means, the brute creatures are worked to the Divine purpose, and made to fill their subordinate sphere, and contribute, as far as that extends, to the regularity, perfection and happiness of the whole.

We come now to what we reckon the third rank of being, the rational creation: which must likewise, according to the Divine scheme, concur with the other parts, and contribute in their sphere to the perfection and happiness of the universal system.

The rational world being the part the most necessary, and of the greatest importance, as their happiness was the principal view the Supreme Being must have had in the creation, their concurrence is what can the least be dispensed with. Should the whole material system run to ruin: should suns be lost in eternal darkness; planets and comets rush out on all sides into the infinite expanse, or the

fixed stars leave their stations, and dash against one another; and should an universal sentence of annihilation be passed upon the animal world; the destruction of both the inanimate and animal creation would not be so great a disturbance of the Divine scheme, would not be such an important breach of the general order and regularity necessary to universal perfection and happiness, as a general defect of concurrence or irregularity and opposition, in the rational world, for whose happiness, the inferior creation was brought into being, and whose happiness, should it totally miscarry, the Divine scheme must be totally defeated.

SECTION III.

Of the Nature of Man, and Immortality of the Soul.

IN order to understand what it is for our species to concur, in a proper manner, with the Divine scheme, and to observe what wise means have been contrived by the Divine wisdom and goodness for bringing us to the requisite concurrence in consistence with our nature and state, it will be necessary to consider a little the human nature and character.

It is commonly said, that we understand matter better than spirit; that we know less of our souls than of our bodies. But this is only a vulgar error. And the truth is, that we know nothing of the internal substance of either one or the other. But we know enough of the properties and state of both, to know how to seek the good of both, would we but act according to our knowledge.

That which raises the human make above the brute creatures, is our having capacities, which enable us to take more extensive views, and penetrate farther into the natures and connexions of things, than inferior creatures; our having a faculty of abstract reflexions; so that we can at pleasure, call up to our minds any subject we have formerly known, which, for aught that appears, the inferior creatures cannot do, nor excite in themselves the idea of an absent object, but what their senses, either directly or indirectly, recal to their memory; and lastly, that we are naturally, till we come to be debauched, more masters

of our passions and appetites, or more free to choose and refuse, than the inferior creatures.

It is impossible to put together any consistent theory of our nature, or state, without taking in the thought of our being intended for immortality. If we attempt to think of our existence as terminating with this life, all is abrupt, confused, and unaccountable. But when the present is considered as a state of discipline, and introduction to endless improvement hereafter; though we cannot say, that we see through the whole scheme, we yet see so much of wisdom and design, as to lead us to conclude with reason, that the whole is contrived in the most proper manner for gaining the important end of preparing us for immortal happiness and glory.

And that it is reasonable to believe our species formed for immortality, will appear first, by considering the nature of the mind itself, which is indeed, properly speaking, the being; for the body is only a system of matter inhabited and actuated by the living spirit.

That the mind may, in a dependence upon the infinite Author of life and being, continue to exist after the dissolution of the body, there is no reason to question. For individuality and indiscerpibility being inseparable properties of mind, it is plain that a mind can die only by annihilation. But no one can show that there is any connexion between death and annihilation. On the contrary, the mortal body itself is certainly not annihilated at death, nor any way altered in its essence, only its condition and circumstances are not the same as when animated by the living principle which is also the case of the mind. But if the mind be a principle originally capable of thought and self-motion by its own nature; it follows, that it may for any thing we know, think and act in one state as well as another; in a future as well as in the present. If it were possible to conceive of a material, thinking, and self-moving principle, which is a flat contradiction, inactivity being inseparable from the idea of matter; yet it would not thence follow, that the thinking principle must lose its existence at the dissolution of the gross body. The moral proofs for the future existence of the human species would still remain in force, whether we were considered as embodied spirits, or as mere body. Nor is there any contradiction in the

idea of an immortal body, any more than of an immortal spirit; nor is any being immortal, but by dependence on the Divine Supporting Power. Nor does the notion of the possibility of a faculty of thinking, superadded to matter, at all effect the point in question. Though it is certain, that a pretended system of matter with a thinking faculty, must either be nothing more than matter animated by spirit or a substance of a quite opposite nature to all that we call matter, about which we cannot reason, having no ideas of it. Farther, we have reason to conclude, that the body depends on the mind for life and motion; not the mind on the body. We find, that the mind is not impaired by the loss of whole limbs of the body; that the mind is often very active, when the body is at rest; that the mind corrects the errors presented to it through the senses; that even in the decay, disorder, or total suspension, of the senses, the mind is affected just as she might be expected to be, when obliged to use outward instruments, and to have wrong representations, and false impressions, forced upon her, or when deprived of all traces, and quite put out of her element. For, the case of persons intoxicated with liquor, or in a dream, or raving in a fever, or distracted, all which have a resemblance to one another, may be conceived of in the following manner. The mind, or thinking being, which at present receives impressions only by means of the material organ of the brain, and the senses through which intelligence is communicated into the brain; the mind, I say, being at present confined to act only within the dark cell of the brain, and to receive very lively impressions from it, which is a consequence of a law of nature, to us inexplicable; may be exactly in the same manner affected by the impressions made on the brain by a disease, or other accidental cause, as if they were made by some real external object. For example, if in a violent fever, or a frenzy, the same impressions be, by a preternatural flow of the animal spirits, made on the retina of the eye, as would be made if the person was to be in a field of battle, where two armies were engaged; and if at the same time it happened, that by the same means the same impressions should be made on the auditory nerve, as would be made if the person were within hearing of the noise of drums, the clangour of trumpets, and the shouts of men;

how should the spiritual being, immured as she is in her dark cell, and unused to such a deception as this, how should we know it was a deception any more than an *Indian*, who had never seen a picture, could find at the first view, that the canvass was really flat, though it appeared to exhibit a landscape of several miles in extent? It is therefore conceivable that the mind may be strongly and forcibly affected by a material system, without being itself material. And that the mind is not material, appears farther, in that she abstracts herself from the body, when she would apply most closely to thought; that the soul is capable of purely abstract ideas, as of rectitude, order, virtue, vice, and the like; to which matter furnishes no archetype, nor has any connexion with them; that it is affected by what is confessedly not matter, as the sense of words heard, or read in books, which if it were material it could not be: which shows our minds to be quite different beings from the body, and naturally independent on it; that we can conceive of matter in a way, which we cannot of spirit, and contrariwise; matter being still to be, without any contradiction, conceived of as divisible and inactive; whereas it is impossible to apply those ideas to spirit, without a direct absurdity, which shows, that the mind is the same, conscious, indivisible, identical being, though the body is subject to continual change, addition, and diminution; that the mind continues to improve in the most noble and valuable accomplishments, when the body is going fast to decay; that, even the moment before the dissolution of the body, the vigour of the mind seems often wholly unimpaired; that the interests of the mind and body are always different, and often opposite, as in the case of being obliged to give up life for truth. These considerations, attended to duly, show, that we have no reason to question the possibility of the living principle's subsisting after the dissolution of the material vehicle.

As to the difficulty arising from the consideration of the close connexion between the body and soul, and the impressions made by the one upon the other, which has led some to question whether they are in reality at all distinct beings, it is to be remembered, that this connexion, which is absolutely necessary in the present state, is wholly owing to the divine disposal, and not to any likeness,

much less sameness, of the thinking, intelligent agent with the gross corporeal vehicle. If it had so pleased the Author of our being, he could have fixed such a natural connexion between our minds and the moon, or planets, that their various revolutions and aspects might have affected us in the same manner, as now the health or disorder of our bodies does. But this would not have the moon and planets a part of us. No more do the mutual impressions, made reciprocally by the mind and body, prove them to be the same, or that the human nature is all body, especially considering that as already observed, in many cases we evidently perceive an independency and difference between them.

It cannot be pretended that there is any absurdity in conceiving of the animating principle as existing even before conception in the womb, nor of a new union commencing at a certain period, by a fixed law of nature, between it and a corporeal vehicle, which union may be supposed to continue, according to certain established laws of nature for a long course of years; and may be broke, or dissolved, in the same regular manner; so that the system of matter, to which the animating principle was united, may be no more to it than any other system of matter.

It is remarkable, that all living creatures, especially our species, on their first appearance in life, seem at a loss, as if the mind was not, in the infant state, quite engaged and united to its new vehicle, and, therefore could not command and wield it properly. Sleep, infirm old age, severe sickness, and fainting, seem according to certain established laws of nature, partly to loosen or relax the union between the living principle, the mind, and the material vehicle; and, as it were, to set them at a greater distance from one another, or make them more indifferent to one another, as if (so to speak) almost beyond the sphere of one another's attraction. Death is nothing more than the total dissolution of this tie, occasioned in a natural way, by some alteration in the material frame, not in the mind; whereby that which formed the nexus, or union, whatever that may be, is removed or disengaged. It is probable, that the anxiety and distress, under which the mind commonly feels itself at death, is owing rather to the manner and process of the dissolution, than to the dissolution

itself. For we observe, that very aged persons, and infants, often die without a struggle. The union between soul and body, being already weak, is easily dissolved. And if sleep be, as it seems, a partial dissolution of this union, or a setting the mind and body at a greater distance from one another, the reason why it gives no disturbance is, that it comes on in such a manner as not forcibly to tear in pieces, but gently to relax the ligatures, whatever they are, between the material and spiritual natures. That there is an analogy between sleep and death is evident from observing, that sleep sometimes goes on to death, as in lethargic cases, and in the effects of strong opiates. And it is remarkable, that the life of a person, who has taken too large a dose of opium, cannot be saved but by forcibly waking him; as if the mutual action of the mind and body upon one another was the medium of the union; and that, if their mutual action upon one another comes to be lessened to a certain degree, they become indifferent to one another, and the union between them ceases of course, as two companions walking together in the dark may come to lose one another, by dropping their conversation, and keeping a profound silence.

It is probable, that the condition in which the mind, just disengaged from the body, feels itself, is very much like to that of dreaming; all confusion, uncertainty, and incoherence of ideas; and that, in some measure, like the infant mind newly entered upon a state wholly unknown, it finds itself greatly at a loss, and exert itself with much difficulty and disadvantage; till a little time and habit qualifies it for a new and untried scene of action.*

If the true account of the human nature be, that the spiritual, active, thinking principle is united to a subtile ethereal vehicle, whose residence is in the brain, and the death is the departure of the soul and spirit from the body; which

* The author is not ashamed to confess, that he now thinks his former opinion concerning the state of the dead, as represented in these paragraphs, erroneous; though he chooses not to alter the text on that account; thinking it hardly fair to lessen the value of former editions, by adding to succeeding ones what is better laid before readers in separate publications. The author is now inclineable to think Doctor *Law's* opinion, in his *Theory of Religion*, more rational, as well as more scriptural, than the generally received notion of the soul's being in a full state of consciousness and activity between death and resurrection. It is a point of mere speculation, no way materially affecting either faith or manners.

was the notion of the *Platonic* Philosophers and *Jewish* rabbii, and seems to be countenanced by the apostle *Paul*; if this be the true account of the human make, there is no difficulty in conceiving the possibility of the mind's thinking and acting in a state of total separation from the gross terrestrial body, notwithstanding the seeming difficulty of a suspension of thought in profound sleep, or in a fainting fit. For the embodied and separate states are so very different, there is no reasoning from one to the other on every point. It may be impossible for the mind, while imprisoned in the body, in a great disorder of the animal frame, to join ideas together, for want of its traces in the brain, and other implements of reasoning, to which it has all along been accustomed, and which it cannot do without; and yet may be possible for the same mind, when freed from its dark prison, to go to work in a quite different manner, to receive impressions immediately from the objects themselves, which it received before by the intervention of the senses, and to contrive for itself memorial traces, and the other necessary apparatus for improvement, in a much more perfect manner. It may then be able to penetrate into the internal substance, and examine the minute arrangement of the smallest corpuscles of all kinds of material systems. By applying its ductile and delicate vehicle, which may be considered as all sensation, all eye, all ears, and touch, it may accurately take off, not only the real form, but the internal nature and state of things, with all their properties, and present them to the immediate intuition of the perceptive principle, just as they are in themselves; whereas at present the mind apprehends things only as the dull and imperfect bodily senses exhibit them to it. It may be able to contract itself to the examination of the internal structure of the body of the minutest animalcule; and it may, as it goes on to improve and enlarge its powers, come to such a perfection, as to diffuse its actual presence and intelligence over a kingdom, or round the whole globe, so as to perceive all that passes in every spot on the face of it. It may enter into, and examine the sublime ideas which are treasured up in the mind of an angel, and as now, by perusing a book, it acquires new views, and by slow degrees perfect those it had before acquired; so it may hereafter attain such a capacity

of comprehension, as to be able to take off at one intuition a whole new science. Thus new powers and faculties, for which we have at present no names, may be forever springing up in the mind, which will ever find new employment in examining and inquiring into truth. For the object of the mind is infinite.

That our species should have another state to enter upon, wholly different from the present, is so far from being unreasonable to expect, that it is analogous to the whole scheme of Nature. For there is no species, as far we know, that do not live in different successive states. But to instance only the insect tribe, many of that species, besides their animalcule state, before they be propagated from the male, in which they differ in nothing from the whole animal creation, appear first as eggs, and afterwards as living reptiles, capable of motion and feeding; then they enter upon their nymph or aurelia state, and continue for several months as it were confined up in their slough and totally insensible. At last they burst their prison, expand their wings, and fly away in the shape of butterflies, dragonflies, or other winged insects, according to their several species. This succession of states, of which the last is the most perfect, has been considered as emblematical of our mortal life, our intermediate state, and resurrection to immortality.

But the most irrefragable proofs for the future immortality of the human species, separate from those which revelation yields, are taken from the consideration of the perfections of the Maker and Governor of the world, who designs all his works according to infinite wisdom and goodness, and according to the true state of things. No one can suppose that a God of truth would have allowed that a whole order of rational creatures should, by any means whatever, be misled into an universal persuasion of a state for which they never were intended. For it is evident, that if we are not formed for a future immortal state, we can have no more concern with any thing beyond death, than with the world in the moon, and consequently, our whole business being with the present life, it is not to be supposed, that our infinitely wise Creator would have suffered our attention to have been taken off from it, by our being led into the notion of any other; much less

that our whole species should be irresistibly possessed with the same useless and hurtful delusion: nor that he would have universally impressed their minds with a false notion of an account to be hereafter given of all their thoughts, words, and actions. Had he wanted them to conform themselves to his general scheme in the government of the world, he could have brought that about, and certainly would, by any other means, rather than by suffering them to be misled into a series of groundless imaginations and delusions. Nor would the infinitely-wise Creator have given us these vast and insatiate desires after endless improvement in knowledge, this reach of thought, which expatiates through creation, and extends itself beyond the limits of the universe; nor would he have fired our souls with the prospect of an endless existence for carrying on those improvements, only to curse us with a cruel disappointment. Nor would he have made the human soul for himself; fixed its desires and wishes upon the enjoyment of his own perfections; drawn and engaged it to love, admire, and breathe after the fruition of him; raised it to this lofty height of ambition only to throw it down, baffled and disappointed, into a state of insensibility and annihilation. Nor would he have formed the mind with a capacity for continual advances in goodness, and nearer approaches to himself, only to give us an opportunity of fitting ourselves for a future state of perfection and happiness, to which, according as we approached nearer and nearer, we should approach nearer and nearer to the total disappointment of all our labours and all our hopes, and find the whole at last to have been no other than a golden dream.

The only reason why any one has recourse to artifice and deceit, is, that he has not sagacity enough to gain his ends by proceeding in a fair and open manner. Whoever is master of his scheme, has no need of tricks and arts to compass his designs. And who will dare to affirm, that Infinite Wisdom had no way of bringing about his important designs for the good of his universe, but by deluding his reasonable creatures, or suffering them to be universally deluded, which is the same, into the belief of a future Utopia? We know of nothing in nature analogous to this. Whatever our species, or any other, are liable to be

mistaken in, is owing to the mere imperfection of sense and understanding, unavoidably in beings of inferior rank: but we have no idea of a whole species irresistibly led into a positive error, especially of such consequences as that of the expectation of a future state, if it were an error. And here it is highly worthy of remark, that it is not the weak, the short-sighted, and the ignorant part of the human kind, that are most inclinable to the persuasion of the immortality of the soul, as might have been expected were it an error; but quite otherwise. While the most sordid, degenerate, and barbarous of the species have overlooked, or not been sufficiently persuaded of it; the wisest and greatest of mankind have been believers and teachers of this important doctrine; which shows it in a light wholly unaccountable, if it be supposed an error.

The irregular distribution of happiness and misery in the present state renders it highly probable, that this is only a part, not the whole of the Divine œconomy with respect to our species.

Do we not find, that in the present state, the highest degree of goodness is, in some cases, attended with the greatest unhappiness? For though virtue must, in general, be owned to be the likeliest means for procuring happiness in the present, as well as future state; yet there are numerous exceptions to this rule. I appeal to the experience of every man, who from a course of thoughtlessness and libertinism, has had the happiness to be brought to some concern about the interests of futurity, whether he does not now suffer a thousand times more of the anguish of remorse from a reflexion of the least failure, than he did formerly for the grossest enormities. If so, it is evident, that improvement in virtue brings with it such a delicacy of sentiment, as must often break in upon the tranquility of the mind, and produce an uneasiness, to which the hardened sinner is wholly a stranger. So that in this instance we see, that virtue is not in the present life its own reward, which infers the necessity of a future reward in a life to come.

Nor is the permission of persecution or tyranny, by which the best of mankind always suffer the most severely, while wickedness reigns triumphant, at all reconcilable with the goodness of the universal Governor, upon any footing but

that of a future state, wherein the sufferings, to which the mere incapacity of resisting, or the strict adherence to truth, has exposed multitudes of the species, of the best of the species, shall be suitably made up for. When an *Alexander*, or a *Cæsar*, is let loose upon his fellow creatures, when he pours desolation, like a deluge, over one side of the globe, and plunges half the human species in a sea of their own blood, what must be the whole amount of the calamity suffered by millions, involved in the various woes of war, of which great numbers must be of the tender sex, and helpless age! What must be the terror of those who dread the hour when the merciless savage, habituated to scenes of cruelty, will give orders to his hellhounds to begin the general massacre? What the carnage when it is begun? Men slaughtered in heaps in the streets and fields; women ravished and murdered before their husband's faces; children dashed against the walls in sight of their parents; cities wrapt in flames; the shouts of the conquerors; the groans of the dying; the ghastly visages of the dead; universal horror, misery, and desolation. All to gain a spot of ground, an useless addition of revenue, or even the visionary satisfaction of a sounding name, to swell the pride of a wretched worm, who will himself quickly sink among the heaps his fury has made, himself a prey to the universal leveller of mankind. And what is all history full of, but such horrid scenes as these? Has not ambition or superstition set mankind, in all ages and nations, in arms against one another; turned this world into a general shambles, and fattened every soil with slaughtered thousands?

The blood thirsty inquisitor, who has grown grey in the service of the mother of abominations, who has long made it his boast, that none of her priests has brought so many hundreds of victims to her horrid altars as himself; the venerable butcher sits on his bench. The helpless innocent is brought bound from his dungeon, where no voice of comfort is heard, no friendly eye glances compassion; where damp and stench, perpetual darkness and horrid silence reign, except when broken by the echo of his groans; where months and years have been languished out in want of all that nature requires; an out-cast from family, from friends, from ease and affluence,

and a pleasant habitation, from the blessed light of the world. He kneels; he weeps; he begs for pity. He sues for mercy by the love of God, and by the bowels of humanity. Already cruelly exercised by torture, nature shudders at the thought of repeating the dreadful sufferings, under which she had almost sunk before. He protest his innocence. He calls heaven to witness for him; and implores the Divine power to touch the flinty heart, which all his cries and tears cannot move. The unfeeling monster talks of heresy, and profanation of his cursed superstition. His furious zeal for priestly power and a worldly church, stops his ear against the melting voice of a fellow creature prostrate at his feet. And the terror necessary to be kept up among the blinded votaries, renders cruelty a proper instrument of religious slavery. The dumb executioners strip him of his rags. The rack is prepared. The ropes are extended. The wheels are driven round. The bloody whip and hissing pincers tear the quivering flesh from the bones. The pullies raise him to the roof. The sinews crack. The joints are torn asunder. The pavement swims in blood. The hardened minister of infernal cruelty sits unmoved. His heart has long been steeled against compassion. He listens to the groans, he views the strong convulsive pangs, when nature shrinks, and struggles, and agonising pain rages in every pore. He counts the heart-rending shrieks of a fellow creature in torment, and enjoys his anguish with the calmness of one who views a philosophical experiment! The wretched victim expires before him. He feels no movement, but of vexation at being deprived of his prey, before he had sufficiently glutted his hellish fury. He rises. No thunder roars. No lightning blasts him. He goes on to fill up the measure of his wickedness. He lives out his days in ease and luxury. He goes down to the grave gorged with the blood of the innocent; nor does the earth cast up again his cursed carcase.

Can any one think such scenes would be suffered to be acted in a world, at the head of which sits enthroned in supreme majesty a Being of infinite goodness and perfect justice, who has only to give his word, and such monsters would be in an instant driven by his thunder to the centre; can any one think that such proceedings would be suffered

to pass unpunished; if there was not a life to come, a day appointed for rewarding every man according to his works?

Some have thought, that part of the arguments for the immortality of the human soul, being applicable to inferior natures, might be said to prove too much and therefore to prove nothing. For that the unequal allotment of happiness and misery among the brute creatures seems to require, that those who have suffered unjustly in this state, should have such sufferings compensated to them in some future existence.

This difficulty is easily got over, if we consider, first, that the sufferings of the inferior creatures are, so to speak, only momentary; whereas foreboding fears and cutting reflections increase human miseries a thousand fold; which greatly abates the necessity of a future existence to make up for what they may have suffered here. Besides, justice does not require, that any species of creatures be wholly exempted from suffering; but only, that, upon the whole, all creatures have it in their power to be gainers by their existence, that is, that they have in their power a greater share of happiness than misery. If any one thinks it most probable, that all creatures, once introduced into existence, are to be continued in being, till they deserve, by perverse wickedness, to be annihilated; and that, as material substances, which seem to us to perish, are only dissipated into small invisible parts, so the spirits of all living creatures, at death, are only removed into another state; if any one, I say, thinks he sees reason to believe the immortality, in a succession of states, of all living creatures, I do not see that my subject obliges me to confute such an opinion.

Though the distinguishing character of man is reason, it is evident, that reason does not in general prevail in the present state; but on the contrary, vice, and folly, and madness, seem to be most of what this world was made for, if it be the whole of man. And surely, such an economy is not worthy to be ascribed to an infinitely wise Creator. Is it a design worthy of infinite Goodness to produce into being a species to be continued for several thousand years, to harrass and massacre one another, and then to sink again into the earth, and fatten it with their carcasses? The Creator can never be supposed to have produced be-

ings on purpose for suffering, and to be losers by their existence, without any fault of their own. Upon this footing, the brute creatures would have eminently the advantage of our species. But it is very improbable, that the beneficent Author of nature has taken more care, and made a better provision for the inferior creatures than for us. And still more unlikely, that he has given the advantage upon the whole to the most worthless part of our species, and exposed the best of mankind to unavoidable distress and hardship, as is conspicuously the case in innumerable instances in this world. For in the case of tyranny and persecution, it is evident, that all that the good man has to support him under his cruel sufferings, is the testimony of his conscience; the persuasion of the Divine approbation; and the hope of a future recompence of honour and happiness for the pain and shame he has suffered here. But to say there is no future state of retribution, is to say, That He, who placed conscience in the human breast, did so for the sole purpose of making the best of men the most unhappy; that He, who most loves, and best knows the sincere and upright, will show no favor to the sincere and upright, but the contrary; and consequently, that virtue is something worse than an empty name, being a real and substantial misfortune to its most faithful votary. To say the truth, were the present state the whole of the human existence, it is evident, that to give up life for the cause of religion, so far from being virtue, the highest pitch of virtue, would be directly vicious; because it would be throwing away our existence for an absolute nothing. Annihilate the reality of a future state, and christianity is a delusion; consequently not to be suffered for.

There is, there must be, hereafter a state, in which the present irregularities shall be rectified, and defects supplied; in which vice and folly shall universally, by established laws of the Divine economy, sink to disgrace and punishment, and wisdom and virtue of course, rise universally triumphant, and prevail throughout the universe. For it cannot be but that what is suitable to the character of the universal Governor, should have the advantage, upon the whole, in a world, of which he is the absolute and irresistible Lord, and that what opposes perfect rectitude armed with Omnipotence, must sooner or later be

crushed before him. For he does in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, whatever seems to him good, and none can stay his hand.

The virtuous and pious soul has, above all, such evidence for its own immortality, as it cannot doubt. Purified from every sordid desire, purged from every dreg of earth, and become wholly spiritual and angelic, whose prospects are large, whose views sublime, and whose disposition godlike; such a soul already feels her own immortality. Whilst in the body, she is sensible of her own independence upon the body, and superiority to it. While chained to flesh, and imprisoned in clay, she feels within herself celestial vigour, declaring her noble origin. Attracted by the Divine influence, which in degenerate spirits is clogged and overpowered by sensual appetite and sordid passion, she raises her desires to that better world, for which she was formed. She pants for liberty; she breathes after that state of heavenly light and real life, which suits her noble powers and elevated disposition; she spreads her impatient wing; she plumes herself for flight; she darts her angelic eye, as it were, athwart eternity; her vast imagination already grasps futurity: she leaves behind, in thought, this lessening speck of matter, and all its vanities; she hangs upon the verge of time, and only waits the powerful call, which spoke her into being, to seize the future world, the glories of the resurrection, to leave those lower regions, and expatiate at large through boundless space, to view the immensity of Nature, and to soar with choirs of seraphim, to present herself before the eternal throne.

SECTION IV.

Reasonbleness and Necessity of the Connexion between the Behaviour of moral Agents and their Happiness. Discipline the only means for bringing moral Agents voluntarily to pursue Virtue.

HAVING already seen, that it was necessary to the very idea of a perfect system, that there should be a proper subordination, a scale, rising by easy and just degrees, of the various ranks of creatures; it is evident, that there

must have been such a creature as man, that is, a species to fill the place which he possesses. And it is plain, that as his place is immediately above the brute, and below the angelic nature, he could not possibly have been formed otherwise than he is. He could not be superior to the animal rank, without having powers and faculties superior to theirs. It is that which gives him his superiority over them. Nor could he have been inferior to the angelic order of beings, without falling short of their powers and faculties. It is the very thing which places him beneath them. Man, or whatever creature should have been made to fill up the chasm between the angelic and the animal natures, must have been exactly what we find our species actually is. For without such a rank as man, the moral system could not have been perfect, consequently could not have been at all: for it is impossible that an absolutely perfect author should produce an imperfect work. So that there is no room left to complain, that by creating man in such a station, it was necessary he should be endowed with nobler powers and faculties than the brutes; he comes to be put in a more elevated and more precarious state. It is true that very few of the brutes are likely to fall short of the happiness destined for them, having, as already observed, but few chances of missing of it, and being more effectually confined to the track appointed them, than it was proper such a creature as man should be. But is not the immense superiority of happiness to which a human mind may, with proper attention, rise, a very great overbalance for all the disadvantages our species labour under, were there a thousand for one? Would any man, who had his choice before hand, whether he would be of the human or the brute species, deliberately choose the latter, in which he knew it was impossible he should ever attain any considerable degree of perfection and happiness, rather than the former, in which he was sure, if he was not wanting to himself he might rise to greatness and felicity inconceivable? Would any rational creature make this absurd choice merely upon the consideration, that if he was of a species endowed with liberty, it was possible he might be so foolish as to neglect his own interest, and with open eyes run into ruin and misery? What no reasonable being would choose, let not presumptuous man

blame his Maker for not putting in his choice. If man is what he ought to be, and is placed where he ought to be, what has he to do but to think of filling his station with such propriety as is necessary for a reasonable being to study, who is desirous of attaining his own perfection and happiness in the only way in which they are attainable?

If the perfect concurrence of reasonable beings, as well as others, with the Divine scheme, was necessary to the very notion of a regular universal system, with an universal governor at the head of it; it was to be expected, that the final happiness of such beings as should study to conform themselves habitually in disposition and practice to the Divine scheme, should by the positive ordination of the Ruler of the world be closely connected with their character and behaviour. And if it be impossible to conceive a plan of universal economy laid by an universal and perfect mind, that should not be suitable to his own necessary nature and character, but founded in mere arbitrary will; it is likewise impossible to conceive a system in which the habitual conformity of reasonable beings to the grand scheme of the Universal Governor should not naturally, and as it were of itself, produce happiness. The Divine scheme of government is founded, not in arbitrary will; but in the eternal and unchangeable rectitude of the Divine Nature. And therefore it was as much an impossibility that it should be contrary to what it is, or that conformity to it should finally produce any thing but happiness, or irregularity any thing but misery; as that the Divine Nature, which is necessarily what it is, should have been otherwise. So that, till the time comes, when universal regularity shall have the same natural tendency to promote order, perfection, and happiness, as universal conformity to the scheme of the universe; when the Divine Will comes to be directly contrary to all the moral perfections of his nature, till impossibilities become possible, and direct contradictions the same; till the time comes, when all these shall happen, there can be no chance for the happiness of any reasoning being, who does not study to conform his disposition and practice to the general scheme of the Ruler of the world.

Let daring impious man hear this and tremble.

That there is a rectitude in conduct, which is indepen-

dent upon connected happiness, seems so evident, that one would wonder how some writers have persuaded themselves, and laboured to persuade others, That the only good, or rectitude of an action, is its tendency to produce happiness. After what I have said to show the natural, as well as judicial connexion between virtue and happiness, I must declare, that to me it appears evident, That rectitude is prior to, and independent upon, all tendency to produce happiness. To prove this very briefly, let it be proposed to a person, that he have his choice to perform some noble action, such as delivering his country, by one or two methods, the former of which shall oblige him to make use of a piece of dissimulation, which shall hurt no creature, but if he chooses the latter, he may save his country without the least deviation from truth. Ought a man of integrity to hesitate one moment which of the two methods he would choose? And does not the preference of the latter to the former, the consequences of both being the same, show plainly a rectitude in mere veracity, independent of its producing happiness? Again, were a traveller to see some strange sight, which never had been, or could be seen, by any other, would it not evidently be better that he gave an account of it on his return, exactly in every circumstance as it really was, than that he should in the smallest circumstance deviate from truth; though such deviation should have no kind of effect upon any person in the world? Farther, is it not certain, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the Supreme Being acts always from the greatest and best motives, and according to the wisest and most perfect rules, at the same time that his happiness is, has been, and will be, necessarily at all moments, from eternity to eternity, the same, unchangeable, and absolutely perfect. Is the whole rectitude of created beings the pursuit of happiness? And is there no foundation for Divine rectitude? Is it not rectitude in a prince, or a father, to wish the happiness of his people, or children, without regard to his own happiness? Is not benevolence the more truly commendable for its being disinterested? Whereas, upon the scheme of placing the whole of rectitude in pursuing the greatest happiness, it ought to be quite the reverse. Ought not a good man to do what is right, rather than the contrary, if he were sure, that himself

and the whole universe were to be annihilated the next moment, so that it would be impossible that any degree of happiness should be the consequence?

There is plainly an independent rectitude, or goodness, in the conduct of moral agents, separate from the connexion between virtue and happiness. And this is the foundation of the necessity of their acting according to a certain fixed course; and consequently of their having laws and rules promulgated to them by the Universal Governor. Nor does this at all invalidate the connexion between virtue and happiness; but on the contrary, shows that there is, and ought to be, such a connexion. And, generally speaking, there is no safer way to try the moral excellence or turpitude of actions, than by considering the natural consequences of their being universally practised. For example, let it be supposed a questionable point, Whether the murder of the innocent is in itself right, or otherwise. Try it by the consequences, which must follow the universal practice of destroying all the good and virtuous part of mankind; and it immediately appears to be so far from right, that nothing can be conceived more contrary to rectitude. On the other hand, let it be disputed, Whether the protection and preservation of the innocent be right. Let it be considered, what would be the consequences of innocence being universally preserved and protected; and it appears evident beyond all possibility of doubt, that nothing is more agreeable to rectitude. Rectitude, therefore, does not consist in the pursuit of happiness; nor does the happiness, consequent upon a certain course of conduct, constitute the rectitude of such conduct. The true state of the case is, Certain actions are first in themselves right, and then happiness is the natural and judicial consequence of them.

In order to bring mankind to a complete and perfect concurrence with the Universal Scheme, it was plainly necessary, that other means should be used than force or instinct; the first of which was sufficient for working dead matter, and the second, the animal creation, to the Divine purpose. Had man been only inanimate matter, nothing more would have been necessary, than that he should be acted upon. Had he been a machine; a weight, or a spring, would have been sufficient to make him perform

his motions. Were there nothing in man but the mere animal powers; were he capable of being wrought to nothing higher than the animal functions; were his nature fit for no higher happiness, than those of eating and drinking, and, after living a few years, and leaving behind him a successor to fill his place, and continue the species, to pass out of existence; were this the case, there would have needed no very grand apparatus to make him fill his inconsiderable place, so as to contribute his small share to the happiness of the whole, and to secure his own mean portion. But it is very much otherwise, as will immediately appear. I believe hardly any one will deny, that man (or however most of the species) are endowed with the faculty of understanding; by which, though weak indeed and narrow at present, our species are yet capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood, in all points of importance, and with sufficient certainty, as shown above. Now, in order to a creature's acting properly its part, and concurring with the whole, it is evidently necessary, that it make a proper use and application of every one of its faculties. No one will pretend, I think, that the perfection and happiness of the universe would be as universally promoted by every individual's making a wrong use of his faculties, as a right one; but on the contrary, that every individual's making an improper use of his faculties would produce the most consummate disorder and imperfection in the system, and would be the most opposite to the Divine Scheme, that could be imagined. It follows, that, if man is endowed with understanding, he is to be brought to cultivate and inform it, not to stifle and blind it; to endeavour to enlarge, not to narrow it; to apply it to the searching out of useful and important truth, not to mislead it into the belief of falsehoods, nor to employ it upon objects unworthy of it.

Another leading faculty in the human mind is will. That there is in man a faculty of will, or a power of choosing and refusing, we shall see established immediately. What I have to say at present is, That in order to man's concurrence with the Universal Scheme, it is necessary, that he regulates his will properly, or in such a manner that he may will or desire whatever is for the general good, and will or desire nothing that may be generally prejudicial. No man, I think, will pretend, that it would be

better if the wills of all created beings were set to thwart the general scheme, than that they were formed to concur with it; but, on the contrary, it is evident, that a general opposition of all beings to what is the nature of things, and the right upon the whole, must produce universal confusion; and that if there was no way to bring about this general concurrence, it were reasonable to expect, from the absolutely perfect rectitude of the Supreme Governor of the World, that an universe of such perverse and unruly beings should be utterly destroyed, or rather never have been produced. It is plain, then, that, in order to man's acting his part, and concurring with the general scheme, he must be brought to use all the faculties of his mind properly.

I promised above to bring some proofs for the fact of man's being a creature endowed with will, or freedom to desire, and power to determine himself in favour of, or against any particular object. The certainty of this fact is founded in sensation, and confirmed by reasoning. Let any man observe what passes in his own mind, and he will be obliged to own, that he feels he has it in his power to will, or desire, and determine himself in favour of, or against any particular object. We have no other proof for our existence, nor is it in its nature capable of any other, than that we feel we exist.

But because the reality of human liberty has been cavilled at by some men of metaphysical heads, who have run into greater difficulties to avoid less, it may be worth while to consider this matter a little. I know not whether I am made like the rest of mankind. But I can feel every thing pass in my mind, that I can conceive I should feel, if I was really a free agent. For example, in an indifferent case: When I look on my watch, to know whether it is time for me to give over writing, and I find the hour come, when I usually give over, I do not find that I am impelled to lay down my pen, in the same manner as the index of my watch is moved to point at the hour; but that I give over, because I think, upon the whole, it is more proper I should give over, than go on. Does my watch point to the hour, because it thinks upon the whole it is more proper that it should point to that hour, than any other? If so, then the watch and I are beings of the same sort,

endowed with much the same powers and faculties. Do I not lay aside my pen, because I choose to lay it aside, that is, because I am willing to lay it aside? Should I give over, if I was unwilling to give over? If I find my usual time past, and yet should be glad to finish the head I am upon, before I lay aside my pen, does that motive act upon me, and force me to go on, as a spring acts upon a watch, or does it act as a consideration upon a rational creature?

Again, suppose I am tempted to do a bad action, do the motives laid in my way force my compliance? Do I not, on the contrary, feel that I yield to them, because I choose to seize a present object, which I expect to yield me some fancied advantage? Do I not feel in my own mind a violent struggle between the considerations of present profit or pleasure, and those of wisdom and virtue? Is it possible I should feel any such struggle if I was not free? Does any such thing pass in a machine? Do I not find, that I sometimes yield to temptations, which at other times I get the better of? Have not others resisted temptations which have proved too hard for me? Could these differences happen, if they and I were machines? Do not these instances of temptations conquered, fix both liberty and guilt upon me, in having yielded to what it was plain I might have resisted at one time, if I did at another? If it is extremely difficult, or what may be called next to impossible, to resist all sorts of temptations at all times, does this prove any thing else, than that human nature is weak? Were man a machine, he must act as a machine, uniformly and invariably.

What I have here remarked upon the case of being tempted to a bad action, is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to that of an opportunity of doing a good one. Motives, according as they appear, will influence a rational mind. But the appearance of motives to our minds, as well as their influence over us, depends very much upon ourselves. If I am prevailed on by motives, do motives force me? Do I not yield to them, because I choose to yield to them? If this is not being free, what is freedom? What should I feel pass in my mind, if I was really free? What may we suppose superior beings, what may we suppose the Supreme himself to feel in his infinite mind? Does he,

(with profound reverence be it spoken) does he act without regard to motives? Does he act contrary to reasonable motives? Can we suppose him uninfluenced by proper motives? Can we suppose he feels himself to be wholly uninfluenced by reasonable and important considerations? Would we be more free than the most perfect of all beings? If he gives us liberty and power to a proper extent, what would we have more? If we feel that we have such liberty, why should we, contrary to possibility, endeavour to bring ourselves to doubt of our having it? If we cannot doubt of our being free creatures, what have we more to think of, than how to make a proper use of our liberty, how to get our wills formed to a perfect concurrence with the grand scheme of the Governor of the Universe, so that we may behave properly within our sphere? which if we and all other moral agents did, every part must be properly acted, every sphere properly filled, and universal regularity, perfection, and happiness be the result.

Some have imagined that allowing liberty or will to created beings was a derogation from the Supreme, to whom alone the privilege of freedom ought to be ascribed. It is certain that this is strictly true of absolute, independent, original freedom. As it is undoubted that independent, necessary, or natural existence is the incommunicable privilege of the First Cause. But, as we find a limited, dependent existence may be, and actually is communicated to created beings, where is the difficulty or impropriety of supposing a limited, independent freedom, or power of choosing or refusing, communicated to created beings? As created beings depend on the Supreme for their existence; and yet the existence they enjoy is a real and proper existence; so may the liberty they enjoy, of choosing or refusing, be a real and proper liberty, and yet derived from, and dependent on the infinite Giver of every gift.

If there is no such thing as liberty, in any created being, as some have imagined, then it is evident, there can be no will but that of the Supreme Being: for liberty, or a power of choosing or refusing, is only another term for will. Will, or willingness, implies freedom in the very term. Therefore, the common term free-will is a tautology, as much as if one should say voluntary will. There neither is, nor can be, any will but free-will. Constraint, or force,

is the very opposite of will, or willingness. Let it be considered then, what the consequence must be of affirming that there is no will, but the Supreme. We find in history, that a monster of an Emperor wished that the whole *Roman* people had but one neck, that he might cut them all off at once. The same temper, which led him to desire the destruction of his people, of whom he ought to have been the father and protector, would have inclined him to wish the destruction of whatever opposed him, that is of all good beings in heaven and earth. Will any one pretend, that this temper of mind is agreeable to the Supreme will? Is it not blasphemy to imagine the Divine will to be against goodness? But if liberty or will in a created being is impossible, then what we call *Caligula's* will was really the Divine will; the destruction of all goodness was agreeable to the Divine mind! It is too horrible to think of.

I know, it has been said, that the perpetration of the most wicked action, that ever was committed, must have been in one sense suitable to the Divine mind, and scheme, else it would have been prevented by his over-ruling power. In a state of discipline, it was necessary, that both the good and the wicked should have liberty, within a certain sphere, to exert themselves according to their respective characters, and the Divine Wisdom has taken measures for preventing such a prevalence of wickedness as should defeat his gracious ends; so that it shall still be worth while to have created an universe; though every thing would have gone incomparably better, had no moral agent ever made a wrong use of his liberty. Nor is there the least difficulty in conceiving of the Supreme Being, as proposing the greatest possible happiness of his creatures, and of a wicked being, as Satan, as studying how to produce the greatest misery. Which two inclinations, if they be not direct opposites, there is no such thing as opposition conceivable. And if there is a will opposite to the Divine, there is freedom; for freedom is necessary to the idea of will.

It being then evident, beyond contradiction, that man is endowed with liberty, or a power of choosing to act in such or such a manner within the sphere appointed him by his Maker, it follows, that to bring him to act his part properly, or in such a manner as may the most conduce to the order, per-

fection and happiness of the whole, such means must be used as are fit to work upon an intelligent free agent. Neither force, nor mere instinct, being suited to a creature of superior rank, fit to be acted upon by reasonable motives, it is plain, that nothing is so proper to lead mankind to a steady and habitual attachment to rectitude of conduct, as placing them in a state of discipline.

We find by experience, that we ourselves (and perhaps it may be the case of all orders of rational created beings in the universe) are not of ourselves at first strongly attached to any object, but what we are led to by instinct or constitution, in which there is nothing either praise-worthy or blameable. Some minds are indeed observed to be very well or ill-disposed, so to speak, in early youth. But the goodness of very young persons is generally rather negative, consisting in a temper fit for virtue, a soil proper to sow the good seed in, and free from any unhappy cast of disposition. As on the contrary, those we call unpromising children, are unfortunate through some deficiency or redundancy, most probably in the material frame, which proves unfriendly to the cultivation of virtue in the mind, which would otherwise spring up, and thrive in it, almost of itself. For virtue wants only to be seen by an unprejudiced mind, to be loved. But the proper notion of goodness in a moral agent, is a strong and habitual inclination in the mind, to concur with the Divine scheme, or to act on all occasions according to rectitude, arising not from irrisistible, mechanical instinct, nor from mere negative happiness of constitution, but from clear and comprehensive views of the nature of things, and of moral obligations. In this there is a real and intrinsic excellence. And were this attachment to rectitude, on rational considerations, universally prevalent in all moral agents; moral evil there could be none. How the most effectually to produce and fix in the minds of free agents this inviolable attachment to virtue, is therefore the point to be gained.

The Supreme Mind perceiving all things as they really are, and having all things absolutely in his power, can in no respect be biassed against perfect rectitude; but must be more inviolably attached to it, so to speak, than any finite being, whose views must be comparatively narrow. And to speak properly, he is himself the basis and stand-

ard of rectitude. The mind of an angel, or archangel, must, in proportion to the extent of his views of things, be more strongly attached to rectitude, than that of any mortal in the present state. Yet we have no reason to imagine that such his attachment was congenial to him ; but may rather conclude it to be the effect of examination, habit, and gradual improvement. We cannot conceive of a mind just produced into existence, as furnished with inclinations, attachments, or even ideas of any kind. We have no conception of these as other than the effects of improvement. And we consider a mind at its first entrance into being, as endowed only with the capacity of taking in ideas, as the eye is of viewing objects, when presented to it. So that we can form no other notion of the elevated degree of goodness, which those glorious beings have attained, than as the effect of their having passed a very long course of improvement. Nor do the accounts we have in revelation, of the fall of some of them, seem so well to suit any other scheme, as that of their having been at that time in a state of discipline analogous to ours. Be that as it will, it is evident, that to such creatures as we are, with capacities and all other circumstances such as ours (and had they been different, we should not have been what we are, nor where we are) nothing but a state of discipline could have answered the end of producing in us the necessary attachment to rectitude or virtue. For this attachment or inclination could not have arisen in us of itself, and without adequate means.

SECTION V.

The present very proper for a State of Discipline. Objections answered.*

WERE we to imagine a plan of a state of discipline, for improving a species of beings such as ours for high stations, and extensive usefulness in future states ; how could we suppose it contrived in any manner, that should be materially different from the state we find ourselves in ?

* The Author would not, if it were to do again, draw up the following Section, altogether as it stands here, seeing, as he thinks, reason to change his opinion, in some points (none of them indeed of any material consequence) from what it was, when this book was written.

What scheme could be imagined, likely to answer the purposes of planting in the mind of the creature the necessary habit of obedience to the Supreme Being; of giving it an inviolable attachment to virtue, and horror at irregularity; and of teaching it to study a rational and voluntary concurrence with the general scheme of the Governor of the universe; what method, I say, can we conceive of for these noble purposes, that should not take in, among others, the following particulars, viz. That the species should be furnished with sufficient capacity, and advantages of all kinds, for distinguishing between right and wrong: That the ingenuity of their dispositions, and the strength of their virtue, should have full exercise, in order both to its trial, and its improvement: That they should have rewards and punishments set before them, as the most powerful motives to obedience: And that, upon the whole, they should have it fairly in their power to attain the end of their being put in a state of discipline?

If we consider the present as a state of discipline, all is ordered as should be. We enter into life with minds wholly unfurnished with ideas, attachments, or biasses of any kind. After a little time, we find certain instincts begin to act pretty strongly within us, which are necessary to move us to avoid what might be hurtful, and pursue what is useful to the support of the animal frame, and these instincts are appointed to anticipate reason, which does not at first exert itself; and bring us to that by mechanical means, which we are not capable of being worked to by rational considerations. Nature has ordered, that our parents shall be so engaged to us by irresistible affection, as to be willing to undertake the office of caring for us in our helpless years; of opening, and cultivating our reason, as soon as it begins to appear; and of forming us by habit, by precept, and example, to virtue and regularity. As we advance in life, our faculties, by habitually exerting them upon various objects, come to enlarge themselves so as to take in a wider compass. We become then capable of reasoning upon actions, and their consequences, and accordingly, do, in general, reason justly enough about matters of right and wrong, where passion does not blind and mislead us. When we come into the vigorous and flourishing time of life, excited by our pas-

sions and appetites, without which, with the low degree of reason we then enjoy, we should be but half animated, we proceed to enter into various scenes of action. It is true, that innumerable irregularities and follies are the consequence. But without passions and appetites, we could not be the compounded creatures we are, nor consequently fill our proper station between the angelic and animal ranks. Here then is the proper opportunity for exercising our virtue; for habituating us to keep continually on our guard against innumerable assaults; for watching over ourselves, that we may not be surprized, and fall before temptation; or if we fall, that by suffering from our errors, we may be moved to greater diligence and attention to our duty, to a stronger attachment to virtue, and a more fixed hatred to the crimes, which have brought such sufferings upon us. And though the necessary propensions of our nature do indeed eventually lead us, through our own folly, into irregularity and vice, it must yet be owned at the same time, that by the wise and kind constitution of nature, we have innumerable natural directions, and advantages, towards restraining and bringing them under subjection, and innumerable ill consequences are made to follow naturally upon our giving a loose to them. Which ought in all reason to lead us to reflect, that the government of our passions and appetites is a part of our wisdom and our duty.

Pleasure and pain, health and disease, success, and misfortune, reward and punishment, often at a very great distance of time after the action, are made the natural, or at least frequent consequences of our general behaviour here; to suggest to us the reasonableness of concluding that an extensive uniformity prevails through the whole of the Divine moral government, and that what we see here in shadow, will in the future state appear in substance and perfection, and that it not only will, but ought, to be so, and cannot be otherwise.

If we consider the opposite natural tendencies and effects of virtue and vice, in the present state, we shall from thence see reason to conclude, that the former is pleasing to the Governor of the world, and the latter the contrary. The natural effects of temperance are health, length of days, and a more delicate enjoyment of the in-

nocent pleasures of life. The natural effects of gluttony, drunkenness, and lewdness, are disease and pain, disgust and disappointment, and untimely death. The natural effects of universal benevolence, justice and charity, are the love of mankind, success in life, and peace in one's own mind. The consequences to be expected from ill-will, injustice and selfishness, are the contempt and hatred of mankind, and punishment by the laws of nations. When we say such an effect follows naturally from such a cause, we mean, that it does so by the Divine appointment. For what is natural, is only so, because the rectitude requires it to be so.

Now, if our bodily frame is so formed that its well being consists in temperance, and that an immoderate indulgence of appetite tends to disorder and unhinge it; if the make of the human mind, and our social state in life, are such, that the social virtues tend to produce universal happiness, and all this by the constitution and course of nature, of which God himself is the author; if these things be so, who is so blind, as not to see in all this a moral government already established under God, even in this world, and going on to perfection? That we see in fact innumerable deviations from the natural connexion between virtue and happiness, and vice and misery; and that, through the perverseness, the wickedness, and sometimes the mere caprice of mankind, and the unnatural and disorderly state things are got into, it comes to pass, that the natural consequences of things do not invariably follow, is by no means an objection against the conclusion I have drawn from the state of things, as the Divine Wisdom constituted them, any more than the possibility of resisting the power of gravitation, or lifting a heavy body, is a proof, that there is no such law established in the natural world by the author of nature.

That we may not, by a continued course of ease and happiness, be led either to such arrogance and pride, as to conclude ourselves the lords of nature, and to forget that there is one above us; or to fix our affections upon the present state, which is only intended to be transient and temporary, not lasting and final; to answer these important ends, we are placed in the school of affliction, to be broke and tamed to obedience. That happiness too

easily come at, and a constant series of success and prosperity, are by no means proper for such unprincipled and unexperienced beings as we are, is too evident from the effects of ease and affluence, which very few can bear without almost losing their reason. The scenes of madness run into by victorious princes, of which history is full; the pranks from time to time played by our nobility and rich commoners, and the fate of whole nations, whenever they arrive at the pinnacle of greatness and riches, show the absolute necessity of affliction to force us upon consideration, to put us in mind of the frailty of our nature and state, and to make us remember that we are under the government of one, who can raise or humble, afflict or relieve, reward or punish, as to him seems good.

That we may never lose sight of our duty, nor have it in our power to pretend ignorance, and to silence even the poor excuse of thoughtlessness, conscience, that ever watchful and faithful monitor, is placed within the mind itself, to be always at hand, to judge of our characters and actions, and to alarm us with its stings and reproaches, whenever we do amiss. And there is no mind so gross and stupid, as not to feel at times some pangs of remorse. The very cannibal has a clear enough sense of right and wrong, to know when he himself is injured, though he will not stick to injure his neighbour. This effectually fastens guilt upon him. And the lowest and most savage of mankind, who shall hereafter be condemned, will be obliged to own, that with all his disadvantages for knowing his duty, he might have acted his part better than he did.

Not only conscience within, but every object in nature presents us some moral lesson. Tempests, thunders, and lightnings from above; inundations and earthquakes from beneath; the sword, famine, and pestilence in our cities; diseases and pains in our own persons, or those of our nearest friends and relations, and death on our right hand and on our left; what are all these but awful and yet kind warnings from the tender and compassionate Father of mankind, who shows himself willing to give his poor unthinking short-sighted creatures all possible advantages for virtue and happiness, that might be at all consistent with their nature as free agents, with their condition as beings

in a state of discipline, and with the grand and universal scheme, which must be equitable, unchangeable, and uniform.

And, as if all this, and a thousand times more not mentioned, had not been enough, we are taught, that angels have a charge over us, to assist us in our trials, and to prevent our falling too shamefully; that the Divine Providence watches over us, and suits our circumstances to our strength and ingenuity of disposition. And to crown all, the Ambassador of heaven, the image of Paternal Deity, and brightness of Divine Glory has descended to our world, and in our own nature shown us, both by his example and his divine laws, what it is to live as we ought, and how we may infallibly attain the end of our being. If this is not doing enough for us,—what would be enough?

Thus it appears plain, that the present was intended for a state of discipline, and is very well adapted to that purpose. Nor does the actual failure and hideous ruin of numbers of moral agents, who will undoubtedly be found hereafter to have perverted this state of discipline for virtue, into an education in vice, prove, that the state was not intended for training them up to virtue, or that it is not properly adapted to that purpose, any more than the amazing number of abortions, which happen in the natural world, proves, that the general design of seeds was not to fructify, and produce plants and animals. Naturalists show us, that in some cases millions of stamina perish for one that comes to maturity. And, as we conclude every seed of a plant, or animal egg, was formed capable of fructification, so we may, that every moral agent was formed capable of attaining happiness. The great difference is, that in the natural world, the numerous abortions we have been speaking of, are the consequence of the common course of nature; but in the moral, of the fatal perverseness of unhappy beings, who wilfully rush upon their own destruction.

Some have made a difficulty of conceiving how the wisest and best of beings, who must have foreseen, that great numbers of his unhappy short-sighted creatures, in spite of all that should be done for them, would obstinately throw themselves into destruction, and defeat the end of their creation; some have puzzled themselves, I say,

how to reconcile with the divine perfections of wisdom and goodness, the creating of such beings.

But what state of discipline for free agents can be conceived, without supposing a possibility of their behaving ill in it? Nothing but an absolute restraint upon the liberty of the creature, which is wholly inconsistent with the nature of free agency, and of a state of discipline, could have prevented their acting in many instances amiss. But the all-bounteous Creator has effectually put it out of the power of the most presumptuously insolent of his creatures to arraign his justice. For, if he has given to every accountable being a fair opportunity of working out his own happiness; if he has put into the hands of every individual the means; placed him in the direct way toward it, and is ready to assist him in his endeavours after it; if he has, in short, put happiness in the power of every accountable being, which he undoubtedly has, as shown above; he has, to all intents and purposes, done the same as if he had given it to every individual. For he, who points me out the way to get an estate, or any of the good things of life, and who assists and supports me in my endeavours to procure it, he it is to whom I am obliged for whatever I acquire in consequence of his advice, and by means of his protection and assistance. Now, if the beneficent Author of being has thus given to every individual such means of happiness; as it must be wholly through his own perverseness if he misses it; what shadow of pretence is there for cavilling, or what difficulty in understanding and vindicating the wisdom and goodness of the adorable Author of existence? If we lay the whole blame, and with the utmost justice, on him, who, having an opportunity and means for gaining any secular advantage put in his hands, neglects them; if we should as much condemn the man, who, through obstinacy or indolence, has let slip an opportunity of making his fortune, as another, who through extravagance has dissipated one already in his possession; if we should as justly look upon that person as our benefactor, by whose means we acquire the conveniences of life, as on the immediate giver of a gift, what remains but that we justify and adore the boundless goodness of the universal Parent of Nature, who, by calling innumerable creatures into existence, by endow-

ing them with reason, by placing them in a state of discipline, and giving them all possible advantages for the improvement necessary for happiness, has, in effect, put in the hands of every accountable being a felicity fit for a God to bestow? And if every individual, that shall hereafter be condemned, shall be obliged to confess his sentence just, and to own that he might have acted a better part than he did, the Divine justice and goodness stand fully vindicated in the sight of the whole rational creation.

For, what!—Must the infinite Author of existence (with reverence be it spoken) must He deny himself the exertion of his boundless goodness in producing an universe of conscious beings, of whom numbers will in the event come to happiness, merely to prevent the self-sought destruction of a set of wicked degenerate beings? Either there must have been no creatures brought into being above the rank of brutes, consequently no happiness above the animal enjoyed by any created being, or freedom of agency must have been given. And what freedom is conceivable without a possibility of error and irregularity, and consequently of misery? But is not the happiness of one virtuous mind of more consequence than the voluntary ruin of a thousand degenerate beings? And is not a state, in which we have the opportunity of attaining an inconceivable felicity, if we be not inexcusably wanting to ourselves, is not this a state to be wished for by mankind, if they had their choice either to come into it or not? As for those unhappy beings of our species, who, proceeding from one degree of vice and folly to another, shall at last come to be hardened against all good, what is the value of thousands of such beings in the estimation of infinite wisdom and rectitude, that their destruction should be thought a hardship? For what else are such degenerate beings fit? Besides, we know that Divine Wisdom has so planned out his universal economy, that an inferior good shall, in the end, proceed from what was by wicked beings intended for ruin and mischief. The whole human species were originally formed capable of happiness, and every individual has happiness in his power. But as the Divine Wisdom, which perfectly knew the future characters of all his creatures, with all the circumstances they should be effected by, foresaw that numbers would come to deviate from

the eternal rule of rectitude, it was proper that a secondary scheme should be provided, by means of which those free agents, who should not thus voluntarily yield the due obedience and concurrence with the general design, should, by superior direction, be forced to contribute to the greater perfection and beauty of the whole. Of this secondary part of the divine economy, we can trace out some very considerable parts, as the following, *viz.* We know that wicked and cruel men, in endeavouring to root out truth, and sweep virtue from the earth, have ever been made, in spite of themselves, the instruments of their more general establishment. The whole race of persecutors of christianity, from *Herod* down to *Lewis XIV.* have so egregiously overshot themselves, as to be the very causes of the greater prevalency of true religion, which has given occasion to the well-known saying, That the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church. In more private life, it is notorious, that a very considerable part of the trials of the virtue of good men arises from the wicked part of the species. And every trial, where the good man comes off with honour, serves naturally to establish his virtue, and to increase his reward hereafter. The mere contrast between the character of the pious, the temperate and benevolent man, and that of the blasphemers, the voluptuary, and the hard-hearted, sets off the former to the utmost advantage, and presents it to the general observation in the fairest point of view; by which votaries to virtue are gained, and a horror at vice is raised in every considerate mind. And in the future state, what powerful effects may be produced by the fearful and exemplary punishments inflicted on those of our species, or others, who have degenerated from the dignity of their nature, and, as much as they could, defeated the end of their creation, may be imagined by those who consider what extensive connexions between the various orders of being may hereafter come to be opened to our view; and that, as all moral and free agents of all orders are now allied, they may hereafter come to be united, and make one immense and universal society; and whatever has been originally intended for usefulness to one order of moral agents, may at last come to be useful to all. Something analogous to this viz.

have in the case of the fallen angels, whose ruin is mentioned in scripture as a warning to us.

It has been said, Since the Supreme Being foresaw, without a possibility of error, what would be the exact character of every one of his creatures, was it not to have been expected, that such of them as he knew would turn out wicked, and come to ruin, should never have been brought into existence, or cut off in the beginning of life? Our Saviour says of *Judas*, for example, that it had been better for him never to have been born. How then, say they, came he to be born? Or why was he not removed out of life, before he came to the age of perpetrating the most atrocious crime that ever was or can be committed?

Though I would not be the proposer of such presumptuous questions, I think it innocent enough to endeavour to answer them. And first, if we consider, that to infinite purity and rectitude, wickedness is so odious as to render the guilty person altogether contemptible in his sight, we shall not wonder that he does not (so to speak) judge it worth while to put him out of existence, but lets him go on to fill up the measure of his iniquity, and reap the fruit of his doings. Again, it is to be considered, that Infinite Wisdom intending to work out great and valuable ends by what is designed by his wicked creatures for ruin and mischief, may therefore think proper to suffer them to go on to heap damnation on themselves, and determine to make use of their self-sought destruction for the advantage of the more valuable part of his creatures. How the character of one, who does not yet exist, is fore-knowable, we have no conception, though we find from scripture that it is so, in the case of *Judas* particular.

On the seeming difficulty of reconciling with the Divine Goodness, our being placed in a state perhaps more disadvantageous for virtue and happiness than that in which other orders of beings are created; a state exposed to such variety of temptations, as renders it hard for beings, furnished with such moderate degrees of strength as we are, to get the better of the important conflict, on the event of which our eternal happiness depends; on this difficulty the following thoughts may serve to vindicate the Divine Goodness, and to shew our condition to be extremely desi-

rable, instead of our being hardly dealt with, as some have insinuated.

If our condition were such, that one single deviation from our duty would at once irrecoverably determine our fate, or that what may properly be called human infirmity should doom us to irreversible destruction, there might be some pretence for complaint. But if, so far from that, a faithful, constant, and prevailing endeavour to gain the Divine Approbation, with watchfulness against temptations, and repentance for our faults, followed by amendment of life, be the means for attaining happiness; where lies the mighty hardship? Nay, I would ask any impartial person, whether it were more desirable to be put in a state of trial, in which there should be upon the whole fewer chances of miscarrying, but lest allowances to be made in the final judgment for deviation; or to be in a state exposed to greater hazards, but with greater allowances to failures? Is it not the same thing in the event, how various the temptations in the state of trial may be, if the merciful allowances, made by the judge, be proportioned to them. And who can doubt that Infinite Goodness will make all possible allowances hereafter for those failures of weak and frail beings, which shall be found to have been owing to the mere infirmity of their nature, and the precariousness of the present state, not to daring impiety and presumptuous wickedness. And it will accordingly be hereafter found, that a competent number of our species have actually been able under the greatest disadvantages, to attain such a measure of conformity to the Divine Will, as shall, with the heavenly assistance, and allowances to be made for human frailty, be found proper for rendering them, upon the christian plan, objects of the mercy of the Judge of the World, and capable of being raised to a state of happiness; which will show, that the miscarriage of the rest was wholly owing to their own perverseness, and that they themselves were the whole cause of that destruction, which the others escaped.

Every one knows, that, with respect to the present state, exclusive of futurity, there is great difficulty in getting through life without some fatal misconduct, which may embitter, and render it unhappy. And very doubtful it must be confessed to be, whether a new born infant

shall get over the precarious time of youth, without being drawn through rashness and thoughtlessness, and the temptations of bad company, into such a course of folly, as may effectually prevent his proving a useful and valuable member of society. Yet we always look upon the birth of a child into the world as a subject of joy, not of grief or complaint, and upon the untimely death of a young person as a calamity; because we take into our view the consideration of its being in the power of every person, through Divine Assistance, which is never wanting to the honest mind, to behave well in life, if he pleases, and we hope he will do so. The warrior is sufficiently apprized of the danger of engaging; a danger, which it is out of his power to ward off. Yet he longs to mix in the martial tumult; and engages with joy in the glorious strife. Why should man think himself hardly used in being placed in a post attended with occasional danger; but in which he must be egregiously wanting to himself if he miscarries finally? But if I should not choose a happiness attainable only through peril and trouble, but would rather through sordid stupidity and inactivity, desire to decline existing upon such terms; does it therefore follow, that the infinite Author of existence may not oblige me, in spite of my obstinacy, or stupidity, to go through what he may judge proper for me, and necessary for his great ends? Has not the potter power over the clay? Suppose I should not in this life be convinced of my obligations to the Divine Goodness upon the whole, does it follow that I never shall?

It has been asked, why the beneficent Author of being did not pursue such an effectual scheme in the moral world as he has done in the natural? It was, for example, the Divine intention, that the human and other species should absolutely be preserved as long as the world lasted. The two sexes are therefore engaged to one another, and to their common offspring, by such powerful instinctive attractions as are found fully sufficient to answer this important end. Why did not our Maker plant in our minds such a strong and irresistible propensity to virtue, as would have effectually secured the universal happiness of the species? The answer is easy, viz. There is reason to believe, that, upon the whole, a great number of the hu-

man species will, through Divine Goodness, come to happiness; such a number at least, as it shall in the end appear to have been, to speak after the manner of men, worth while to have created the human species. But, to propose by mere instinctive attractions alone, mechanically to draw free agents to the love and practice of virtue, is contradictory to the nature of the design. Because what is wanted is not so much, that mankind, and other free agents, be brought to go, like machines, in a certain track, as that the rational faculties be formed in a rational manner to the entire love and habitual pursuit of goodness. This shows mechanical means to be improper alone for that purpose, though they may prove, as we find, useful helps; and that rational means are absolutely necessary for acting upon rational natures. And it is ever to be remembered, that as the inanimate world is made to concur with the Divine scheme in a mechanical, and the animal in an instinctive manner, so rational beings, if they concur at all, must concur in a manner suitable to their nature; I mean, in a rational, free, and voluntary manner.

It has likewise been said, Why did not the scheme of the moral government of the world take in such a succession of continual interpositions, as would have effectually forced men to have been virtuous? To this may be answered, first, That miracles continued would soon be no miracles, and consequently would have no effects different from those produced by the common course of nature. And, secondly, That if Omnipotence were continually from time to time to strike offenders dead, it is to be questioned, whether abstinence from vice, and the forced practice of virtue, which would be the consequence, would be sufficient, in the nature of things, to render moral agents capable of any high degree of happiness.

For, suppose it were affirmed, that there is a natural absurdity, or inconsistency, in proposing to bestow upon an order of creatures a very high degree of happiness, upon any other footing, than in consequence of their having passed with honour and victory through a state of probation, in which there was some difficulty and danger, though not unsurmountable: suppose it were alleged, that there is a necessity in the nature of things, that the happiness of all rational beings be proportioned and suited to

their state of probation: who could contradict this, or show the bare possibility how such a creature, as man, could, in a constancy with his own nature, and the Divine Rectitude, come to such a degree and kind of happiness, as we believe to be intended for him, without such a preparation, as he is to pass through in the present state? If we judge according to what experience teaches us of our own turn of mind, which in all probability is universal, we cannot suppose the happiness even of heaven itself would prove a happiness to beings, who should attain it too easily. When a prince, educated from his infancy in expectation of the regal dignity, comes to mount the throne of his ancestors, we do not find, that it gives him any greater joy, than an heir to a very small fortune has in entering upon his estate. But suppose a private person unexpectedly raised from poverty, and even from the fear of death, to an imperial throne; the transport of an elevation so unexpected, from circumstances so grievous, will be likely to endanger his losing his senses. It is to be supposed, that to a species of beings created in heaven, or transported thither they knew not how, it would in reality be no heaven. Nor is there any possibility of conceiving of an order of being raised to a station of happiness, without passing through a state of trial, who should not be in danger of falling from it again, for want of having been disciplined to virtue, and in a rational, as well as habitual manner attached to goodness and obedience. So that trial and discipline seem necessary to be gone through by every species (I do not say by every individual) throughout the rational creation, sooner or later.

It has likewise been asked on this subject, how the justice of the immensely different fates of two persons, one of which proves obedient, and the other wicked, appears; since it may often be supposed, that he, who has actually proved virtuous, might in more disadvantageous circumstances, have been overcome by the severity of his trial, and been a reprobate; and he, who, by the force of very powerful temptations, has been seduced, might, in circumstances more favourable to virtue, have stood his ground, and in the end come to happiness?

This seemingly difficulty is not very hard to obviate. For, first, as to him, who comes to happiness, no one ever

thought of injustice in the case of a benefit bestowed. And he, who is Lord of all, may, without question, do with his own what he will; he may give to one of his creatures such advantages as shall in the event produce the effect of qualifying him for final happiness. But the other, whose advantages were inferior, will not he have just ground for complaint? By no means. If the advantages, he enjoyed, were fully sufficient, he stands self-condemned for having abused them; nor could he in reason expect them to be more than sufficient, much less to be greatly above what was sufficient, and least of all, to be equal to the greatest advantages, ever allowed to any other person. Upon the whole, nothing is more evident, than that the being, who has actually proved obedient, by whatever means he has been brought to goodness, is, according to the nature and fitness of things, rewardable; and that the soul, which sins, does in strict justice deserve to die.

The case of that very considerable part of the human species, which is cut off in immature age, without any opportunity of going through any trial in life, seems, at first view, to lessen the force of what I have been saying of the necessity of a state of discipline, to form the mind to virtue. For what is to become of those, who die in infancy? Are they annihilated? Are they happy or miserable in a future state, who have done neither good or evil? Or do they go through a state of discipline in their separate existence?

To what may be said on this point, I have the following brief answers to offer; First, what I have above said of the necessity of a state of discipline, must be understood to be meant of a species in general. Perhaps the circumstances of the bulk of a species' having gone through a state of discipline, may be sufficient for making such an impression upon the other, who happened to escape it, as may keep them to the steady practice of virtue in all future states. This may be the case; and yet it might be absurd to imagine a whole species raised to happiness without at least a considerable part of them going through a discipline for virtue, and thereby being qualified to instruct their more unexperienced fellow-beings in the importance of keeping to their duty, and the fatal danger and direful effects of swerving from it. So that what was above said

of the necessity of a state of discipline for every species of rational agents in the universe, stands upon the same footing notwithstanding this difficulty.

But if every period of the existence of a free agent be, in fact, a state of trial and discipline, in which it is possible (though still less and less probable according to their farther improvements in virtue) that they should fall; we may then conceive of the possibility of surmounting this difficulty by supposing that those of the human species, who do not go through a state of discipline in this life, may be hereafter made partakers of a lower degree of happiness (as we are in Scripture informed, that the mansions of future bliss are various) which may prove their state of trial, as the paradisaical was intended to have been for our species and the angelic was of Satan and his angels. And as *Adam*, and the rebellious angels, fell from a higher state than that which we are placed in, so may many of those of our species, whose first state of discipline may commence after this life is over, and after our world is judged and brought to its consummation. If so, those of us who have past through this mortal life in such a manner as to be found fit objects of the Divine Mercy, will have great reason to congratulate ourselves on our having passed the danger, and being more secure of our happiness, than those whom we are now apt to envy for their getting out of life so easily: For we know not what we ought to wish for, but He, who made us, knows.

If any reader should imagine, that I intended to establish any one hypothesis as the real account of this matter; he mistakes my design. All I mean by what I have advanced, is only to show, that the circumstance of a considerable part of our species' passing through no state of discipline in this life, does not invalidate the necessity of a discipline to be gone through by every species of free creatures, in order to their being effectually attached to virtue, and so fitted for higher degrees of happiness and glory.

If after all that has been said and more, which might be offered, if it were proper, there should remain difficulties with respect to the august economy of the infinitely-wise and good Governor of the world; if such short-sighted beings as we are, should no way be able to reconcile the seeming contradictions, and surmount the supposed difficulties;

this is no more than might have been expected. We are, through the meanness of our faculties, ignorant of infinitely more particulars than we know, in all extensive subjects; and we see but part of one scene in the immense drama of the moral world. But in what little we see, we observe a thousand times more than would have been sufficient to prove a wise and good government already begun, and going on to perfection. If therefore, we have any candor, or any judgment to form a reasonable deduction of one thing from another, we cannot avoid concluding, that what we do not comprehend of the Divine Scheme is of a piece with what we do comprehend, and that the whole is established upon, and conducted by, perfect and unerring rectitude.

The very circumstance of the difficulty we find in comprehending the whole of the Divine Scheme, both in the natural and moral world, while at the same time we find we can enter into them so far, and see so much of wisdom and contrivance, is a beauty, and a proof that the Author is one whose ways are immensely above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts.

Considering the superabundant care that has been taken for putting, and keeping us, in the way to happiness, I think it may be fairly concluded, that whoever is not satisfied with the Divine wisdom and goodness apparent in the conduct of the moral world, would not be satisfied with any possible degree of them. And it is only going on in the same way of finding fault, wherever we do not understand, and we shall at last take exception against all possibility of guilt and consequent unhappiness, and blame our Maker, if we are not brought into the world at once perfect seraphs; if this earth is not the third region of the heavens; if we cannot give ourselves up to the most sordid lusts and passions, and yet be prepared for, and admitted to the conversation of angels and archangels. But when weak short-sighted man has racked his narrow invention to start or to solve a thousand imaginary difficulties in the economy of the infinite Governor of the Universe, it will be found at last, that though clouds and darkness are around about him, yet righteousness and justice are the habitation of his throne.

SECTION VI.

Wherein the requisite Concurrence of moral Agents consists. Our Species under a threefold Obligation; the first respecting themselves, the second their Fellow-creatures, and the third, their Creator. Of the first of these, to wit, The due Care and Regulation of the mental and animal Natures.

THE requisite concurrence of moral agents, of whatever rank or order, or their conformity to the grand design of the Universal Governor, which is the ground work of universal harmony, perfection, and happiness throughout the creation, consists, in their acting according to truth, rectitude and propriety (in their respective stations, whether higher or lower in the scale of being, whether in states of discipline, or reward) in all cases or circumstances that regard either themselves, their fellow-beings, or their Creator. Whatever moral agent strictly and universally observes this rule, he is of that character, which we and all rational beings call good, is amiable in the sight of the Supreme Judge of rectitude and goodness; and it is as certain, that every such being must be finally happy, as that the nature of things is what it is, and that perfect wisdom and goodness must act rightly in governing the world.

What makes the duty of such poor, short-sighted creatures as we are, who are yet but in the infancy of our being, is likewise the grand rule which every angel and archangel in heaven observes. Nay, it would be blasphemy to think of the Supreme Governor of the Universe, as conducting his immense and august economy otherwise than according to the sacred rule which himself has prescribed for the conduct of his reasonable creatures and which is an attribute of his own infinitely perfect nature, I mean, immutable and eternal rectitude.

In what light does this show the Dignity of Human Nature! What may we yet come to be? Made in the image of God himself! and taught to imitate his example! to what heights may we thus come to be raised? Would to God, we could be brought to consider our own importance! Did we sufficiently reverence ourselves; we should

act a part worthy of the honours for which our Creator gave us our being.

The rectitude of that part of our conduct, which regards ourselves, consists in the due care of our minds and our bodies, which two parts constitute our whole nature in the present state.

Our mental powers are generally considered under the heads of intelligence and passion. The office of the first, to judge, and distinguish between what ought to be pursued, and what avoided; of the latter, to excite to action. Where these two capital powers of the mind hold each her proper place, where the understanding is faithfully exerted in the search of truth, and the active powers for attaining the real good of the creature, such a mind may be properly said to be duly regulated, and in a good condition.

The proper exertion of the understanding is in inquiry into important truth; and that understanding, which is furnished with extensive and clear ideas of things, and enriched with useful and ornamental knowledge, is applied as the Divine Wisdom intended every rational mind in the universe should be, if not in one state, yet in another; if not universally in a state of discipline, as that we are now in, yet in a state of perfection, to which we hope hereafter to be raised. And whoever, in the present state, is blest with the proper advantages for improving his mind with knowledge (as natural capacity, leisure, and fortune) and neglects to use those advantages, will hereafter be found guilty of having omitted an important part of his duty.

Having in the foregoing book treated pretty copiously of the improvement and conduct of the understanding, there is the less occasion to enlarge upon that subject in this place. Let us therefore proceed to consider wherein the rectitude of that part of our conduct, which regards the active powers of the mind, consists.

In general, it is evident, that the will of every individual being in the universe ought to be effectually formed to an absolute and implicit submission to the disposal of the Universal Governor, which is saying, in other words, that every created being in the universe ought to study perfect rectitude in all his desires and wishes. He who desires

any thing contrary to the Divine Nature, and will, or to what is right and good, is guilty of rebellion against the Supreme Governor of the Universe.

The passions, as they are commonly, but improperly called, of the human mind, are various, and some of them of so mixed and compounded a nature, that they are not easily ranged under classes. The following are the principal. Love, or complacence, or desire, whose object is, whatever appears to us good, amiable, or fit for us, as God, our fellow-creatures, virtue, beauty; joy, excited by happiness, real or imaginary, in possession, or prospect; sympathy, or a humane sense of the good or bad condition of our fellow-creatures; self-love; ambition, or desire of glory, true, or false; covetousness; love of life; appetites of eating, drinking, recreation, sleeping, and mutual desires of the sexes; mirth; anger; hatred; envy; malice; revenge; fear; jealousy; grief.

It is the whole soul, or whole man, that loves, hates, desires, or fears. Every passion is a motion of the whole being, toward or from some object, which appears to him either desirable or disagreeable. And objects appear to us desirable, or disagreeable, either from the real excellence our understanding perceives to be in them, as in virtue, beauty, proportion,—and their contraries, as vice, deformity, and confusion; or from some peculiar fitness, or congruity between the objects and our particular make, or cast of mind, which is the pure arbitrary effect of our make; as in the reciprocal love of the sexes, and the antipathy we have at certain creatures.

Now the Divine Will, the dignity of our nature, and perfect rectitude, unite in requiring that every one of our passions, and appetites be properly directed, and exerted in a proper manner and degree; not that they be rooted out and destroyed, according to the romantic notion of the ancient Stoic Philosophers. It is in many cases equally unsuitable to the dignity of our nature, that the motions of our minds be too weak and languid, as that they be too strong and vigorous. We may be as faulty in not sufficiently loving God and Virtue, as in loving the vanities of this world too much.

Previous to what may be more particularly observed on the conduct of the natural inclinations or passions of the

mind, it may be proper briefly to mention some general directions, which will be found of absolute necessity towards our undertaking the business of regulating our passions with any reasonable prospect of success.

The first preparatory direction I shall give, is, To habituate ourselves as early, and as constantly as possible, to consideration.

The faculty or capacity of thought is what raises our nature above the animal. But if we do not use this noble faculty for the purpose of distinguishing between right and wrong, for finding out, and practising our duty, we had been as well without it. Nay, the beasts have the advantage of those of our species, who act the part of beasts; in as far as they are not capable of being called to an account, or punished, as unthinking men, for the neglect or abuse of the noblest of God's good gifts—sacred reason. It is dreadful to think of the conduct of by far the greatest part of our species, in respect of inconsiderateness. Mankind seem to think nothing more is necessary, to remove at once all guilt, than only, to drown all thought and reflection, and then give themselves up to be led or driven at the pleasure of passion or appetite. But how will those poor unthinking creatures be hereafter confounded, when they find the voluntary neglect of thought and consideration treated as a most atrocious insult upon the goodness of the Author of our being! And what indeed can be more impious, or contemptuous, than for beings endowed with a capacity of thought and understanding, to spurn from them the inestimable gift of heaven, or bury that talent which was given them to be used for the most important purposes of distinguishing between good and evil, and pursuing their own happiness, and then pretend, in excuse for all the madness they are guilty of, that they did not think, because they cared not to take the pains?

If thought be the very foundation of the dignity of our nature; if one man is preferable to another, according as he exerts more reason and shows more understanding in his conduct, what must be said of those, who glory in what ought to be their shame, in degrading themselves to the level of inferior beings?

Especially, what prospect does the present age yield, in

which we seem to vie with one another, who shall carry pleasure and vanity to the greatest height, and who shall do the most to discountenance sober thought, and regular conduct? To determine of times and seasons, and how long a nation may continue to flourish, in which luxury and extravagance have taken place of all that is rational and manly; is what I do not pretend to. But I appeal to those who best understand human nature, and the nature of government, and who know the history of other states and kingdoms, which have been corrupted in the same manner, whether we have not every thing to fear from the present universal inconsiderate dissolution of manners, and decay of virtue, public and private. May heaven take into its own hands the reformation of a degenerate people; and give comfort, and more agreeable prospects, to those who bleed inwardly, for the decline of their sinking country!

To return; let any person consider the natural effects which an attentive and habitual consideration of his own character and conduct are likely to produce; and then judge, whether it is not his duty to resolve to act the part of a reasonable creature. With respect to the conduct of his passions and appetites, let a man make it his constant custom to spend some time every day in considering the following points, viz. Whether he indulges passion and appetite beyond the intention of nature; whether, for example, he sets his heart upon gratifying the bodily appetites, for the sake of luxurious indulgence, or if he only consults health in eating, drinking, sleeping, and recreations; whether he gives himself up to anger upon small or no provocation; whether he sets his love wholly upon the vanities of life, or if he aspires habitually after something nobler than any worldly pursuit, and so of the rest. Let a man accustom himself to recollect every evening the miscarriages of the day in respect of his passions and appetites, and he will soon find, if he be faithful to himself, which are prevalent, and ought to be subdued.

Unless we can bring our minds to some tolerable degree of tranquility and sobriety, we cannot hope to redress the irregularities of our passions and inclinations. What condition must that soul be in, which is continually engaged, and distracted various ways after pleasure, honour, or

riches? If any irregularity, or redundancy, springs up in such a mind, there it must abide, and flourish, and strengthen more and more, till it become too deeply rooted ever to be eradicated. How do we accordingly see the gay, the ambitious, and the covetous, give themselves to be driven in a perpetual whirl of amusements and pursuits, to the absolute neglect of all that is worth attending to? But if the men of business cannot find time, for getting of money, and the sons and daughters of pleasure are too much engaged in hearing music, seeing plays, and in the endless drudgery of the card-table; to find time for getting acquainted with themselves, and regulating their minds, I can tell them one truth, and a terrible one; They must find time to die, whether they have prepared themselves for death or not.

Before any thing can be done to purpose toward bringing the passions under due subjection, it will be necessary to bring down high swelling pride and self-opinion, and to cultivate humility, the foundation of all virtues. For this purpose, it will be our wisdom to endeavour to view ourselves in the light we may suppose we appear in before that eye which sees all things exactly as they are. We are therefore to consider, that we do not appear to our Maker under the same distinctions as we do to one another. He does not regard one as a king, another as a hero, or a third as a learned man! He looks down from where he sits enthroned above all conceivable height, through the vast scale of being, and beholds innumerable different orders, all gradually descending from himself, the highest created nature infinitely inferior to his own original perfection! At a very great distance below the summit of created excellence, and at the very lowest degree of rational nature, we may suppose the All-comprehensive eye to behold our humble species just rising above the animal rank! How poor a figure must we make before him in this our infancy of being, placed on this speck of creation, creeping about like insects for a day, and then sinking into the dust! Nor is this all. For what appearance must a set of such lawless beings as we are, make before that eye which is too pure to look upon evil without abhorrence? How must we appear to perfect rectitude and purity, guilty and polluted as we are, and covered with

the stains of wickedness, which are the disgrace of any rational nature; Is pride fit for such an order of creatures as we are, in our present state of humiliation and pollution? Can we value ourselves upon any thing of our own? Have we any thing, that we have not received? And does any reasonable creature boast of what it owes to another? Have we not infinite reason to loathe ourselves, and to be covered with shame and confusion? And are shame and pride, in any respect, consistent?

The few advantages we possess at present want only to be considered, to convince us how little they are to be boasted of. The whole of our bodily perfections may be summed up in two words, strength and beauty. As for the first, this is a poor qualification to boast of, in which we are, to say the least, equalled by the plodding ox, and stupid ass. Besides, it is but three days sickness, or the loss, of a little blood, and a *Hercules* becomes as manageable as a child! Who then would boast of what is so very precarious?

As to beauty, that fatal ornament of the female part of our species, which has exhausted the human wit in raptures to its praise, which so often proves the misfortune of its possessor, and the disquiet of him who gives himself to the admiration of it; which has ruined cities, armies, and the virtue of thousands: What is beauty? A pleasing glare of white and red, reflected from a skin incomparably exceeded by the glossy hue of the humble daisy, which was made to be trod upon by ever quadruped. The mild glitter of an eye, outshone by every dew-drop on the grass. Is it inherent in the structure of the human frame? No:—Strip off the scarf-skin to the thickness of a fish's scale; and the charming fair grows hideous to behold. A sudden fright alarms her; a fit of sickness attacks her; the roses fly from her cheeks; her eyes lose their fire; she looks haggard, pale, and ghastly. Even in all the blooming pride of beauty, what is the human frame? A mass of corruption and disease, covered over with a fair skin. When the animate spirit flies, and leaves the lovely tabernacle behind, how soon does horror succeed to admiration? How do we hasten to hide out of sight the loathsome remains of beauty! Open the charnel-house in which a very little while ago, the celebrated toast was laid.

Who can now bear to look on that face, shrivelled and black, and loathsome, which used to be the delight of every youthful gazer? who could now touch, with one finger, her, whose very steps the enamoured youth would have kissed? Can the lover himself go near, without stopping his nose at her, who used to breathe all the perfumes of the spring? If beauty is a subject for boasting, what is matter of mortification?

The accomplishments of the mind are likewise two, knowledge and virtue. Is there any reason to be proud of the poor attainments we can in the present state gain in knowledge, of which the perfection is, 'To know our own weakness? Is that an accomplishment to be boasted of, which a blow on the head, or a week's illness will destroy? As to our attainments in virtue, or religion, to be proud on those accounts, would be to be proud of what we did not possess: for pride would annihilate all our virtues, and render our religion vain. If our virtue and religion be not founded in humility, they are false and sophisticate; consequently of no value. And who would be proud of what is of no value?

The pride of riches is yet more monstrous than any of the others. To turn the good gift of providence into vanity and wantonness; to value one's self upon what is altogether foreign and accidental, and makes no part of merit, as not being the inherent qualification either of body or mind, nor any way valuable or honourable, but according as we use it: What can be conceived more remote from common sense, unless we reflect on the folly of those who take occasion to value themselves on their birth, and are proud that they can trace back a great many fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, whose virtues and vices belonged wholly to themselves, and are gone with them? It is amazing to think how poor a pretence is thought sufficient to support human folly. The family of the cottager is as ancient as that of the lord of the manor, if it could be traced. And in every family there have been scoundrels, as well as heroes, and more of the former than the latter.

As pride was the introduction to all the evil that we know of in the moral world, so humility is the only foundation, upon which the structure of virtue can be raised.

A submissive, tractable temper is alone capable of being formed to obedience. A mind puffed up with self-opinion, cannot bring itself to listen to advice, or to yield to just authority. The wise man endeavours to attain such a knowledge of himself, that he may neither, on one hand, act a part unworthy of himself, nor on the other, forget his present humble station, and presume on any thought or action unsuitable to it.

Before we can hope to go any great length in the due regulation of our passions or inclinations, we must resolve carefully to study, and thoroughly to master, that most useful of all sciences, self-knowledge.

It is not in schools, in universities, or in the voluminous works of the learned, that we must search for this most important branch of knowledge. He, who would know himself, must search carefully his own heart, must study diligently his own character. He must above all things study the peculiar weaknesses of his nature. In order to find out these, he ought to recollect often what particular follies have most frequently drawn him into difficulties and distresses. If he finds that he has been often engaged in quarrels, and disputes, he may conclude, that the passion of anger is too powerful in him, and wants to be brought under subjection. If he recollects various instances of his behaving in a lewd, an intemperate, an envious, or a malicious manner, and that he has often had occasion to blame himself for a behaviour which has brought upon him the reflections of the sober and regular part of people; it is evident, where the fault lies, and what is to be corrected. But conscience, and the sacred rule of life contained in holy scripture, are more certain tests by which to try one's character, than the general opinion of mankind.

Nothing is more common, than for a person's weakness to be known to every body but himself. Let a man therefore set his own conduct at a distance from himself, and view it with the same eye as he may suppose a stranger regards it; or with the same as he himself views that of another person. Let one endeavour to find out some person, whose behaviour and character comes the nearest to his own; and in that, view himself as in a mirror. And as there is generally some resemblance between the charac-

ters of those, who keep up a long friendship, a man may, generally speaking, see his own likeness in that of his friend.

It will be of great consequence to you to know what character is drawn of you by your enemy, especially if you find several agree in the same. Enemies will help you, more than friends, in discovering your faults; for they will aggravate what your friends will lessen.

Attend carefully to the general strain of your thoughts. Observe what subjects rise oftenest, and abide longest in your mind, and what you dwell upon with the greatest delight. You will by that find out what passion, or appetite, has the ascendant, and ought to be subdued. It is from the fulness of the heart that the mouth speaks. And from a man's eager manner of talking on certain favourite subjects, every one, who spends an hour in his company, finds out his prevailing passion, while he himself perhaps is, all his life, wholly ignorant of it. Lastly, whoever means in earnest to come at the true knowledge of his own weaknesses, let him listen, with the most sacred attention, to every motion of conscience. There is more meaning in her softest whisper, than in the loudest applause of the unthinking multitude.

Another direction of the utmost consequence to our setting about the due regulation of our passions, and indeed to our behaving in general in a manner suitable to the true dignity of our nature, is, That we reverence ourselves.

The effect, which a just and habitual sense of the grandeur and importance of our nature, and the high elevation we are formed capable of, would have upon us, is, To inspire us with sentiments worthy of ourselves, and suitable to the gracious designs of the Author of our being. This is very consistent with that humility which becomes us so well in our present condition. Humility is commendable: Baseness odious. Did men habitually consider themselves as formed for immortality, they would not so generally set their whole hearts upon the present life. Did they constantly keep in mind their heavenly Original, and the end of their creation, they could not thus sink their very souls into earth. Did they often reflect upon the worth of immortal minds, they would

not think of satisfying them with the gross and sordid objects of sense. Did they consider themselves as intended for companions of angels and archangels, they would not, by indulging carnal appetites, debase themselves to the level of the brutes. Did they duly reverence themselves as beings formed for the contemplation and fruition of infinite perfection, they would think it beneath them to place their happiness in the enjoyment of any thing created.

One general rule carefully attended to, and the judgment of our own consciences according to it faithfully followed, would make the whole conduct of the passions and appetites clear, and would prevent our falling into any error in indulging or suppressing them. The rule is, To consider what good purpose is to be gained by the exertion of every active power of the mind; and to take care, that in the conduct of every passion and appetite, we have that end singly, and nothing else in view.

I will therefore proceed to show, in a particular manner, how this rule is to be applied in the regulation of those of our passions and appetites, which have important effects upon our moral characters.

That motion of the mind, which we call love, or desire, tends, naturally to draw and engage us to whatever is either in its own nature truly amiable and excellent, or which our present state renders it necessary that she should be engaged to. There is no danger of our loving God, or virtue, or desiring our own real happiness too much. For these are proper and worthy objects of the best affections of every rational being throughout the whole of its existence. The inclination we find in ourselves toward such objects, is the pure effect of our having clear and rational apprehensions of their real, internal excellence; not of any factitious or arbitrary taste implanted in our minds, or any arbitrary fitness in such objects to gain our affections. No rational unprejudiced mind in the universe ever had, or can have, just apprehensions of the Divine perfections, and of the excellence of virtue, that has not admired and loved them. And the clearer the apprehensions, the stronger must be the affection.

To mix and confound together all the motions of the mind, and to range them all indiscriminately under one

head, is reducing the whole philosophy of human nature to a mere jumble. Hunger or thirst, for example, are no more to be considered under the head of self-love, than anatomy under that of astronomy. The pure disinterested love of virtue is no more to be called a factitious or arbitrary inclination, as the mutual desires of the sexes undoubtedly is, than gravitation is to be called solidity or extension. The bodily appetites, improperly so called, are plainly factitious and temporary; for we can conceive of a living, conscious, rational being, who has not so much as an idea of them; nay, the time will come, when they will be wholly forgot by at least *some* of our own species. But is it possible to conceive of a living, conscious, rational being, who, if left to itself free and uncorrupted, should be able to avoid loving virtue, or could be indifferent to goodness, as soon as it became an object of its perfection? Again, the fitness between the appetite and the object is in some cases evidently arbitrary. Different species, therefore, choose different sorts of food, which, without that arbitrary fitness, would be alike grateful or disagreeable to all tastes; so that grass and hay would be as acceptable to the lion and the vulture, as to the horse and the ox; and the flesh as agreeable to the horse and the ox, as to the lion and vulture. On the contrary, in other cases, this fitness is by no means arbitrary or factitious, but unalterable and necessary. A mind, to which apparent truth was no object; an understanding, which saw no beauty or desirableness in undoubted virtue and rectitude, must be perverted from its natural state, and debauched out of itself.

Our love to earthly objects may easily be carried to excess. For it is evident, that a very moderate attachment is sufficient, where the connexion is intended to hold only for the present short life. As on the other hand, those objects which are intended to be the final happiness of our being, ought to be pursued with the utmost ardency of affection. To pursue, with an unbounded desire, an object, whose nature and perfections are bounded within very narrow limits, is a gross absurdity; as to be cold and indifferent to that which is of inestimable worth, is contrary to sound reason. But to observe the general conduct of mankind, one would think they considered God and virtue, and eternal happiness, as objects of little or no con-

sequence ; and good eating and drinking, pleasure and wealth as alone worth the attention of reasonable beings. One would imagine they believed that the latter were to be the everlasting enjoyment of the rational mind, and the former the transitory amusement of a few years at most. What do mankind pursue with the greatest eagerness? What are their hearts most set upon? What does their conversation most run upon? What is their last thought at night and their first in the morning? and what employs their minds through the whole day? I am afraid the objects, which engage their supreme attention, are of no higher a nature than how to get money; to raise themselves, as they very improperly call it, in the world; to concert a party of pleasure, or some other scheme of as little consequence. Now, if the present were to be the final state, this turn of mind might be proper enough. But that a being formed for immortality should set his whole affections upon this mortal life, is as if a traveller, going to a distant country, should make abundant provision for the voyage, and spend his whole fortune by the way, leaving nothing for his comfortable settlement when he arrives, where he is to pass his days.

Suppose an unbodied spirit, of the character of most human minds, entered upon the future state, left to itself, and neither raised to positive happiness, nor condemned to positive punishment; I ask, what must be the condition of such a being? What can be more deplorable than the situation of a mind, which has lost all the objects of its delight, and can enjoy nothing of what makes the happiness of the state in which it is placed? For, alas, there is no eating and drinking, no stock-jobbing or trafficking, no enjoyment of wine and women, no parliamenteering in the world of spirits; and in this world of spirits we shall all find ourselves before many years be gone. What then is our wisdom? Not surely to set our whole affections upon this present fleeting state; but to habituate ourselves to think of the eternal existence hereafter as the principal end of our being, and what ought therefore to fill up the greatest part of our attention, and to engage our warmest affections and most eager pursuit.

That any being in the universe should ever bring itself to hate itself, or desire its own misery, as misery, is impos-

sible. Though a reasonable self-love, rightly directed, is highly commendable, nothing is more easy or common, than to err egregiously with respect to self-love. Most people love themselves so very much, and in a way so absurd, that they love nothing else, except what is closely connected with themselves: and that they love more for their own sakes than any thing else. That mind must be wonderfully narrow that is wholly wrapt up in itself. But this is too visibly the character of most human minds. The true standard of rectitude as to self-love, is, that every one love himself as God may be supposed to love him; that is, as an individual among many. To the Divine Mind every object appears as it really is. We ought therefore to endeavour to see things in the light in which they appear to that Eye which comprehends the universal system. If we thus enlarged our conceptions, we should never suffer our whole regards to be possessed by any one finite object whatever, not even by self. Nor should we ever think of preferring ourselves unjustly to others, or raising ourselves upon their ruin. For that is to act as if a man did not consider himself as a part, and a very small part of an immense whole, but as the only being in the universe; than which nothing can be more monstrous. If we loved ourselves as our Maker loves us, we should not think of being partial to our faults; but should view them with the same eye as we do those of others. It is a great unhappiness that we cannot root out of our foolish hearts this shameful weakness. Does it at all alter the real evil of a bad action, that it was I who did it? Will a lie become a truth in any mouth? Is not every man's self as much self, and as dear to him as I am to myself? And is the immutable and eternal nature of right and wrong to be changed by every man's fancy? If I see injustice, falsehood, or impiety in another in the most odious light, does not a third person see them in me in the same manner? And does not the all-piercing Eye of heaven see them alike in all? If I am shocked at the vices of another person, have I not a thousand times more reason to be startled at my own? Those of another can never do me the prejudice which my own can do me. The plague at *Constantinople* can never affect me, as if it attacked me in my own person.

The love of praise, or desire of distinction, is a passion

as necessary to a thinking being, as that which prompts it to preserve its existence. But as this tendency, like all the others which enter into the human make, ought to be subject to the government of reason, it is plain, that no approbation, but that of the wise and good, is of any real value, or deserves the least regard. The advantage gained by the exertion of this universal propensity, is, that men may be thereby excited to such a course of action, as will deserve the approbation of the wise and good. But the love of undistinguishing applause will never produce this effect. For the unthinking multitude generally give their praise where it is least due; and overlook real merit. One *Charles* of *Sweden*, or *Lewis* of *France*, the common furies of the world, shall receive more huzzas from the maddening crowd, than ten *Alfreds* the fathers of their country. So that the desire of promiscuous praise, as it defeats the moral design of the passion, is altogether improper and mischievous, instead of being useful. The rule for the conduct of this passion is, To act such a part as shall deserve praise; but in our conduct to have as little regard as possible to praise. A good man will dare to be meanly or ill thought of in doing well; but he will not venture to do ill in order to be commended.

The passion, or emotion which we call anger, serves the same purpose as the natural weapons with which the animal creation is furnished, as teeth, horns, hoofs, and claws; I mean for our defence against attacks and insults. Cool reason alone would not have sufficiently animated us in our own defence, to secure us in the quiet possession of our natural rights, any more than it would alone have suggested to us the due care and nourishment of our bodies. To supply, therefore, the deficiencies of reason in our present imperfect state, passion and appetite come in, and are necessary to the human composition. And it would have been as much to the purpose, that the ancient *Stoics* should have directed their disciples to eradicate hunger and thirst, as anger, grief, love, and the other natural passions. It is indeed too true, that in our present imperfect state we are in much greater danger of yielding too much to our passions, than of subduing them too thoroughly; and therefore we find all wise teachers, and particularly the best of teachers, who came from heaven to instruct us, labouring

to inculcate upon mankind the conquest of passion and appetite, without setting any bounds to the length they would have the conquest carried; as knowing, that there is no need to caution men against an excess on this safest side. And, with respect to the passion we are now treating of, if a person does not show himself wholly incapable of being moved, if he does not directly invite injuries and assaults, by bearing without all measure; if he does but from time to time show that he has in him too much spirit to suffer himself to be trampled upon; I am clearly of opinion, that he cannot exert this passion too seldom, or too moderately.

If we take the same method for coming at the true state of things in this, as in other cases, viz. endeavouring, as before directed to get that view of them which appears before the all-comprehensive eye of God, we shall then see how absurd the excessive indulgence of this lawless passion is. To the Supreme Mind we appear a set of infirm, short-sighted, helpless beings, engaged to one another by nature, and the necessity of our affairs; incapable of greatly prejudicing one another; all very nearly upon a footing; all guilty before him; all alike under his government, and all to stand hereafter before the same judgment-seat. How ridiculous must then our fatal quarrels, our important points of honour, our high indignation, and our mighty resentments appear before him? Infinitely more contemptible than the contentions between the frogs and mice do to us in the ludicrous ancient poem ascribed to *Homer*.

But this is not all. Let it be considered also how the impiety of our hatred and resentment, must appear before that Eye, which sees all things as they are. That the Supreme Governor of the world should choose to vindicate to himself the privileges of searching the hearts, and of knowing the real characters of all his creatures, is no more than might be expected. Whoever therefore presumes to pronounce upon the character or state of any of his fellow-creatures before God, assumes the incommunicable privilege of Divinity. Now, every man who hates his fellow-creature, must first conclude him to be wicked and hateful in the sight of God, or he must hate him whom God loves; which is such a piece of audacious opposition to the Divine Mind, as hardly any man will confess him-

self capable of. Again for a private person to take upon him to avenge an injury, (in any way besides having recourse to lawful authority which is founded in the Divine) what is it less than assuming the authority of God himself, whose privilege it is to decide finally, either immediately, or by those whom he has authorised for that purpose?

Farther, let the effects of this unruly passion, carried to its utmost length, and indulged universally, be considered, that we may judge whether it be most for the good of the whole, that we conquer, or give way to it. Experience shows, that every passion and appetite indulged, would proceed to greater and greater lengths without end. Suppose then every man to lay the reins upon the neck of his fury, and give himself up to be driven by it without controul into all manner of madness and extravagance: The obvious consequence must be the destruction of the weaker by the stronger, till the world became a desert.

Whatever is right for one man to practice, is equally right for all, unless circumstances make a difference. If it be proper that one man indulge anger without a cause, no circumstance can make it improper that all do so. If it be proper that one man suffer his passion to hurry him on to abuse, or destroy an innocent person, it is proper that all do so, and that the world be made one vast scene of blood and desolation.

People ought to be very careful in the younger part of life, not to give way to passion: for all habits strengthen with years. And he, who in youth indulges an angry and fretful temper, by the time he comes into years, is likely to be unsufferable by his peevishness; which, though not so fatal and terrible as a furious temper, is more frequently troublesome, and renders the person who gives way to it more thoroughly contemptible. The excessive strength of all our passions is owing to our neglect to curb them in time, before they become unconquerable.

When therefore you feel passion rising, instead of giving it vent in outrageous expressions, which will inflame both your own, and that of the person you are angry with, accustom yourself to call reflection to your assistance. Say to yourself, What is there in this affair of sufficient consequence to provoke me to expose myself? Had I not better drop the quarrel, if the offence were much more

atrocious, than be guilty of folly? If I have lost money, or honour, by this injurious person, must I lose by him my wits too? How would a *Socrates*, or a *Phocian*, have behaved on such an occasion? How did a greater than either behave on an occasion of incomparably greater provocation, while he had it in his power to have struck his enemies dead with a word? True greatness appears in restraining, not giving a loose to passion.

Make a resolution for one day not to be put out of temper upon any account. If you can keep it one day, you may two; and so on. To keep you in mind of your resolution, you may wear a ring upon a particular finger, or use any other such contrivance. You may accustom yourself never to say any thing peevish, without thinking it over as long as you could count six deliberately. After you have habituated yourself for some time to this practice, you will find it as unnatural to blunder out rash speeches, as you do now to deliberate before you speak.

Envy and malice are rather corruptions of natural passions, than the natural growth of the human heart. For the very least degree of them is wicked and unnatural as well as the greatest. Emulation, out of which arises envy, is one of the noblest exertions of a rational mind. To aspire to equal whatever is truly great in a fellow-creature, what can show more conspicuously true greatness of mind? What worthy mind was ever without this disposition? But to look with an evil eye upon, or to hate that excellence in another, which we cannot, or will not emulate, is the very disposition of an evil spirit: for it is hating a person for the very thing which ought to excite love and admiration.

Some of the other excesses we are apt to run into in indulging our passions have to plead for themselves, that the exertion of those passions is attended with a sensible pleasure. But anger, hatred, malice, envy, revenge, and all the irascible passions, the more strongly they operate, the greater the torment they produce. And it must be an extraordinary degree of virulence in a mind, that makes it choose to torture itself for the sake of exerting its spite against another. Which spite also, through the goodness of an over-ruling Providence, instead of hurting the

person attacked, most commonly recoils in vengeance upon him who has indulged in himself so devilish a temper.

The natural inclination we have to sympathise with our fellow-creatures, to make their case our own, and to suffer a sensible pain when we think of their misery or misfortune, was placed in us to draw us more effectually than reason alone would, to endeavour to relieve them. It is therefore evident, that this motion of the mind ought to be encouraged and strengthened in us, because we cannot be too much attached to our fellow-creatures, at the same time that we ought to act chiefly upon rational motives in endeavouring to relieve the distresses of our brethren of mankind.

Fear is a natural passion of the mind, and ought no more to be eradicated than any of the others. A reasonable caution against, and desire of avoiding whatever would prove in any degree hurtful, is the prudent motion of every rational created mind. The conduct of this passion consists in directing our fear, or caution, to proper objects. To fear poverty, or pain, or death, more than guilt; to dread the misery of an hour, or of a life, more than a future punishment for ages, is fearing a lesser evil more than a greater, choosing an extreme degree of misery for the sake of avoiding an inconsiderable one.

Though a dastardly spirit is, generally speaking, a proof of baseness of mind, it does not therefore follow, that to dare to attempt any thing, however unreasonable or unjust, is true fortitude. A bully, a drunkard, or a lunatic, will attack what a wise man will avoid encountering with. For the natural or adventitious vivacity of temper in such persons, which is owing to bodily constitution, or intoxication by liquor, or to a preternatural flow of spirits hurrying them on, and reason being in them very weak, or altogether insufficient for restraining their impetuosity, it is no wonder if they run into the most extravagant and dangerous adventures, nor if they sometimes carry all before them. For the very notion that a person, or body of men, are resolute to a desperate degree, renders them much more formidable to a people who have not, or perhaps cannot work themselves up to the same pitch. True courage is cool and deliberate, founded in a strong attach-

ment to justice, truth, love of one's country, and of true glory ; and is regulated and restrained by wisdom and goodness. True fortitude appears infinitely more glorious in the faithful martyr, who subdued by want and imprisonment, goes on without fear, but without pride, friendless and alone, and in the midst of the insulting crowd gives up his body to the devouring flames in honour of God and his truth, than in the blustering commander at the head of his thousands, who marches to battle, and, in confidence of the might of his arm already assures himself of victory ; and yet the latter is immortalized by the venal strain of flattery, while the former is passed over in silence.

The loss of some good which we have either enjoyed or had reasonable hopes of attaining, or the arrival of some positive evil, is a reasonable subject of reasonable grief ; and the concern of mind ought to be proportioned to the greatness of the loss, or the severity of the calamity which is come upon us. As for the afflictions of this present life, such as the loss of riches, of health, of the favor of the great, of the good opinion of our fellow-creatures, of friends or relations, by removal to distant places, or by death ; these, and the like, being all temporary, we show our wisdom most by bearing them with patience, or even most of them with indifference, in consideration of the prospect we have, if we be virtuous, of having all such losses made up to us hereafter ; of being hereafter possessed of the true and unfading riches ; of having the integrity of our characters cleared before men and angels ; of being restored to our valuable friends and relations, and united to them in a better and happier state, where they and we shall be fitter for true and exalted friendship, and where we shall no more fear a cruel separation.

There is but one just subject of great or lasting grief that I know of ; it is the consideration of our guilt before God. That we ourselves, or others, should ever have offended the kindest and best of beings, whom we were, by all the ties of nature and reason, obliged to love, to obey, and to adore ; this is a grief that will lie heavy upon every considerate mind : And till that happy day comes, when all tears are to be wiped away, and all griefs buried in oblivion, the thought of our own guilt, and that of our un-

happy unthinking fellow-creatures, ought not for a long time to be out of our view. Nor is there any degree of concern (inferior to what might disqualify us for the performance of the duties of life) too great for the occasion. Nor can any thing be imagined more absurd, than for a reasoning being to express more uneasiness about a trifling loss of affliction, which, like all temporal distresses, will, after a few years be to us, as if they had never been; at the same time that the consideration of those offences against the Majesty of heaven, which may have fatal effects upon their final state, raises no uneasiness in their minds. That a thinking creature (or rather a creature capable of thought) should fret for the loss of a mortal friend or relation, whom we always knew to be mortal, and be under no concern for his having alienated from himself by his wickedness, the favour of the most powerful, the most faithful, and the kindest friend. That a rational creature should bitterly lament the lost patronage of a prince, or peer, whose favour he knew to be uncertain and precarious, and give himself no trouble about his having forfeited the protection of Him, upon whom he depends for every moment's existence, and every degree of happiness he can enjoy in the present life, and through all eternity! Surely such grief is indulged with great impropriety!

While we live in the body, it is plainly necessary, that we bestow a reasonable attention upon the body, for providing whatever may be useful for its health and support. To think of eradicating, or destroying the appetites, would be making sure of the destruction of the body. The point we ought to have in view is, therefore, to conduct and regulate them so, as best to answer the wise ends, for which they were planted in our nature.

That every living creature should have in its make a strong desire to preserve life, was necessary. But in rational minds all natural instincts are to be under the controul of reason; the superior faculty to govern the inferior. It is evident, that there may be many cases, in which rectitude and propriety may require us to get over the instinctive love of life, as well as to conquer the influence of the other natural passions. Whoever loves life more than virtue, religion, or his country, is guilty of a gross absurd-

ity in preferring that, which is of less consequence, to that which is of greater. We are always to endeavour, as before observed, to view things in the light, they may be supposed to appear in to the All-comprehensive Mind. But I cannot bring myself to believe, that my life appears to the Supreme Mind of such importance, that it ought to be preserved to the prejudice of sacred and eternal truth; that it is better, the people should perish for one man, than one man for the people.

If the heroes and sages among the Heathens, who had no such sure prospect of a future existence as we have, or may have; if they, whose views of a life to come, were rather strong desires, than well established hopes; if they showed such a contempt of the present life, as to give it up with joy and triumph for the service of their country, and for the sake of truth; of which history furnishes instances almost innumerable; it were to be expected, that we should, in the contempt of life, greatly exceed them; which, to our shame, is far from being the case.

A competency of the good things of life being necessary for the support of life, it is evident, that a reasonable degree of care, industry, and frugality, is altogether proper; of which I have treated pretty copiously in the first part of this work. Whenever this care for the conveniences of life proceeds to such a length, as to produce a love of riches for their own sake, it is then, that a man shows himself bewildered and lost to all rational and judicious views, and enchanted with a mere imaginary object of no real value in itself. That a man should bestow his whole labour in heaping up pieces of metal, or paper, and should make his very being wretched, because he cannot get together the quantity he aims at, which he does not need, nor would use, if he had them in his possession; is much the same wisdom, as if he spent his life in filling his magazines with cockle-shells, or pebbles. If it be likewise remembered, that every passion indulged, becomes in time an unconquerable habit, and that a fixed love of sordid riches is altogether unsuitable to the spiritual, immortal state, for which we were intended, where gold and silver will be of no value; if it be considered, that a great degree of avarice is wholly inconsistent with every generous sentiment, and even with common honesty; and that any

constant pursuit whatever, which engages the whole attention, and takes it off from those sublime views of futurity, and those preparations for immortality, which are absolutely necessary toward our being found fit for that final state, is highly criminal; if these, and various other considerations, be allowed their due weight, it will appear, that covetousness is a vice altogether unsuitable to the dignity of our nature, and that the safe side to err on, with regard to riches, is, To be too indifferent, rather than too anxious about them.

If the sole design of the appetite of hunger be, to oblige us mechanically, by means of pain, to take that due care of supporting the body by proper nourishment, which we could not have been so agreeably, and effectually brought to, by pure reason; it is obvious, that the view we ought to have in eating, is the support of life. That kind of food, which is fittest for nourishing the body, and the least likely to breed diseases, is evidently the best. And if artificial dishes, unnatural mixtures, and high sauces, be the least proper for being assimilated into chyle and blood, and the most likely to produce humours unfriendly to the constitution; what is commonly called rich feeding is, in truth, slow poison. It is therefore very strange, that men should have so little command of themselves, that for the sake of the trifling pleasure of having their palates tickled with a savoury taste, they should venture the shortening of their days. At the same time, that the enormous expense of a rich table might be spared, and the same or indeed a much higher pleasure, in eating, might be enjoyed, if people would but give themselves time and exercise to acquire a hearty appetite. But I really believe, that is what some have never experienced, and consequently have no conception of.

The vices we are in danger of running into, by which our table may become a snare to us, bestowing too great expense, or too much time at our meals, over-gorging nature, or hurting our health by a wrong choice of food. Nothing seems more evident, than that to waste or squander away the good gifts of Providence, especially in so sordid a manner, as upon the materials of gluttony, is altogether unjustifiable. The only rational notion we can form of the design of Providence in bestowing riches upon

some, and sinking others in poverty, is, That men are placed in those different circumstances with a view to the trial and exercise of different virtues. So that riches are to be considered as a stewardship, not to be lavished away in pampering our vices, and supporting our vanity, but to be laid out in such a manner as we shall hereafter be able to answer for, to Him, who entrusted us with them. And whoever bestows yearly in gorging and gluttony, what might support a great many families in industry and frugality, let him see to the consequences.

Again, if we be really spirits, though at present embodied; it seems pretty plain, that the feeding of the body ought not to engross any great proportion of our time. If indeed we look upon ourselves as more body than spirit, we ought then to bestow the principal attention upon the body. But this is what few will care to own in words; which makes their declaring it by their practice the more absurd, and inconsistent.

If it be our duty to preserve our health and life for usefulness in our station, it can never be innocent in us to pervert the very means appointed for the support of the body, to the destruction of the body. We are here upon duty, and are to keep upon our post, till called off. And he who trifles with life, and loses it upon any frivolous occasion, must answer for it hereafter to the Author of Life.

Lastly, if it be certain, that in the future world of spirits, to which we are all hastening, there will be no occasion for this appetite, nor any gratifying of appetites at all, nothing is more evident, than the absurdity of indulging it in such an unbounded and licentious manner, as to give it an absolute ascendant over us, and to work it into the very mind, so as it shall remain, when the body, for whose sake it was given, has no farther occasion for it. The design our Maker had in placing us in this state of discipline, was to give us an opportunity of cultivating in ourselves other sorts of habits than those of gluttony and sensuality.

Of the many fatal contrivances, which our species, too fertile in invention, have hit upon for corrupting themselves, defacing the blessed Maker's image upon the mind, and perverting the end of their creation: none would ap-

pear more unaccountable, if we were not too well accustomed to see instances of it, than the savage vice of drunkenness. That ever it should become a practice for rational beings to delight in overturning their reason; that ever men should voluntarily choose, by swallowing a magical draught, to brutify themselves; nay, to sink themselves below the level of the brutes; for drunkenness is peculiar to our species; this madness must appear to other orders of being, wonderfully shocking. No man can bear the least reflection upon his understanding, whatever he will upon his virtue. Yet men will indulge a practice, by which experience convinces them, they will effectually lose their understanding, and become perfect idiots. Unthinking people are wont to look with great contempt upon natural fools. But in what light ought they to view a fool of his own making? What can be conceived more unsuitable to the Dignity of Human Nature, than the drunkard, with his eyes staring, his tongue stammering, his lips quivering, his hands trembling, his legs tottering, his stomach heaving. Decency will not suffer me to proceed in so filthy a description. The swine, wallowing in the mire, is not so loathsome an object as the drunkard; for nature in her meanest dress is always nature: but the drunkard is a monster out of nature. The only rational being upon earth reduced to absolute incapacity of reason, or speech! A being formed for immortality sunk into filth and sensuality! A creature endowed with capacities for being a companion of angels, and inhabiting the ethereal regions, in a condition not fit to come into a clean room, among his fellow creatures! The lord of this world sunk below the vilest of the brutes!

One would think all this was bad enough; but there is much worse to be said against this most abominable and fatal vice. For there is no other that so effectually and so suddenly unhinges and overturns all virtues, and destroys every thing valuable in the mind, as drunkenness. For it takes off every restraint, and opens the mind to every temptation. So that there is no such expeditious way for a person to corrupt and debauch himself, to turn himself from a man into a demon, as by intoxicating himself, with strong liquor. Nor is there, perhaps, any other habit so bewitching, and which becomes so soon uncon-

querable as drunkenness. The reason is plain. There is no vice which so effectually destroys reason. And when the faculties of the mind are overturned, what means can the unhappy person use, or what course can another take with him, to set him right? To attempt to reform a confirmed drunkard, is much the same as preaching to a madman, or idiot. Reason, the helm of the mind, once destroyed, there is nothing remaining wherewith to steer it. It must then be left to run adrift.

It is deplorable to think of the miserable pretences made use of to apologize for this beastly vice. One excuses himself by his being necessarily obliged to keep company. But it is notorious that nothing more effectually disqualifies a man for company, than to have his tongue tied, and his brains stupified with liquor. Besides, no man is obliged to do himself a mischief, to do another no kindness. Another pretends he is drawn by his business or way of life, to taverns and places of entertainment. But a man must never have been drunk, nor even seen another drunk, to imagine that strong liquor will help him in driving bargains. On the contrary, every body knows, that one is never so likely to be imposed on as when he is in liquor. Nor is the pretence of drinking to drive away care, to pass the time, or to cheer the spirits, more worthy of a rational creature. If, by the force of strong liquor, a man's cares may be mechanically banished, and his conscience lulled asleep for a time, he can only expect them to break loose upon him afterwards with the greater fury. He who artificially raises his spirits by drinking, will find them sink and flag in proportion. And then they must be raised again; and so on, till at last he has no spirits to raise. For understanding, and fortune, and virtue, and health, all fall before this dreadful destroyer. As for drinking to pass the time, instead of an excuse, it is an aggravation. It is criminal enough to waste expense and health, without lavishing precious time besides.

Nor is the pretence of being odious among one's neighbours, and being looked upon as a precise fellow, for living temperately, any better than the others. Alas! we are not hereafter to stand or fall by the opinion of our neighbours. Besides, we ourselves in many cases show a neglect of the opinion of mankind; and do not cross our

inclinations to gain it. And if in one instance, why not in another? We may be sure of the favourable opinion of the sober part of our acquaintance by keeping on the right side; the approbation of one of whom is preferable to that of a thousand drunkards.

Of all kinds of intemperance, the modern times have produced one of the most fatal and unheard of, which like a plague over-runs and lays waste both town and country, sweeping the lower part of the people, who indulge in it, by thousands to the grave. The unhappy invention I mean, and which seems by its mischievous effects to claim Satan himself for its author, is the drinking of fermented spirituous liquors. This is no place for setting forth the destructive effects of that most shocking species of debauchery. That has been the subject of a parliamentary inquiry. And it is to be hoped, that the accounts laid before that august body, which were tragical enough to melt a heart of rock, will be the cause of producing an effectual remedy for that ruinous national evil.

The best human means I know of, for conquering a habit of drinking, are to avoid temptation, to accustom one's self by degrees to lessen the quantity, and lower the strength of the liquor by a more copious dilution with water.

The natural desire of the two sexes was placed in us for the support of the species. It is not therefore to be eradicated; but only brought under proper regulations, so as the end may the best be answered. That the union of one man and woman for life, was the original design, is evident from the near equality between the numbers of the two sexes. For one man therefore to break loose upon the other sex, and appropriate to himself a plurality, is evidently against the order of nature, and inconsistent with the good of society, in which every individual is to enjoy all his natural rights and privileges, and all monopolies are unjust. That the marriage engagement ought to be sacred and indissoluble but by death, is plain from considering the various bad effects of its being precarious; as alienating the affections of the two parties for one another, and for their common children, and thereby defeating one main end of their coming together, viz. to be mutual helps and supports to one another under the various distresses of life; encouraging inconstancy and an endless

desire of variety; and exposing one of the sexes to the unhappiness of a slavish dependence. That all commerce of the sexes, where a due care is not had for the offspring, is vicious, is evident from considering, that thereby the very design of nature is frustrated. That invading the bed of our neighbour is highly injurious, is plain, because it is a breach of the most solemn engagements, and most sacred vows, without which there could be no marriage. That all commerce of the sexes, except in lawful marriage, is unjustifiable, is certain, in that it tends to the discouragement of that most wise and excellent institution. And that is the indispensable duty of every man and woman to enter into that state, excepting in the case of unsurmountable constitutional or prudential objections, is as plain, as that it is the duty of every man and woman to eat and drink. For it is as certainly the design of Providence, that the species be kept up, as that the life of individuals be preserved by nourishment. And what is the duty of one is the duty of all, unless in the case of insuperable obstacles.

The indulgence of this appetite to excess is as clearly unjustifiable as that of any other. The effects of every undue sensual indulgence are sinking and debasing the mind, misleading it from the sublime views, and noble pursuits, for which it was created, and habituating it to disobedience and misrule; which is directly contrary to the intention of a state of discipline. Whoever gives himself up to the uncontrolled dominion of passion or appetite, sells himself an unredeemable slave to the most rigorous, and most despicable of tyrants. And it is only going on farther and farther in such base indulgences, and at last, no gratification whatever of the desire will be sufficient. Yet, there is no state in life, in which abstinence at times, from sensual gratifications of every kind, is not indispensably necessary. Every reader's common sense will convince him of the truth of this, and particularly with respect to the subject we are now upon. Though marriage is the natural way of gratifying the mutual desires of the sexes, every body knows, that a continued indulgence is utterly incompatible with the marriage state. Which shows plainly, that due regulation and restraint of every passion and appetite, is the scheme of nature, and that unbounded excess

is contrary to nature. And yet, how strange is it to consider the poor and superficial fallacies, which mankind think sufficient to satisfy themselves with, rather than give up their favourite vices and follies! What can be more contemptible than the common plea for all excessive and irregular indulgences, particularly the criminal commerce of the sexes; That we are formed with natural inclinations, desires, and powers; and why should we not act according to the bent of our nature?

To pursue the ends of nature, according to the order of nature, is so far from being criminal, that it is virtue. But excess and irregularity are directly contrary to nature's views. This is seen by every man, in every case where passion and appetite do not blind him. We have a natural appetite, for example, to food. How comes it then, that we do not as often over-gorge our stomachs with plain bread as with dainties? The one would be as irregular and vicious as the other. Yet we should see a strange absurdity in the former, while we can excuse ourselves in the latter. If we are formed with a natural appetite for food, why do we make such a difference in the indulgence of our appetite in delicacies, from plain food? The truth is, that excess of all kinds is indefensible, and unnatural. If it were natural, we should be as apt to eat too much bread, as too much pastry. It is the deplorable weakness of our nature, that we yield to appetite and passion, till they become too powerful for us, and lead us captive in spite of ourselves. While we pretend we only follow nature, we are indulging a false and vitiated taste. And in no indulgence is there more shameful excess committed, nor greater deviations from the intention of nature, than in that which is the subject of this paragraph. Were the above apology for excess of any weight, that is, were it proper we should do every thing we have power or inclination to, we might by the same plea throw ourselves down a precipice, because we have power to do it. The thief may steal, because he has a natural desire to ease rather than labour; the drunkard may drink himself to death, because it is natural to quench thirst; the passionate man may kill his enemy, because he has a natural disposition to repel injuries; in short, if this plea be good

for any thing it renders all excesses, which take their first rise from a natural appetite, innocent.

Such an indulgence in sleep, in leisure or in action, and in relaxations or amusements, as may be necessary for the refreshment and health of these frail vehicles we now inhabit is allowable. And the just measure of such indulgences is different according to different constitutions and ways of life. But it is to be feared, that hundreds exceed the bounds of moderation, for one, who restricts himself too much. Let every reader lay his hand upon his heart, and think what lost time he will have to answer for hereafter. The safe side is, to indulge rather too little than too much. A tolerable constitution will hold better with eight hours sleep, in the twenty-four, than with more. And as to relaxations or diversions, the plea of their necessity is wholly groundless, except for those who live a laborious, or studious life. What necessity for those, whose whole existence is one continued course of indulgence and relaxation, for relaxation? Relaxation from what? Not from business; for they never do any. The proper relaxation from idleness, would be to do somewhat. And there is no mortal, who is one degree above an idiot, that is not capable of doing something worth living for.

Whoever can persuade himself, that it was the intention of his Maker, in placing him in this state of discipline, that he should pass an existence as useless as that of a stock or a stone, (supposing him innocent of all positive crimes) must have strange notions of the Divine economy, and of his own nature. If that sort of life be lawful and proper for one, it is so for all. And where would then be the business of life, the improvement of ourselves, the care of our children, the government of kingdoms, the advancement of the species towards a preparation for a future state of happiness? Let no one pretend, that he cannot find employment, till he has at least performed all that is perscribed in this book.

I will here throw together a few remarks on some of the modern fashionable amusements.

Gaming is an amusement wholly unworthy of rational beings, having neither the pretence of exercising the body, or exerting ingenuity, or of giving any natural pleasure;

and owing its entertainment wholly to an unnatural and vitiated taste; the cause of infinite loss of time, of enormous destruction of money, of irritating the passions, of stirring up avarice, of innumerable sneaking tricks and frauds, of encouraging idleness, of disgusting people against their proper employments, and of sinking and debasing all that is truly great and valuable in the mind.*

As for the theatrical diversions, they are managed in such a manner, that a sober person may be ashamed to be seen at many of them. It is notorious that the bulk of our *English* plays are not fit to be seen in print. The tragedies are, generally speaking, a heap of wild flights and bombastic rants, and the comedies of scandalous impurities; neither of which can be thought worthy the attention of a people, who value themselves either upon their taste or their virtue. There may be found, perhaps, in the *English* language, about twenty or thirty pieces, especially some of *Shakspeare's*, which, if subjected to

* Cards being now become so universal, as to be the nuisance of almost all companies, it may seem necessary in opposing the general practice of the polite, to support what is above said against card-playing by some authorities, which will, I believe, appear at least, equal to those of any of the most eminent modern defenders of that stupid and mischievous amusement.

“Play, wherein persons of condition, especially ladies” (in our times all ages sexes, and ranks) “waste so much of their time, is a plain instance that people cannot be idle; they must be doing something,” (if it be mischief) “For how else could they sit so many hours *toiling* at that which gives generally more *exaction* than delight to people, while they are engaged in it? It is certain, gaming leaves no *satisfaction* behind it to those who reflect when it is over, and it no way *profits* either *body* or *mind*. As to *estates*, if it strike so deep as to concern them, it is then a trade, and not a recreation, wherein few thrive; and at best, a thriving gamester has but a poor trade on't, who fills his pockets at the price of his reputation.”

LOCKE on *Educat.* p. 366.

And afterwards, page 368.

“As to cards and dice, I think the safest and best way is, never to *learn* any play upon them, and so to be incapacitated for those *dangerous temptations* and *encroaching wasters of useful time*.”

What would this great man have said, had he lived in our times, when it is common for people to spend five or six hours every night at cards, Sunday not excepted; which amounts to the fourth or fifth part of the whole time of life, and comes in all to perhaps ten or a dozen years in a long life?

Let us now hear Mr. *Addison* on the same subject. SPECT. No. 93.

“I must confess I think it is below *reasonable* creatures to be altogether conversant in such diversions as are merely *innocent*, and have nothing else to recommend them, but that there is *no hurt* in them. Whether any kind of gaming has *even thus much* to say for itself, I shall not determine; but I think it is very wonderful to see persons of the *best sense*, passing away *hours together* in *shuffling* and dividing a pack of cards, with no other *conversation*, but what is made up of a few *game phrases*, and no other *ideas*, but those of *black* or *red spots*, ranged together in different figures. Would not a man laugh to hear any one of this species complaining *that life is short?*”

pretty severe castigation, and properly represented, might be said to make a noble entertainment. But these serve only as traps to draw in the innocent and unwary to a delight in the diversions of the theatre. And by the sagacity of the managers of the theatres, who very well know, that the gross of an audience have no taste for what is really excellent in those entertainments, and are only to be pleased with show, or ribaldry; by their cunning management, I say, it comes about, that it is not much safer for a young and innocent person to be present at the representation of a chaste and virtuous piece, than of one of the most profane. What does it avail, that the piece itself be unexceptionable, if it is to be interlarded with lewd songs or dances, and tagged at the conclusion with a ludicrous and beastly farce? I cannot therefore, in conscience, give youth any other advice, than generally to avoid such diversions, as cannot be indulged without the utmost danger of perverting their taste, and corrupting their morals.

As for masquerades, if the intention of them be intriguing, they answer some end, though a bad one; if not, they seem by all accounts to be such a piece of wretched foolery, as ought to be beneath any but children or mad people. That a thousand people should come together in ridiculous dresses only to squeak to one another, *I know you, and, Do you know me!* Posterity, if the world should grow a little wiser, will not believe it; but will conclude, that their grandfathers and grandmothers were very naught. A multitude assembled together in masks, by which means shame, the great restraint from vice, is banished! What can be imagined more threatening to the interests of virtue and decency?*

I know of no very material objection against the entertainments of music called concerts, if they be not pursued to the loss of too much time or money. Those called oratorios, being a kind of dramas taken from Scripture,

* Among various other the immortal honours of our present most excellent Sovereign, George III. may this page hand down to posterity, that he has set his royal authority and example in full opposition to the vices here remarked on, viz. Masquerading, Gaming, and criminal Gallantry. And to the indelible disgrace of the present age, be it remembered, that, in consequence of the discontent of a set of disappointed grandees, the merit of so amiable a prince has not been esteemed as, from the known generosity of the people of Britain, might have been expected.

are, I think, exceptionable, as they tend to degrade those awful subjects, and to turn into diversion what is more proper for devotion.

Promiscuous dancing at public balls, is a diversion no way proper for young people, as it gives an opportunity for the artful and designing of either sex to lay snares for one another, which sometimes prove fatal. At the same time, country-dancing in private, where the whole company are known to one another, where the parents or other judicious persons preside, where decency is kept up, and moderation used, must, I think, be owned to be both an agreeable amusement, and a wholesome exercise.

Hunting, the favourite diversion of the country-gentry, is, without doubt, the very best that can be used, for the preservation of health, exclusive of the danger of broken bones. But, as a gentleman ought in all reason to be possessed of other endowments and accomplishments, besides that of a healthy constitution, one would think, a few other employments should have place; such as reading, overlooking their business, improving their estates; serving their friends, and country, and preparing themselves for another world; for surely that cannot be said to be the existence of a thinking, social, immortal creature, which is divided between hunting, drinking, and sleeping.

The distress many people seem to be in for somewhat to pass the time, might have been prevented by their studying in the earlier part of life to acquire a little taste for reading and contemplation. Whoever can find an agreeable companion in a book, a tree, or a flower, can never be at a loss how to pass his leisure hours, though he should not be in the way of the card-table, the tavern, or the play. And it is well worth while to acquire a little taste for mental amusements in one's early years (the only time of life in which it is to be acquired) for when all is said, it is but a miserable case for a man to have in himself no entertainment for himself; but to be obliged to be beholden to others for all his pleasure in life.

Our situation in the present state is such, that every thing makes a part of our discipline; and we are in danger, without proper care, and attention, of deviating into error in so seemingly trivial a particular as that of dress. Too much time, or too great expence bestowed on dress, that

is, more than might do the business decently, becomes criminal. For that is wasting upon an affair of very little consequence, what is of great value, and might be much better applied. Levity, or wantonness appearing in dress, is also unjustifiable, as tending to produce bad effects on ourselves and others.

To conclude, the proper conduct of the passions and appetites consists briefly, in following nature in the indulgence of them; in taking care, above all things, not to suffer them to get such a hold of the mind, as to enslave it, that is, to engage so much of its attention as may disqualify it for worthier pursuits, make it unhappy, by continually hankering after the gratification of one low desire or other, and lead it to place its whole satisfaction in such gratifications. The due conduct of the passions and appetites supposes reason to bear rule in the mind, and the inferior powers to be in subjection. Whoever keeps his mind constantly in such a condition, is at all times in a capacity for acting a part suitable to the Dignity of Human Nature, and performing his duty to his fellow-creatures, and to his Creator.

SECTION VII.

Of our Obligations with Respect to our Fellow-creatures.

THE foundation upon which the whole of our duty to our fellow-creatures must rest, is benevolence. And the measure of our love to the rest of mankind, is, its being equal to that which we have for ourselves. The reason why it is made our duty to love our neighbours as ourselves, is, That being proper, there should be such an order of being, as man, created, it was impossible for Divine Wisdom to propose the production of such a species, without intending them to be united together as a society; and that mutual love and agreement are essentially necessary to the very idea of a society. As it is impossible to conceive a material system, in which repulsion should universally prevail, and attraction have no place, but every particle of matter should repel every other, so it is conceivable that a society should subsist in which every individual should hate every other.

Our self-love is very wisely made the measure of our love to our fellow-creatures, because every individual ought to consider himself as only one among many, and no way of greater consequence than his neighbour, before the universal Governor, than as he may be more virtuous than he. And as human penetration does not reach so far as to judge of internal characters, we cannot upon any rational pretence pronounce ourselves preferable to others, nor consequently ought to love our fellow-creatures at all less than ourselves. It is true, that the order of human affairs is such, as to direct every man to apply himself to the conducting of his own concerns, and consulting his own interest; because every man knows best, and is therefore the fittest, to undertake the management of his own concerns, temporal and spiritual. By which means every man's concerns are likely to be managed to the best purpose. But it does not follow from thence, that any man ought in his own mind to prefer himself to another, or to love himself more than his neighbour.

Whoever loves his neighbour as himself, will show his affection by consulting his interest in all things which may concern either his body, his soul, his fortune, or reputation: For every man, who rationally loves himself, will study his own interest with respect to these four great concerns.

To consult our neighbour's interest, is, to do him no injury: to prevent, as much as in us lies, any other person from injuring him; to do him justice in every respect, and, beyond justice, to show him all the kindness in our power.

To be negatively good, if we proceed no farther, is deserving no more praise than a stock or a stone. And those selfish and narrow-hearted people, whose whole praise is, that they do no harm, are not to be reckoned upon as members of society, but are mere cyphers in the creation. Such sordid dispositions as will admit no thought of any thing but self, can never be fit for any place in that more extensive future society, which will be composed wholly of beings ennobled and perfected by virtue and universal benevolence: For in that higher state, every individual will be connected with the whole, and the whole with every individual; so that there will be no detached or separate

beings. This shows the necessity of our being habituated to consider ourselves as parts of the whole, and of enlarging our minds by an extensive benevolence. This also shows the strange absurdity of making retirement from society, in the active time of life, a part of religion; as by that unnatural and monstrous practice one third part of our duty is wholly cut off, and the human mind, which ought by all possible methods to be drawn and engaged to society, is detached and separated from it, and habituated to think with horror of the very state for which it was formed.

Affection to our neighbour will prevent our injuring him, and incline us to do him the utmost justice, first, as to his fortune or possessions. I begin with this, as that part of our neighbour's concerns, which is of the least consequence; intending to proceed afterwards to those which touch more nearly. Now the foundation of property is in reason or rectitude; that is to say, That a person may in such a manner come to be possessed of a portion of the good things of life, that he may have an exclusive right to it against all mankind; so that for any other to deprive him of such possession against his consent, would be iniquitous. As the infinite Author of all things has an unquestionable title to all creatures and things in the universe, it is evident, that he may, in the course of his providence give to any man the possession of any of the good things of life; and what he gives cannot without injustice be, by any private person, forcibly or clandestinely taken away. At the same time, the general consent of society, or the law of the country in which a person lives, may for wise and generally beneficial purposes, render property otherwise rightful, not tenable, and may make all things common, except where the Divine law has absolutely prohibited alienation, as in matrimony. In a country where exclusive property is established and supported by law or mutual agreement, a right to valuable possessions may come first by birth. It is plainly agreeable to reason, that a parent provide for his own offspring, preferably to strangers. The natural affection of even the inferior creatures for their young, leads to this. By the same rule, all successions among persons related by marriage or blood, are equitably and legally established; and it becomes injustice to deprive any one of property so acquired. The fruits of a person's

ingenuity, or labour, are also lawful property. Purchase is the giving what one had a right to, for something which belonged to another, and therefore purchase gives a just right. Free gift, from one who has power to give, makes a just title. In things which have been claimed by no one, the first possession gives a title, as in the case of uninhabited countries. To seize a country by force of arms, to the prejudice of the original inhabitants, is a flagrant injustice. For as the first entrance into an uninhabited country, being by the direction of Providence, gives the first discoverers a title to it, it is evident, that no person can, without violating the laws of justice, disturb the first possessors in their property, or pretend to a settlement in that country, but by agreement with the first possessors.

I do not think it necessary to my purpose to determine, with the utmost exactness, the boundaries of property, or how far one person may lawfully encroach upon another's right. Whoever sincerely loves his neighbour with the same measure of affection as himself, will be as tender of his property as he would wish others to be of his own; and whoever resolves to regulate his conduct according to rectitude, will be more delicately fearful of breaking in upon another's right, than of loosing part of his own; and with the utmost reason: For in violating his neighbour's right, he becomes guilty before God; whereas in loosing his own, the worst consequence is, his being deprived of what is of no great value in itself, and which he must soon leave behind him.

Whatever practices tend to the violation of any person's just property, they are all contrary to the affection we ought to entertain for our neighbour, and to strict rectitude. Whether such practices are openly violent, or more indirect and concealed, the consequences being the same, the vice is the same; unless where increased or diminished by circumstances of greater or less aggravation. Thus, receiving or concealing the property of another, whether stolen, robbed, or found, if the proprietor is known, or assisting or countenancing another in such practices is the same injury to our neighbour as direct theft.

The most extensive and ruinous violation of property, is that which is committed by those scourges and curses

of this lower world, Tyrants. When one of those furies, the disgrace and horror of the human species, breaks loose upon mankind; a whole kingdom is robbed, a quarter of the world is plundered. And in that day, when all differences of rank will be at an end, dreadful in that day will be the charge against those who, being by Divine Providence raised for the general happiness of mankind, have used their power only to spread extensive misery and distress among God's creatures.

Whoever is by the Divine Providence raised to a station of power and influence, and takes the advantage of his power to oppress his inferiors, shows himself not only unjust, but cowardly; For true greatness of mind scorns any unfair advantage. And if it be unjust to appropriate to one's self what belongs to another, however able he may be to bear the loss, much more cruel and base is it for the rich to avail themselves of their power to the distressing of their poor tenants or dependants. What will add but a small matter to the already over grown wealth and superfluous state of the powerful landlord, wrung from the poor industrious farmer, reduces him, and his numerous family, to the extremity of distress. And that heart must have little feeling, that would not spare a superfluous dish, or a needless bottle, rather than a family of half a dozen fellow-creatures should want bread.

I know of no oppression in this happy country, of such great and extensive bad consequences, as that occasioned by the abuse of law: the grievance of which is so much more calamitous, as the very intention of the law is the redress of grievances. It is notorious, that it is in the power of any rascally pettifogger to keep a whole town in fear, and to ruin as many as he pleases of the poor and industrious part of the inhabitants, who are, without doubt, collectively considered, the most valuable part of the people: And the judge upon the bench must sit and see such wicked practices, without having it in his power to give any relief to an unhappy subject, who is stripped, and his family beggared, to satisfy a voracious blood-sucker: and all under pretence of equity. One single regulation would at once put a stop to this whole complaint, viz. A law, by which in all cases of prosecution about private concerns, if one of the parties choose to submit the cause

to arbitration, the other should be obliged to stand the award. The most judicious and prudent set of men in the nation, I mean the merchants, find this the most amicable, equitable, and frugal manner of deciding disputes about property, and generally use it. And it were to be wished that it were universal; which is to be hoped the abominable iniquity of the law will at last bring about.

The ancient maxim, that the rigour of the law is the height of injustice, is undoubtedly true. And whoever is ready to take all advantages of his neighbour, which the law, strained to its utmost strictness will give him, shows himself (so far from loving his neighbour as himself) to be of a disposition to plunder his neighbour for his own advantage in the utmost iniquitous manner, if he could but at the same time keep himself safe; and that it is not the love of justice and of his neighbour, but fear of punishment, that restrains him from the most notorious violation of property by theft or robbery.

If by borrowing money, or buying goods upon credit, knowing one's self to be in no condition to pay, while the person he deals with believes him fit to be trusted, if by such means as these one may as much injure his neighbour's estate, as by open violence or theft, it is evident that all such proceedings are highly unjust. Every man has a right to know the truth in all cases which concern himself: And whoever conceals from his neighbour a truth, which, if he had known, he would have acted another part than he did, is the cause of all the loss he may suffer by such transaction. Yet nothing is more common than for traders to borrow large sums a very few days before their becoming insolvent. In which, besides the injustice, the abuse of friendship and confidence greatly aggravates the iniquity.

It is lamentable to observe how little regard is too generally paid to such promises as people think themselves not legally liable to be compelled to the performance of. Breaking promises is violating sacred truth. And withholding from a person what one has absolutely promised him, supposing it still in his power to perform his promise, is depriving him of what he has a right to claim: which is in effect a violation of property. Especially in the case of a dependence upon a promise given, by which

the expectant is disappointed, and greatly injured. This is direct injustice, falsehood, and cruelty. Nor does the consideration of an unexpected expense, which the fulfilling of the promise may occasion, bring any excuse for violating it. All that was to have been considered beforehand, and accounted upon, before you gave your promise. At the same time a generous man will quit his right to what has been promised him, when he finds, that the promiser cannot, without considerable detriment, fulfil his engagement.

To withhold a just debt, though the creditor should not have it in his power to recover it by law; is equally unjust, as in the case of its being recoverable. The intention of the law of bankruptcy is to give unfortunate debtors an opportunity of doing justice to their creditors. Therefore he, who takes the advantage of his being cleared by the statute of bankruptcy, and refuses to make complete payment of his whole debts, when it comes afterwards to be in his power, is guilty of the same sort of injustice as the thief. And to take advantage of sanctuaries, or privileged places; or of the laws in favour of members of either houses of parliament, to screen one's self, or others; or by any other means to evade, or assist others in evading, the payment, of just debts, where it is in the debtor's power to make payment, is the very same species of iniquity as theft, with the aggravation of the abuse of law, and the baseness of taking an advantage of the weaker.

Nor is the absolute refusal of a just debt, only injustice; but even the delay of payment beyond a reasonable time, if at all in one's power to make payment, is injurious and iniquitous. And all the prejudice suffered by the creditor, by loss of interest of money, or by inconveniences in his affairs, through want of what he has a just title to, is justly to be laid to the charge of the debtor.

All breach of trust, whether through careless neglect or voluntary embezzling of what is committed to one's care, in the capacity of an executor of the will of the dead, of an assignee, steward, factor, deputy; all proceedings of this kind, which are different from the conduct one would pursue in the management of his own concerns, or might in reason expect another to do for him, are deviations from rectitude, and the great rule of loving our neighbour with the same measure of affection as ourselves.

In commerce and traffic, all advantages taken by dealers, against one another, beyond what the one, if he were in the other's place would think just and reasonable, are iniquitous. Of this kind are all deceits in goods, as putting them off for somewhat better than they are, whether that be done by concealing their real faults, or by giving them counterfeit advantages. Over-rating of commodities; that is, selling them at such a price, as will yield an exorbitant profit to the seller, to the prejudice of the buyer, which shows in a very bad light all monopolies, especially of such articles of commerce as are necessary in trade, or in life. All advantages taken by traders possessed of large capitals, to the hurt of persons in narrower circumstances. All advantages taken by the knowing, against the ignorant. Advantages taken by the buyer against the seller, whether of his ignorance or necessity. And those most flagrant iniquities of false weights, measures, or coins; with whatever else in general, may be the means of transferring to one person the property of another in any manner, which he who is the gainer would think an injustice and hardship, if he were in the case of the loser; all such arts of commerce are iniquitous and unjustifiable.

Reader, if thou art wise, thou wilt stop here, and examine thy heart, and thy life. If thou hast ever desired, or effected, the prejudice of thy neighbour in his property, whether by means of power or craft, as thou lovest thy soul, do not delay one day to repent, and reform thy fault, and to make ample restitution to the injured person, to his heirs, or if these cannot be found, to the poor. If thou goest down to the grave loaded with the spoils of injustice, they will sink thy soul to the bottomless pit. For the Judge of the world is of infinite purity and justice; and will show no mercy to the impenitent offender against unchangeable and eternal rectitude.

Men being drawn to make encroachments upon the property of others, through avarice; it is evidently the duty of every man to look into his own heart; and find out whether the love of riches takes up too much room in it. And if he finds, what I doubt most men will find, that he loves riches better than he does his neighbour, that he has a greater desire to gain wealth than to be of service to

his fellow-creatures, it is his undoubted duty to conquer the sordid passion, and strengthen the generous one. To this purpose it will be his wisdom to set himself in earnest to deep consideration on the evil of avarice, and the excellence of justice; to earnest prayer to heaven for assistance in the conquest of this vicious disposition; and to avoid extravagance and profusion, which are often the cause of the most rapacious and insatiable avarice.

Every man has a right to be thought and spoken of according to his real character. Consequently, whoever, by any means, direct or indirect, is the occasion of his neighbour's being worse thought, or spoken of than he deserves, is guilty of injuring his neighbour; and all injurious treatment of a fellow-creature is contrary to rectitude, and inconsistent with the love we ought to have for our neighbour, which ought to be equal to that with which one loves himself.

The most atrocious injury against our neighbour's reputation is, false witness before a judge. The laws of several nations have condemned the guilty of this crime to suffer the same punishment, to which the law exposed the person sworn against. But I know no punishment too severe for a crime of so black a nature, and which draws along with it such horrid consequences. To take the eternal God of truth to witness to a known falsehood; to defeat the very intention of an oath, which is often the only possible means for the discovery of truth; to render all human testimony suspicious; to stop the course of justice, and open a door to all manner of iniquity and violence; to blast the character of an innocent person in the most public manner, and in the manner the most effectual for ruining it, as being the most likely to gain belief to his prejudice; to violate his property, perhaps to reduce himself and his family to beggary; or to be the cause of passing upon him a sentence of death for what he never was capable of committing; to take a false oath against a person before a court is to be guilty of such black and complicated crimes as these: And for this our law inflicts a punishment, which a little money given the constable, makes almost no punishment!

To spread a false report against any person, is contrary to the love we ought to have for our neighbour, and to justice, whether it be known to be such, or invented for the

purpose by the publisher, or whether it be a mere surmise or suspicion. To invent a lie, or propagate a known falsehood, to the prejudice of any person's character, is taking up the office of Satan himself who is styled in Scripture the Accuser. But, that even insinuations, and whispers, or nods and shrugs, by which an innocent character may be blasted or ruined, are wicked and cruel, every man's conscience will tell him, if he will put it to himself, how he should like to be so used, or reflect upon the uneasiness it gave him, if ever he suffered in the same manner.

If by sneering and ridicule, upon an innocent infirmity a person may be laughed out of the respect and esteem, which every worthy character deserves, it is evident, that such wantonly mischievous mirth is highly unjustifiable.

The cruelty of all practices, which tend to lessen the reputation of an innocent person, appears plainly from the value of reputation; which is always dear to great and worthy minds; and the loss of which is in some cases peculiarly fatal. The characters of a clergyman, a governor of youth, a trader, or a virgin, are more delicate than those of other persons. And whoever is capable of wantonly attacking such characters, must be wholly void of sentiment for his fellow-creatures.

There is a peculiarity in the vice we are now treating of, which renders this more atrocious, than that of invading our neighbour's property. It is, that often the injured person is robbed of what is to him of inestimable worth, and the cruel spoiler not enriched by the rapine. For the defamer commonly reaps neither profit, honour, nor pleasure, unless the indulgence of malice can be called a pleasure,—which, if it is, Satan must be a very happy being.

The defamer is as much more infamous than the open railer, as the dark assassin is more to be dreaded than the fair challenger. And the defamer and assassin resemble one another, in that the wounds which both give, prove often incurable.

Reader, if thou makest it thy practice to divert thyself with mischief, or to strive to build thyself an ill-founded reputation upon the ruins of thy neighbour's, or thinkest, by undermining him, to get thyself into the advantages he now enjoys; remember I have told thee there will be

no triumph hereafter, when thou comest to be judged for thy idle words. The ill-gotten advantages, thou mayest reap from thy base treachery to thy brother, if thou shouldst be successful, which is seldom the case, will bring a curse along with them, a canker-worm, that will destroy both them and thee. And take notice, no malicious, envious, or cruel disposition will find any admittance into the seats of future bliss. If thou thinkest to be hereafter a companion of angels and spirits of good men, resolve in time to form thy mind to universal benevolence. Learn to consider even the abandoned offender as still a human creature, the production of the same goodness which made thyself; as not yet out of the reach of the Divine Grace, and therefore not to be given up as absolutely irrecoverable, and if recoverable, again a fit object for thy love; for thy Maker's love. Do not therefore dare in thy mind to hate or despise, nor in thy conversation to reflect, but with pity and humanity, upon even the real vices of thy fellow-creature, much less to blacken his unspotted reputation. The day will come, when thou shalt stand before the same judgment seat with him. He is not thy creature, but God's. Leave him to God. Is a fellow-creature guilty of a fault? So art thou. It is no part of thy duty to inquire into his faults, or to lay them open to others, unless to prevent the mischief thou knowest he is preparing to do another. If thou art not sure of a superior good to be gained by discovering thy neighbour's faults, why shouldst thou take upon thee the character of an informer? If thy neighbour is really guilty, why shouldst thou be ambitious of the office of an executioner, or delight in lashing offenders? If thou hast been so wicked as basely to stab the reputation of thy innocent fellow-creature, I charge thee, as thou lovest thy soul, that thou endeavour to heal up the wound thou hast made.—Take care, that every single person, be the number ever so great, whose ear thou hast abused, be set right with respect to the character of the innocent. If those, whose minds thou hast poisoned, have communicated the venom to others, be sure to trace the wicked lie, the spawn of thy own foul tongue, through all its doublings, and destroy it, that it may spread its deadly influence no farther. Take shame to thyself, and do justice to

innocence. Thou hadst better suffer shame now, than hereafter before God, angels, and men.

It is plainly contrary to the benevolent affection we ought to have for our fellow-creature, to put him to any pain or distress of body, as by beating, wounding, or maiming, unless in self-defence, when unjustly attacked; in lawful war; or in case of his having deserved corporal correction, and if we are authorised by a just law to inflict, or cause it to be inflicted upon him.

If it be contrary to the affection we ought to have for our neighbour, to put him to bodily pain needlessly, or unjustly, it is much more so, to deprive him of life, unless he has forfeited it according to law.

This injury is so much the more atrocious, as it is irreparable. And it seems to me very much to be doubted, whether human authority ought in reason to be extended to the pardon of the murder of the innocent. Scripture is express, "that he who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

There seems to be in this crime somewhat peculiarly offensive to Heaven, in that the Divine Providence does so often, by most striking and wonderful interpositions, bring the authors of it to light in a manner different from what happens in other cases. For, of the numbers, who lose their lives by violence, it is remarkable, that there are few instances of the murderer's escaping. That in so great and wicked a city as *London*, for example, there should not every year be many people missing, being made away with secretly, and the authors of their death never found, is very remarkable. We find that often the sagacity of dogs, and other animals, and even inanimate things, have been the occasion of bringing this foul crime to light. But the most common means of the discovery of bloody deeds has been conscience, which acting the part of a torturer, has forced the tongue, through extremity of anguish, to disclose the secret, which no other but itself could bring to light.

It being by pride and passion, that men are incited to break loose upon one another in acts of violence, it is plain that the best method of preventing our falling into them is, by subduing those fatal passions, which transport us beyond the power and use of reason. And if nothing

tends more to enflame every passion, than the use of strong liquors, how cautious ought we to be of indulging the maddening draught, which may drive us upon extravagances, we could not in our cooler hours believe ourselves capable of? Cruelty, even to the brute creation, is altogether unjustifiable, much more to our fellow-creatures. Nor can any thinking person believe it possible, that a mind disposed to barbarity, or insensible of the miseries of our fellow-beings, can be at all fit for a future state, in which goodness is to prevail.

A wise man will dread the beginning of quarrels. For no one knows where a quarrel, once begun, may end. None of us knows how much of the evil spirit is either in himself or in his adversary. And he, who begins, is in conscience answerable for all the consequences. Nor was there ever a falling out without folly, at least on one side, if not on both. Were one sure the worst that was to happen would be the ruffling of his own or his neighbour's temper, or the discomposing of their spirits, even that cannot be without guilt. And is an empire of consequence enough to make any thinking man offend God, and endanger his or his neighbour's soul? Tremble, reader, at the thought of being suddenly snatched away, (as nothing is more common than sudden death) and sent into the world of spirits, hot from a contest with a fellow-creature, and fellow-christian.

Hurting our neighbour's health by tempting him to be guilty of intemperance, is as really contrary to that affection we ought to have for him, as wounding, or poisoning him. It is no more an alleviation of the guilt of seducing him into debauchery, that it may not cut him off in less than several years, (which is likewise more than can be certainly affirmed) than it is less murder to poison in the *Italian* manner, than with a dose of arsenic. But to lead a fellow-creature into a course of debauchery is, as above observed, poisoning both soul and body at once.

To grieve, afflict, or terrify a fellow-creature needlessly, or unjustly, is injuring him as to his soul. And the anguish of the mind being more severely felt than bodily pain the inflicting the former upon an innocent person is a greater act of cruelty. It is therefore shocking to think how one half of mankind sport with the anguish of the

other. How little they make the case of their fellow-creatures their own, or consider what they must suffer from their wicked aspersions, misrepresentations, and oppressive and injurious treatment; which bring a pain proportioned to the sensibility of the sufferer. And every one knows, that the delicacy of some minds renders them as different from others, as the temper of the lamb is meeker than that of the tiger.

But the most direct injury against the spiritual part of our fellow-creature is, leading him into vice; whether that be done by means of solicitation; by artfully imposing on his judgment; by powerful compulsion; or by prevailing example.

Some tempers are so impotently ductile, that they can refuse nothing to repeated solicitation. Whoever takes the advantage of such persons, is guilty of the lowest baseness. Yet nothing is more common, than for the debauched part of our sex to show their heroism by a poor triumph over weak, easy, thoughtless woman! nothing more frequent, than to hear them boast of the ruin of that virtue, of which it ought to be their pride to be the defenders. "Poor fool! she loved me, and therefore could refuse me nothing." Base coward! Dost thou boast thy conquest over one, who, by thy own confession, was disabled for resistance, disabled by her affection for thy worthless self? Does affection deserve such a return? Is superior understanding, or rather deeper craft, to be used against thoughtless simplicity; and its shameful success to be boasted of? Dost thou pride thyself, that thou hast had art enough to decoy the harmless lamb to thy hand, that thou mightest shed its blood.

To call good evil, and evil good, is in scripture stigmatized with a curse. And to put out the bodily eyes is not so great an injury, as to mislead, or extinguish the understanding, and impose upon the judgment in matters of right and wrong. Whoever is guilty of this inhuman and diabolical wickedness, may in reason expect to have the soul he has been the ruin of, required hereafter at his hands.

I am very suspicious, that many persons in eminent stations have very little notion of their being highly criminal in the sight of God, in setting a bad example before the rest of mankind. No person, who thinks at all, can

doubt, whether it is justifiable to advise, or force others to be guilty of vice. But if there is a way incomparably more effectual and alluring, by which people are more powerfully drawn into wickedness; surely that is more mischievous and hurtful, and ought most carefully to be avoided.

Of all tyranny, none is so inhuman, as where men use their power over others, to force them into wickedness. The bloody persecutor, who uses threats and punishments, prisons, racks, and fires, to compel the unhappy sufferer to make shipwreck of faith, and give up truth and a good conscience; the corrupt minister, or candidate, who bullies the unhappy dependant into the perjured vote; these, and such like, are in the way toward being qualified for becoming furies and fiends in the lower regions. For who is so fit for the place of a tormentor, to stand among evil spirits, and plunge the emerging souls deeper in hell-flames, than he, who, on earth, made it his infernal employment, to thrust his fellow-creatures into those ways, which lead down to the chambers of destruction?

Reader, if thou hast ever been the cause of a fellow-creature's guilt; if thou hast by force or art, betrayed a wretched soul into vice, and acted the part of an agent of Satan; I charge thee on thy soul, put not off thy repentance for an hour. Prevent, if possible, the final ruin thy cursed arts tend to bring upon a human creature. Endeavour to open the eyes, which thou hast closed; to enlighten the understanding thou hast blinded; and to lead again into the right way, the feet thou hast taught to wander from it. If thou wilt go to destruction, why shouldest thou drag others with thee? If thy ambition prompts thee to ruin thy own soul, spare that of thy poor fellow-creature, who has no concern with thy schemes. Must thy brother have a place in the infernal regions, to get thee a place at court? Take back the damning bribe; prevent the perjured vote: think how thou wilt bear the eternal howlings of a spirit, by thy temptations sunk to irrecoverable perdition.

Besides the general duty of benevolence to all who partake of the same common nature which is indispensably necessary in the nature of things toward the very being of society, in the present state, and for fitting us for en-

tering into a more extensive society hereafter; besides the general benevolence we owe to all our fellow-creatures it is evident, that we owe particular duties to particular persons, according to the relations and connexions we have with them. This propriety is founded in the nature of things,* and is self-evident. It is as plain, that reverence to superiors, for example, is proper, as that all the angles of a plain triangle are equal to two right ones. It is as evident, that the contempt of one really superior to us, would be wrong, as that it would be wrong to say that twice two are equal to fifty.

The first, and most important of all relative social duties, is that which we owe to our country. That we ought to study the interest of our country, is plain from considering, that the love of our families, and even self-love, cannot be pursued, or established; on any rational footing, but what will extend to that of our country (for it is impossible for all families and individuals to be happy in a ruined country) and from considering, that, if no person loved his country, but every individual was indifferent about its interest, no country could subsist; but the world must quickly come to an end.

The virtue of patriotism is most indispensable in persons in high stations, whose rank gives them an opportunity of being of important service to the public interest. These ought to consider themselves as general protectors and fathers, to whose care the rest of mankind are by Divine Providence committed; and ought to tremble at the thought of betraying so awful a trust. And the interest of a country consists briefly in its being properly secured against enemies; in its being governed by good laws, duly executed; in its being secured in its liberties, civil and religious, the boundaries of which last cannot be too ample, though the former may easily be extended to licentiousness, as is at present most flagrantly the case in *England*; in its being kept under such a police, and such regulations, as may tend to promote health, virtue, public and private, and real religion; in a due encouragement of commerce, agriculture, manufactures, learning and arts. Whatever a nation can be the better for the encouragement of, or the worse if discouraged, is the province of gover-

* See the first Section of this third book.

nors to be perfect masters of, and to see effectual means used for carrying into execution every salutary scheme. With respect to the health of a people, for example, the duty of governors is not only to take all possible care to prevent the importation of infections from foreign parts, but that the people have it not in their power, by the use of unwholesome provisions of any kind, to hurt their constitutions, to the enfeebling and enervating of the race, as is most atrociously and extensively the case at present in *England*, by means of too low-priced spirituous liquors. Again, it is unquestionably the duty of governors to see to it, that there be no encouragement given to idleness, or debauchery; but that, on the contrary, all vices hurtful to society be liable to every kind of discouragement. That there be something found for every creature to do, who has any measure of health or strength, that all excuse for idleness may be removed, and the crime of doing nothing be severely punishable. That lewdness and prostitution be at least driven from appearing in public without shame or restraint, to the corrupting of the youth of a nation. That marriage, the main support of states, be in the most effectual manner encouraged, and celibacy, after mature age (one of the worst offences against our country) subjected to every inconvenience and burden. That all possible encouragement be given to every person who enriches or adorns his country by any valuable discovery, or noble production, in arts, or sciences, and particularly to those, whose literary labours tend to the advancement of public and private virtue, and religion. Whatever tends to the increase of luxury and extravagance, ought to be laid under severe restraints, and heavy taxes; as in general all taxes ought to fall on the luxury and superfluity of life, while industry and frugality escape free.

To understand thoroughly all these particulars, and to endeavour to promote and improve them, is the proper calling of persons of rank and weight in a nation. And whoever makes no other advantage of a high station, than to plunder his country to gratify his avarice, to raise himself and his creatures to affluence, or to indulge sensuality, is unworthy of the honourable rank he holds; is a treacherous betrayer of his sacred trust; and instead of honour deserves the contempt of all men of virtue and

public spirit. For the true dignity of high life consists in a superior elevation of mind; more extensive improvements in knowledge; a greater contempt of whatever is unworthy; a more enlarged benevolence to mankind; a more uncorrupted integrity: and a more sublime way of thinking, speaking, and acting, than is to be seen in other men. Whoever is not in these respects superior to the rest of mankind, may be richer, but can with no propriety of speech be said to be greater, than others. For it is not the dress, the station, or the fortune, but the mind, that is the man. Therefore a little mind makes a mean man; a great mind a great man.

Though it is chiefly by the great, that the interest of a nation is to be consulted and supported, it is certain, that every person has it in his power to serve his country less or more. Whoever plants a tree, incloses a field, builds a house, is the cause of a child's being brought into the world, and educated for becoming a valuable member of society; whoever, in short, fills a useful place in life, serves his country more than five hundred of those idle recluses, and holy drones, with which popish countries swarm. Especially, men of abilities, in the most private stations, are capable of serving their country, if not by action yet by suggesting useful hints to those, whose stations give them an opportunity of action; and of improving, by their conversation and writings, the minds and manners of their countrymen.

The true love of our country will show itself in our preferring the public to our own private interest, wherever they come in competition. In a conscientious obedience to the laws, though to our own particular disadvantage. In a proper reverence to our governors, especially the supreme; even in cases where we do not see enough (as how should persons in private stations?) to be able to explain to ourselves, or others, the wisdom of all their measures.

It is with a thorough concern, I cannot help remarking here, that the very contrary of all this seems to be the rule, by which the people of *England* conduct themselves in the present age. Is it not notorious, that the virtue of public spirit is become little else than a subject of ridicule? That venality has poisoned all ranks, from the bribed voter in a country borough, upwards to the candidate for a place

in the great assembly of the nation; The enormous expenses bestowed, and horrible perjury committed, in carrying elections; with the numerous controverted elections which are from time to time the subject of examination before the house; and the variety of regulations found necessary to be made for restraining bribery and corruption (though the most effectual regulation, I mean, of voting in all cases by ballot, which the wise states of antiquity found necessary, has not been tried) all this shows too flagrantly, to what a fatal extent this ruinous and destructive mischief reaches. Nor is there any hope of an effectual cure for the evil, while such a pernicious maxim in politics as the following is held, I had almost said, established: That it is lawful to bribe for the good of the nation, (as they very improperly speak) in order to be on even terms with the enemies of the nation. The Jacobite, or Tory party (say our politicians) will get themselves elected into parliament by bribery; Why must not the gentlemen of revolution-principles endeavour to defeat them by the same means? To expose this fatal doctrine, which is sometimes defended by very well-meaning men, let it be considered, first, that Jacobitism, or Toryism, in the southern part of the nation, is in fact little more than another word for the party who are out, and would be in. There are few men of the least sense, and knowledge of the world, on this side the *Highlands of Scotland*, who do in sober earnest wish to see a papist on the *British* throne. Slavery, civil and religious, will not go down with those who have long enjoyed the sweets of liberty. And if Jacobitism and Toryism be little more than a bugbear; and the virtue of a people, the only sure foundation of government and national happiness, is to be corrupted and ruined by a contention between two sets of men, either of which might be as likely to pursue the interest of the nation as the other, it is plain that both sides are guilty; the pretended Whigs, who are in, and the pretended Tories, who are out; it being equally contrary to virtue, and to the laws of the land, to bribe for one side as for another. But supposing the case to be exactly as first put, and that all, who pretend to be disaffected, were really so in their hearts; and that their inclination, and their power, to subvert the constitution, were much greater than they are; it is evident,

that to do a positive evil, that an uncertain good may come, is directly contrary both to reason and religion. For the real friends of liberty to oppose the enemies of our country, by bribery and corruption, is directly iniquitous and impious. For, to proceed in that manner is to confound the immutable nature of right and wrong, to throw down the sacred barriers, established by Divine authority for guarding the awful laws of virtue from violation, which are to be held in the utmost reverence, and on no account to be broke through, if not only a kingdom should suffer a revolution; but if the solar system, or whole visible universe, were to go to wreck. For one act of perjury, or other gross deviation from virtue, is more opposite to the Divine Nature, and economy of the world, than the extinction of a thousand suns, with the destruction of all their planets. But besides all this, what can be more absurd, than to talk of supporting a state by vice, the very means which have proved the ruin of all the states that ever have sunk; and without which no state could be brought to ruin? Alas, does it become such poor short-sighted creatures as we are, to project schemes for ourselves, to violate the eternal laws of virtue, in order, forsooth to put it in the power of Divine Providence to do what it could not without our assistance? Can any politician think that promoting bribery or perjury are likely to gain us the Divine Protection? or that the kingdom can stand independent of the Divine Protection? or that it can stand without virtue? These are deplorable expedients. Like opiates in an acute distemper they lull things into peace for a short time, while they slowly, but surely, wear out the strength and vitals of the constitution.—O virtue! O my country!

Is it not also notorious, that the bulk of our laws, through the criminal negligence, or timidity, of those, in whose hands the executive power is lodged, and through the licentiousness of the people, who seems to think it the privilege of free-born *Englishmen* to break their own laws, are, instead of a necessary restraint, become a mere bugbear? Above all things, the law-makers are sometimes law-breakers, is a shocking accusation to be laid against persons in eminent stations. That the same persons in their legislative capacity should concur to the making of regulations for the suppression of the destruc-

tive practices of smuggling, gaming, unduly influencing elections and the like, and in their private capacity should be the promoters of those ruinous vices; is doing what they can to turn government into a farce, and reduce a nation to a state of anarchy.

Is it not monstrous, that by means of the madness and insolence of party, such a degree of arrogant and seditious virulence is worked up in the spirits of the people, that the lowest of the mob thinks himself wise enough to take to task the governors of the state, and assumes the liberty, over his cups, to rail at the legislators of his country; by which means, the best constitutioned kingdom upon earth seems hastening to a state of confusion; while the people's reverence for lawful authority, whereby obedience subsists, is destroyed, the measures of government are embarrassed; and our governors discouraged from attempting to alter, or new-model any thing, that may be amiss; since nothing can be done without clamour and disturbance, and laws, when enacted, are, through the perverseness of the people, of very little efficacy.

These are not the effects of the love of our country. Nor the infamous practice of smuggling, and other mean arts, by which the laws for raising a revenue for defraying the necessary expenses of government, are evaded. Yet it is notorious, that the avowed principle of numbers of persons in trade, is, That all is well got, that is got by cheating the king, as they absurdly talk. For defrauding the public revenue, is in effect defrauding the people, who pay it, and making it necessary for the government to lay additional taxes, and to clog and incumber trade and industry, to make up the deficiencies occasioned by the depredations of a set of lawless people, the plague and ruin of fair traders. It is amazing, that rational creatures can contrive so effectually to blind their reason, and stupify their conscience, as to bring themselves to argue, that though it is confessedly unjustifiable and wicked in a son to disobey his parent, yet there is no harm in disobeying that authority, which is higher than the parental, I mean, that of the law of the land: that, though it is wrong to cheat or lie, there is no harm in taking a false oath at the custom-house, by which the guilt of perjury is incurred; the revenue,

or more properly the nation, robbed; and the fair trader injured.

People may deceive themselves as they please: But there is hardly any worse species of vice, than disobedience and insolence to supreme lawful authority. Nor will any person be fit for a future state of peace, regularity, and perfect obedience to the universal Governor, (without which there can be no happiness) who has in this state habituated himself to lawless opposition and contempt of government.

To raise an opposition or rebellion in a country against the supreme authority, except upon most powerful causes and motives, is a crime of as horrid and complicated a kind, as any to which human wickedness is capable of proceeding. For the consequences of a general disturbance in a state, are the perpetration of all kinds of iniquity. And where so dreadful a consequence is foreseen, it is evident, nothing less than the prevention of a total subversion of rights and privileges, civil and religious, of which the last is much the most important, is a sufficient plea for disturbing the general peace.

This was confessedly the case at the revolution in 1688. But those men, who delight in misrepresenting a government, and making it odious and vile in the eyes of the people, and do all they can to thwart and embarrass its measures, merely because themselves have no share in the emoluments of place and power, are the pests of society.

One of the greatest curses of a nation, and of liberty in general, is that of our unhappy divisions and parties in religion and politics. As for the first, it is a subject of too serious and important a nature to be made a mere badge of faction, or a bone of contention. The design of religion is to improve and dignify our natures, to correct our errors in judgment and to regulate our lives. And whoever applies it as a tool of state, as an artifice for aggrandizing himself or his friends, and a cloak to conceal his secular views, is guilty of prostituting the most sacred thing in the world to the vilest uses. As for political parties, it is notorious, that those who assume to themselves the most splendid titles of being on the patriot side, or country-interest, and against the court, as their cant is, gener-

ally make a clamour for pretended liberty, and the good of their country, only to have their mouths stopped with a place or a pension; and that, on the other hand, those who stand up in defence of all the measures of those in power, without distinction, only do so with a view to get, or to keep some emolument. As it is inconceivable that either one or the other party should be constantly in the right, or invariably in the wrong, you may conclude, that whoever inclines universally for or against either side, without ever altering his opinion, is either a man of very mean abilities, or has some indirect scheme in view. The trimmer, who gives his vote sometimes with one side, sometimes with the other, according to the view he has of the consequences, is the only man of integrity. And I cannot help advising my readers to look upon all parties, and all who make either religion or politicks a party-affair, in the same light, and to keep clear of all sides alike; making it their business to consult the real good of their country, and the real welfare of their souls, without any eye to the sordid gains of corruption, or any desire to fight the battles of either party.

To conclude, our duty to our country comprehends all the relative duties; and we are to sacrifice private interest, family, and life itself to it, when called upon: and are to obey its laws in all cases, where they do not clash with the only superior authority in the universe, I mean the Divine.

Next under the authority of national government is the parental. The propriety and necessity of submission to parents appears from considering, that it is evidently necessary, that some person, or persons, should undertake the care of children in the helpless time of life; and that none are so proper as the parents. In consequence of this, it is necessary that children, before they come to the use of reason, be governed by authority, and there is none so natural as that of parents; it is therefore their part to return the reciprocal duties of love, gratitude, reverence, and obedience to those who have taken care of them, when no one else would undertake that office. And it being once made the appointed course and order of things, the law of filial duty is not to be broke through by the children on account of a failure in the parents in discharging their

duty; nor, contrarywise, are parents to give up the care of their children, though they should turn out untowardly. Obedience to parents extends to all things that are consistent with the laws of our country, and of God, both which authorities are superior to that of parents.

The duty of parents to their children is briefly to take care that proper provision be made for their bodily interest, by food, clothing, and education; and more especially for that of their minds, by forming them, from the earliest years, to virtue and religion.

The duty of spiritual pastors to their people, is to do whatever is in their power for the good of the souls committed to their charge, by preaching, catechising, counselling, or writing. However improper it may be thought for a layman to enlarge upon this relative duty, it cannot be improper to refer to one, from whom directions on this head will come with unexceptionable authority; I mean the apostle *Paul* in his Epistles to *Timothy*. The duty of people to their pastors, is to show them a great deal more reverence and gratitude than is commonly done in *England*.

The duty of instructors of youth is briefly to fill the place of parents in forming those consigned to their care by the parents, to usefulness in life, and happiness hereafter. The duty of young persons to their governors and teachers is obedience, and diligence in endeavouring to improve themselves while under their care; and gratitude and love to those, by whose faithful diligence they had the opportunity of becoming wise and good men. And the duty of gratitude to parents and teachers on this account will be binding upon those who have been the objects of their care, not only for life, but to eternity.

The duty of masters to servants, is to pay them according to engagement; to treat them as fellow-creatures, though in an inferior station; and to take care, that they have opportunities of knowing their duty and means of happiness. That of servants to masters is faithfulness, diligence, and obedience in all lawful cases.

The duty of husbands to wives, is the tenderest love, and warmest desire of their happiness in life, and to eternity. That of wives to husbands, besides reciprocal love, takes in obedience in all lawful things. This arises from

the consideration of the priority of creation, and superior dignity of the male sex, to which Nature has given the greater strength of mind and body, and therefore fitted them for authority. But as, on one hand, it is not the part of a good wife to contest the authority of her husband; so neither is it of a good husband to stand up for the privilege of his sex, while he shows little of the tenderness which is due to the weaker. This is, in short, a string never to be touched; for it always introduces discord, and interrupts the matrimonial harmony.

Love is the fulfilling of the whole duty mutually owing by collateral relations, as brothers, sisters, and the like. And such persons may easily know whether they do their duty to one another, by considering how people behave to those they really love.

In friendship, of which I have treated in the first book, the duties are mutual love, fidelity, secrecy, and a desire of promoting one another's happiness both spiritual and temporal. Virtue is the only foundation of friendship. The commerce of the wicked is rather to be called a combination or conspiracy against mankind, than friendship.

The duty of the rich to the poor, is feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and in general supplying the wants of the necessitous. Those to whom the Divine Providence has been distinguishingly bountiful, are to consider themselves as stewards of the good gifts of heaven, which they are not to lavish away upon their own extravagant lusts, but to distribute to their distressed brethren. Nor ought they to think of this as an act of generosity, or almost of supererogation, as many seem, by their ostentatious way of giving charity, to do. It is not what they may do, or let alone. It is not to be carried to what length they please, and no farther. They are expected to give all they can give, and then to think they have done only what they ought. Since to do less, if we will take our Saviour's own word for it, is a neglect which will exclude from future bliss. There is indeed great prudence to be used, that a judicious choice of objects may be made, and that the charity given may not prove a prejudice, instead of an advantage. If what is given serves to support in idleness and debauchery, it had much better be withheld. Care is also to be taken, that our

charity be not given for fashion, ostentation, or any other view, but obedience to God, and benevolence to our fellow-creatures. In as far as any other consideration has influence, in so far the real excellence of such good works is lessened in the sight of Him, who searches the heart.

The duty of the poor, is gratitude to their benefactors; and industry, in endeavouring as much as they can to lighten the burden of their own support to those who contribute to it.

Propriety and rectitude require, that the learned and wise use their endeavours to instruct and advise the ignorant and unthinking. And in general, that every person employ his peculiar talent or advantage for the most extensive usefulness. It is with this view that such remarkable differences are made in the gifts of mind and fortune, which different persons share. These are parts of their respective trials; and they will be judged according to the use they have made of them.

Our duty to benefactors is evidently love and gratitude. Even to enemies we owe, according to the Christian law, of which afterwards, forgiveness and intercession with Heaven for them; which also we are obliged to for all our fellow-creatures.

The rectitude or propriety of these several obligations being self-evident, it would be only wasting time to take the pains to establish it by arguments.

The infinitely wise Governor of the universe has placed us in this state, and engaged us in such a variety of connexions with, and relations to one another, on purpose to habituate us to a sense of duty, and love of obedience and regularity. The more duties we have to do in our present state of discipline, the more occasion we have for watchfulness and diligence, and a due exertion of every noble power of the mind. And the more practice we have of exerting our powers, the stronger they must grow; and the more we practice obedience, the more tractable and obedient we must naturally become; and to be obedient to the Supreme Governor of the world, is the very perfection of every created nature. Again, the various connexions among mankind, and the different duties resulting from them, naturally tend to work in us a settled and extensive benevolence for our fellow-beings, and to

habituate us to think and act with tenderness, forbearance, and affection toward them. And it is evident that this sublime and godlike disposition cannot be too much cultivated. We can never be in a state, in which it will not be for our advantage, and for the advantage of all the other beings with whom we may be connected, that we be disposed to extensive and unbounded benevolence for one another. It is obvious, that a happy society, in which hatred and ill-will should universally prevail, is an inconceivable and contradictory idea. Whatever may be the nature of the states we may be hereafter designed for, it is evident we shall be the fitter for them, for having cultivated in our minds an extensive universal love of all other beings. But if we suppose, what seems agreeable to Scripture views, as well as to reason, that those who shall be found worthy of a future life, are to be raised to stations, not of indolence and inactivity, but of extensive usefulness in the creation, such as we suppose to be filled at present by angels, I mean of guardians and governors over beings of lower ranks, during their state of trial and discipline; if this be a reasonable supposition, it is plain, that the sublime virtue of benevolence cannot be carried too far. And this sets forth the Divine Wisdom in placing us in a state in which we have such opportunities of being habituated to a disposition so useful and necessary for all orders of rational beings throughout all periods of their existence.

It will be the reader's wisdom here carefully to examine his conduct, that he may know whether he acts the part of a valuable and useful member of society. If he has wrought into his soul a kind, a generous, and extensive benevolence toward all his fellow-creatures, whether in high or low stations, whether rich or poor, whether foreigners or countrymen, whether of his own religion or any other, learned or unlearned, virtuous or vicious, friends or enemies; if he finds it recommendation enough to his regard or affection that it is a fellow-creature who wants his assistance, a being produced by the same Almighty hand which created himself; if he earnestly wishes, and is at all times ready to promote the good of his fellow-creatures by all means in his power, by his riches, his advice, his interest, his labour, at any time, seasonable or

unseasonable, in a way agreeable to his own particular temper and inclination, or in a manner that may be less suitable to it; if he finds himself ready with the open arms of forgiveness to receive his enemy, the moment he appears disposed to repentance and reconciliation; if he finds that it would be a pleasure to him to do good to those who have injured him, though his goodness should never be known; if he finds that he is in no part of his private devotions more zealous than when he prays from his heart to Him who searches all hearts, that his enemy may be pardoned, reformed, and made as happy hereafter as himself; if he finds that one disappointment or abuse of his goodness, or ten such discouragements, do not cool his ardour for the good of mankind; that he does not immediately fall out of conceit with a public-spirited design, because of its difficulties or uncertainty of success, but that he can stand the raillery of those narrow souls, who cannot rise to his pitch of disinterested benevolence; and that, though he goes on resolutely, and without wearying in well-doing, he does not do it from pride or self-sufficiency, but from real well-meant goodness of heart and design; if he does not search for excuses, but considers himself as obliged to be always endeavouring to gain some kind and beneficial end, without regard to its being more or less directly in his way, or more or less promising of success, if it is the best he can do at the time, and if no one else will do it better, or engage in it all; and that after all he considers himself as an unprofitable servant, as having done still only his indispensable duty; if the reader finds this to be the turn of his mind, he may conclude that he is not far from that perfection of benevolence, which the Divine rectitude and law require, and which is necessary to fit every human mind for being a member of an universal society hereafter. If, on the other hand, he finds, that he is wholly wrapt up in himself; that he thinks with no relish of the happiness of any one else; that his utmost benevolence extends no wider than the circle of his own family, friends, or party; that all he wants is to enrich himself and his relations; that he cannot look with any personal tenderness or considerations upon a *Frenchman* or *Spaniard*, a *Jew* or a *Papist*, or even a churchman or dissenter, if he differs from them in profession; if, reader, thou findest this to

be the turn of thy mind ; if, in a word, thou dost not find it to be thy meat and thy drink to do thy fellow-creature good, if thou dost not love thy neighbour with the same affection as thyself, be assured thou art not at present of the disposition of mind, which the Universal Governor would have all his rational creatures brought to ; and mayest judge what chance thou hast for His favour, whose favour is life and happiness ; whose love to all his creatures tends to draw and unite them to himself, and would have them all love one another, that by universal love they may be united into one society, under one infinite Lord and universal Father.

SECTION VIII.

Of our Obligations with Respect to our Creator.

WE come now to the third and noblest part of the duty of rational beings, which is also their highest honour, I mean, That which they owe to the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of themselves, and the Universe. The first part, or foundation of which is, The belief of his existence.

The abstract proof of the existence of God requires nothing to be granted, but only, That something now exists ; which concession forces the mind to confess the necessity of some First Cause, existing naturally, necessarily, and independently upon any other ; Himself the cause of all things ; Himself the fountain of being, and plenitude of perfection.

This proof leaves no room for caviling : but effectually cuts off the subtle disputer from every possible evasion or subterfuge. It is not however so easy for those who have been accustomed to abstract reasoning, to see the conclusive force of it. For the bulk of mankind, the fittest arguments for the being of God are taken from the stupendous works of Nature. And what object is there in the whole compass of nature, animate or inanimate, great or small, rare or common, which does not point to the almighty Author of all things ? Not only those which strike us with astonishment, and fill our minds with their greatness ; not only the view of a rolling ocean, a blazing sun, or the concave of heaven sparkling with its innumerable starry fires ;

but even the sight of a flower, a pile of grass, or a reptile of the dust, every particle of matter around us; the body, into which his breath has infused our life; the soul, by which we think and know; whatever we fix our eye or thought upon, holds forth the ever-present Deity. In what state or place must we be, to be insensible of Him, by whom our very being is preserved? Whither must we withdraw ourselves, to be out of the reach of his Divine communications, who minutely fills every point of boundless space? Is it possible to obliterate from our minds the thought of him in whom we live, and move, and have our being?

The first and fundamental duty of all rational beings to God, is, as I have said, To believe his existence. Now, though there is nothing praise-worthy in believing the most important truth upon insufficient grounds; and though, on the contrary, credulity is a weakness unworthy of a being endowed with a capacity of examining and finding out truth: yet there may be a great wickedness in unbelief; For a person may, from obstinacy and perverseness, reject important truth, or through levity, folly, or an attachment to vice, may avoid the proper and natural means of conviction. So that the effect, which the rational and clear persuasion of important truth might have had upon his disposition and practice, may be lost. And it is greatly to be suspected, that multitudes are guilty of this last crime, with respect to the awful doctrine of the existence of God. If they be asked, whether they believe that there is a God, they will take it amiss to be suspected of the least inclination to Atheism. But it is evident, from their lives and conversations, that if they believe the existence of God at all, it is in such a manner as is next to no belief. They think not of the matter. There may, or may not, be a God for any thing they know or care.

But to believe this important doctrine in a manner becoming a rational creature, is to bear in mind a constant and habitual impression of an infinitely perfect nature, the Author and Fountain of existence, the wise and righteous Governor of the universe, who is every where present, beholding all the actions and intentions of his creatures, to whom all rational beings are accountable, and upon whose favour or disapprobation their fate to all eternity wholly

depends. To think of the Supreme Being in any other way than this, is not believing His existence in a rational and consistent manner.

And did men really admit the rational belief of a God; did they impress their minds with a fixed and constant attention to the awful thought of their being under the continual inspection of their judge, we should not see them proceed in the manner they do. For I ask, How the bulk of mankind could behave worse than they do, if they were sure there was no God? We see them ready to catch at every unwarrantable gratification of passion or appetite; to put every fraudulent or wicked scheme in execution, from which they are not restrained either by human laws, or by fear of losing the esteem and confidence of their fellow-creatures, with the advantages connected with it. What could they do more, if there was no God? Is there, taking mankind upon an average, one of an hundred who hesitates at any vicious thought, word or action, from the single consideration of its being perhaps displeasing to God? Is there one of an hundred who habitually regulates his thoughts, words, and actions, by the standard of the Divine Will, and would rather lose the favour and approbation of all the men on earth, and all the angels of heaven, than his Maker's alone? How seldom do we meet with an instance of a person, who will not truckle and temporize, commute and compound with conscience, or even stifle its remonstrances to gain the favour of the great? Whereas, if men acted upon the principle of a rational belief of a God, they would rather make a point of giving up all human favour, to make sure of keeping strictly to their duty; they would take care always to be on the safe side, to be scrupulously exact, rather than too free, in their lives and conversations; they would labour, if possible, to do more than the exact duty of their stations; and to avoid even the least appearance of evil; as they who would make their court to a prince, do not grudge any extraordinary service, attendance, or expence for him; are cautious of so much as seeming to look toward what may be disagreeable to his humour or inclination, or in the least favouring, or seeming to favour, those whom he does not approve. Did men in any rational and consistent manner believe the existence of a God, or think of him as the

Governor and Judge of the world, under whose immediate inspection we stand at all moments, we should see their conduct corrected and regulated by that constant awe and fear, which becomes dependent, accountable beings, whose minds are duly impressed with a sense of their present condition and future expectations. Their belief would be practical as well as speculative. It would affect their hearts, as well as impress their understandings.

How some men contrive to satisfy their own minds upon the subject of their duty to God, is inconceivable. One would imagine it impossible for a being, at all capable of thought, to bring himself to believe, that though he owes his existence, his body, his soul, his reasoning faculty, speech and all its powers, corporeal and mental, with whatever he enjoys now, or hopes for hereafter, to an infinitely perfect and amiable Being; who has made him capable of apprehending his perfections and his absolute power over him; one would imagine it impossible, I say, for a being endowed with a reasoning faculty to believe all this, and yet think he owes no duty at all, no gratitude, love, or service, no positive adoration or praise to his Creator, Governor and Judge. Yet is there, even in this enlightened age, and this land of knowledge, a person among an hundred who makes conscience of regularly and habitually performing, in a rational and devout manner, the positive duties of meditation upon the Divine perfections, in order to raise his mind to an imitation of them; of addressing God by prayer for the supply of all his wants; or of praising him for the bounties received? on the contrary, is there not too much reason to conclude, that by far the greatest part of mankind have not God in all their thoughts; or if they have, the thought of him produces no visible effect? They attend the public worship indeed from a sense of decency. But it is plain, from the general levity of behaviour, that their hearts are not in it. And as for worshipping God daily in their houses, with their families, or by themselves in their closets, they see no necessity for it, and conclude, that whoever lives soberly and is good-natured, though he habitually neglects the whole third part of his duty, is likely to meet with the divine approbation, and to be happy at last.

It is proved above, that the Author of all things must

be infinite in his essence, and in all possible perfections, as wisdom, power, goodness, and rectitude. If so, it is evident, not only that he is the proper object of the admiration, love, gratitude, and every other noble affection, of the minds of such low creatures as mankind, who are probably the meanest of all rational beings; but that it is the glory of the highest archangel in heaven to adore infinite Perfection; nay, that the whole of the reverence, love, and praise of any conceivable number of created beings, paid by them through all eternity, must fall infinitely short of what is justly his due; because the whole of the tribute of honour and service, which all created beings can pay, will be finite; whereas the Divine Perfections are infinite: Now every finite is infinitely deficient, when compared with what is infinite.

To be more particular; the consideration of the Divine Immensity, or Omnipresence, ought to strike every thinking mind with the most profound awe and veneration, which ought to dwell upon it constantly and habitually, of its being at all times surrounded with the Divinity which pervades all matter, and is the Spirit within every spirit, seeing, or rather intimately feeling, every motion of every mind in the universe. Whoever has just and habitual impressions of the Divine Omnipresence, will no more presume to do any thing amiss or even to think a bad thought, than a considerate person will dare to behave rudely in the royal presence. A thinking mind considers itself as at all times, by day and by night, in public and in private, abroad and at home, in the immediate and intimate presence of the great King of the World, whose boundless palace is the whole universe. It will therefore be continually and habitually on its guard; and, as one who appears before an illustrious character, whose favour he greatly values, will be above all things fearful of misbehaving; so will the considerate mind dread the danger of losing the approbation of that ever-present Judge, upon whom his fate depends, infinitely more than pain, or poverty, or shame, or death, and will cheerfully expose himself to any or all of them, rather than act an unbecoming part before that Eye, which is not to be deceived. He, who thinks how vice, or even frailty, must appear before that Being, whose very nature is rectitude in perfection,

and who knows not the least shadow of error, or deviation ; can he think of voluntarily departing from the eternal rule of right, or allowing himself in any practice, which must offend Infinite Purity ?

The consideration of the eternity or perpetual existence hereafter, of the Divinity, together with that of the necessary immutability of his nature, suggests to the pious and well-disposed mind, the comfortable prospect, that after all the changes and revolutions which may happen to it, to the kingdoms, and empires of this world, and to the world itself ; after all the visible objects, which now are, have performed their courses, and are vanished, or renewed ; after a period of duration long enough to obliterate from all human memory the idea of a sun, and stars, and earth ; still he, who is now Governor of the Universe, will continue to fill the Supreme Throne, and to rule with boundless and uncontroled sway over his infinite dominions ; and consequently, that whoever is so wise as to strive above all things to gain his favour, may depend upon being always secure of the enjoyment of the happiness assigned him by the general Judge, and that no change in the affairs even of the whole universe, will ever remove him from that station which has been appointed him. For the Universal Governor will raise no one to happiness hereafter, but such as he finds qualified for it. Nor will the time ever come, when it will not be in his power to keep those beings happy, which he has once made so ; for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and of his kingdom there will never be an end. Nor will the time ever come, when he will change his purpose or scheme of government ; or, like a weak, earthly prince, degrade his favourites, or reverse his laws, or indulge uncertain caprice.

This shows the Supreme Being to be a very proper object of the trust of all his creatures. Had I the favour of all the crowned heads in the world, it is evident, that in so short a time as a century hence, it must be of no manner of value to me. Death will, in all probability, before that short period be elapsed, remove every one of them, and myself too, into a state, in which no favour will be of any avail, but that of the King of Kings, upon whom they must be as much dependent as I. But to trust to Him who is eternal in his nature, and unchangeable in his purpose, and

who has it in his power to make and keep his favourites eternally happy, is building upon a sure foundation.

Here it is to be remembered, that it is only a course of obedience that we have any pretence to trust in God. All confidence in him, that is not founded in well-doing, is vain and presumptuous, and will in the end be disappointed. As the king on the throne has power to raise any person, whom he may judge worthy of honour, at the same time that it is vain and presumptuous to think of trusting to him in any other way, than such as may be likely to gain his favour; so, though the Supreme King of the Universe has power to raise any of his creatures to inconceivable happiness, it is not to be expected that he will bestow his favour upon any, but such as shall be found worthy of it. And his infinite wisdom will effectually prevent his being mistaken in his judgment of characters; and renders it impossible that he should bestow his approbation amiss. So that there is no ground of confidence for any, but those who make it their sincere and diligent endeavour to gain the Divine favour in the way which he has appointed.

It is impossible to survey, with a discerning eye, the world which we inhabit, without reading the illustrious characters of power, wisdom and goodness, which the Divine hand has inscribed upon it; each of which attributes suggests to us a set of duties, and therefore deserves our particular consideration.

To create, or bring into existence, one particle of matter, which before was nothing, who can say what power is requisite? The difference between nothing and a real existence is strictly and properly infinite. Which seems to imply an infinite difficulty to be surmounted, before one particle of matter can be produced. And no power, inferior to infinite, is equal to an infinite difficulty. Be that as it will, it is unquestionable, that to produce great works, requires proportionable power. And if the works of nature are not great, there is no greatness conceivable. The calling forth a world into being, had it been from its creation to remain for ever at rest, had been an effect worthy of Divine power. But to give a system so huge and unwieldy, any degree of motion, much more to give a motion inconceivably swift, to masses of matter inconceivably

bulky; to accommodate velocity to what is the most unfit for being moved with velocity; to whirl a whole earth, a globe of twenty-five thousand miles round, with all its mountains and oceans, at the rate of near sixty thousand miles an hour; to carry on such an amazing motion for many thousands of years; to keep six such bodies in continual motion, in different planes, and with different velocities, round a common centre, at the same time that ten others are revolving round them, and going along with them; what amazing power is requisite to produce such effects!

How do we admire the effects produced by a combination of mechanic powers (which also act by Divine Power, or Laws of Nature) in raising weights, and overcoming the *vis inertiae* of matter? What should we think of a machine, constructed by human hands, by which St. *Paul's* church or a little hill, should be transported half a mile from its place, with ever so slow a motion? But the greatest mountain is no more in comparison with the whole earth, than a grain of sand to a mountain. Yet the whole cumbrous mass of earth has been whirled round the sun, for these five thousand years and upwards, with a rapidity, frightful to think of, and for any thing we know, with undiminished force. And the comet in 1680-81, must, according to the *Newtonian* principles, have moved in its *perihelion*, or nearest approach to the sun, at the rate of above a million of miles in an hour; which was a flight near twenty times more rapid than that of the earth in its annual course! Now the swiftest speed of a horse, that ever has been known, was at the rate of one mile in one minute, which continued, would give sixty miles in an hour, instead of more than a million, the comet's motion. The swiftest horse, at full speed, may move twenty feet in the time that one can pronounce *one*, or sixty feet, while one can say *one, two, three*. But to form some conception of the motion of the *Newtonian* comet, let the reader suppose himself placed upon such an eminence as will give him a prospect of fifty miles on each hand; the rapidity of that tremendous body in the swiftest part of its course, was such that in the time of pronouncing one syllable, or in the twinkling of an eye, it would fly across that space of one hundred miles, while the swiftest horse would have proceeded twenty feet. Yet those enormous bodies

are by the parallax they give, supposed to be nearly of the magnitude of our globe of earth and ocean, and some of them perhaps larger.

Now their is nothing more evident, than that in proportion to the quantity of matter to be moved, and the velocity with which it is to be moved, such must be the moving force. Let the reader, therefore, if he has any talent in calculation, try to estimate the force required to give such a furious rapidity to bodies of such stupendous magnitude; if he has any imagination, let him fill it with the sublime idea of Omnipotence; and if he has either reason or religion, let him prostrate his soul, and adore such tremendous and irresistible power.

Nor is less command of matter required to produce the astonishing appearances in the minute, than in the great world; to carry on the various secretions, circulations, and transmutations in vegetation, and the production, growth, and life of animals; especially when the degree of minuteness is such, as it must be in an animalcule, of which millions would only equal the bulk of a grain of sand. What power is required to wing the rapid light from its fountain, the sun, to us in seven or eight minutes, with such swiftness, that in the instant of pronouncing the word *light*, sixty thousand miles are passed through!

To a being possessed of rightful power over us, the proper duty is evidentially fear, or awe; and the consequences of that is obedience. If we consider the Supreme Being as possessed of infinite or boundless power over all his creatures, we must see the indispensable necessity of the most profound submission to him, both in our dispositions and practices. If we consider him as our Creator, we must be convinced that he has an absolute right to us and to all our services. If we think of him as irresistible, rebellion against him is a degree of madness beyond all computation. For what lasting and inconceivably dreadful punishments may not such power inflict upon those perverse and impenitent beings, who become the objects of his vengeance? And what chance can the worms of the earth have to deliver themselves out of the hands of the Almighty?

There is no inconsistency between the fear we owe to God, and the duty of love. On the contrary, love ever

implies a fear to offend the person beloved. As on one hand, nothing is so perfectly amiable as infinite perfection; so neither is there any so proper object of fear, as he who is infinitely great and awful. And there is a wide difference between the slavish fear, which a criminal has for his judge, or that which a miserable subject has for a tyrant, and that of a son for an affectionate father. Of this last kind is the reverence with which we ought to think of our Creator. Only we must take the utmost care not to entertain any notion of God, as of one capable of any weakness resembling that of earthly parents. For it is certain, that the Judge of the world, whose rectitude and justice are absolutely perfect and inviolable, will not, cannot, be misled, by fondness for his own creatures, to make the obdurately wicked happy. For, though he loves his creatures, he loves justice more, and will not sacrifice his own eternal and immutable attribute for the sake of any number of worthless rebellious beings whatever.

As to the Divine Wisdom appearing in the works of creation, we are peculiarly at a loss to conceive properly of it. For we come into a world ready finished, and fit to be inhabited; and therefore have no conception of the immense stretch of thought, the amazing depth of invention (if we may so speak) that was necessary to plan an universe. Let any man imagine the state of things before there was any created being, if ever such a time was; when there was no plan, no model, or pattern to proceed upon; when the very idea of an universe, as well as the particular plan and execution of it, was to be drawn, so to speak, out of the Divine Imagination. Let the reader suppose himself to have been first produced, and to have had it revealed to him by his Creator, that an universe was to be created. An universe! What idea could he have formed of an universe? Had he been consulted upon the plan of it, which part would he have begun at? Before light existed, could he have conceived the idea of light? Before there was either sun, stars, or earth, could he have formed any conception of a sun, stars, or earth? Could he have contrived light for the eye, or the eye for light? Could he have suited a world to its inhabitants, or inhabitants to a world? Could he have fitted bodies to minds, or minds to bodies?

If the reader should not clearly enough see the difficulty of inventing and planning an universe from nothing, nor the wondrous foresight and comprehensive wisdom, that was necessary for fitting an almost infinite number of things to one another, in such a manner, that every particular should answer its particular end, and fill its particular place at the same time that it should contribute to promote various other designs; if the depth of Wisdom, which has produced all this, does not sufficiently appear to the reader, let him try to form a plan of a new world, quite different from all that he knows of in the present universe, in which none of our elements, nor light, nor animal life, nor any of the five senses, nor respiration, nor vegetation shall have any place. And when he has used his utmost efforts, and put his invention upon the utmost stretch, and finds that he cannot form a shadow of one single idea, of which the original is not drawn from nature; then let him confess his own weakness, and adore that boundless Wisdom, which has produced, out of its own infinite fertility of invention, enough to employ, and to confound the utmost human sagacity.

Have not the most acute penetration, and indefatigable industry of the wise and learned of all ages, been employed (and how could they more worthily) in searching out the wonderful works of the Almighty Maker of the universe? and have they yet found out one single article to the bottom? Can all the philosophers of modern times, who have added to the observations of the ancients, the discoveries made by their own industry and sagacity; can they give a satisfying account of the machinery of the body of a fly, or a worm? Can they tell what makes two particles of matter cohere? Can they tell what the substance of a particle of matter is? Is the science of physiology, delightful and noble as it is, and worthy of the study of angels, is it carried any farther than a set of observations, wonderful indeed and striking, but as to real causes, and internal natures, altogether in the dark? How do we admire, and justly, the exalted genius of our seemingly inspired philosopher, for going a pitch beyond the sagacity of all mankind in discovering the laws, by which the vast machine of the world is governed? Yet he modestly owns the cause of attraction and gravitation to lie too deep for

his penetration. How do we stand astonished at the acuteness of a mind, which could pursue calculations to a degree of subtilty beyond the reach of by far the greatest part of mankind to follow him in, even after he has shown the way? What then ought we think of that Wisdom, which in its meanest productions baffles the deepest penetration of a capacity, whose acuteness baffles the general understanding of mankind?

From the consideration of the wisdom we trace in the natural world, it is manifest, past all doubt, that the moral system (for the sake of which that of nature was brought into existence) is under the same conduct, and will hereafter appear to be a scheme altogether worthy of God. For either both, or neither, must be the contrivance of Divine Wisdom. We cannot conceive of God as partly, or by halves, but wholly, the Creator and Governor of all beings, natural and moral. And if so, we may be assured, that, as in the system of nature, final causes are fitted to produce their effects, and every part of the machine of the world is properly adjusted to its place and purpose; so in the moral, every rational being will be determined to the state and place he is found fit for; the good to happiness, and the wicked to punishment; the highly elevated and purified mind to a high and eminent station, and the corrupt and sordid to shame and misery; the soul, which has perfected its faculties, and refined its virtues, by imitation of the Divine Perfections, to the conversation of angels and the beatific vision of God, and that which has by vice debauched and sunk itself below the brutes, to the place of demons and fallen spirits. And all this may probably proceed as much according to the original constitution of things, as a cause produces its effect in the natural world; as fire produces the dissipation of the parts of combustible substances; as nourishment tends to the support of animal life; and as matter tends to decay. So that the only thing which hinders a wicked embodied mind from being now in torments, may be, its being still embodied, and not yet let out into the world of spirits, where a new and dreadful scene will of course immediately open upon it, as soon as it comes to be divested of the earthly vehicle, which now conceals those invisible horrors, and protects it from its future tormentors. And

in the same manner, the virtuous and exalted mind would be now in a state of happiness, if it were not prevented from the commerce of blessed spirits, and the view of the invisible world, by the impenetrable veil of flesh which surrounds it. But this supposition does not at all affect the doctrine of positive rewards and punishments, nor of separate places appointed for receiving the good, and the wicked, after the final judgment.

If we find the mere material system of nature to be wrought by a degree of wisdom, altogether beyond our comprehension, it would be madness to suppose that we shall ever have sagacity enough to baffle the Divine Scheme in the moral government of the world; that we shall be able to contrive any way of escaping from the punishment we may deserve. No. His counsel will stand; and he will do all his pleasure. It will not be in our power to deceive his penetration, to get out of his reach, or to defend ourselves against his justice.

To frame some idea of the Divine Goodness in the creation of the world, it will be necessary to go back in imagination to the ages which preceded all creation, if such there were, or, however, to those, which were prior to the production of our world. Let us then view the awful Majesty of heaven, surrounded with ineffable glory, and enthroned in absolute perfection, beyond conception blessed in the consciousness of unbounded plenitude. What motive could influence him, who already enjoyed complete perfection and happiness, to call unsubstantial nothing into existence? What could be the views of infinite Wisdom in speaking a world into being? No prospect of any addition to his own perfection or happiness: for that which was already infinite, what addition could it receive? Could the adorable Creator propose to be more than infinitely perfect and happy? it is evident, his sole view must have been to the happiness of the creatures he was to produce. His own was ever, and ever must be, unbounded, undiminished, and unchanged. The addition of happiness therefore, which was to be produced, was to be bestowed upon those who were not yet created. Does then Divine Goodness extend to that which has no existence? Does the universal Parent think of what is not? We, poor, narrow souls! think it a mighty stretch of benevolence, if

we can bring ourselves to regard with some measure of affection those of our fellow-creatures, who stand most nearly connected with us; in loving whom, we do little more than love ourselves, or love our friends and relations for our own sakes. If there be a mind yet more generous, it may take in its country, or the human species. A benevolence still more extensive may perhaps enlarge itself so wide, as to comprehend within its generous embrace the various orders of being which form the universal scale; descending from the flaming seraph to the humble reptile. Nor indeed can any mind sincerely love the Almighty Maker, and hate, or despise any of the works of the same hand, which formed itself. But the Divine Benevolence is as far beyond all this, as infinitude is larger than any limited space. How peevish, and apt to take offence at every trifling injury, are narrow-hearted mortals! Yet what are the insults, our fellow-worms can offer us, when compared with the atrociousness of an offence committed by the dust of the earth against the infinite Majesty of the universe? Though the Omniscient Creator from eternity foresaw, that the creatures he was to form, would prove rebellious and disobedient; that they would violate all his wise and sacred laws, and insult his sovereign honour, as Governor of the world; has he grudged to give them existence; to bestow upon them a temporary happiness; to make his sun shine, and his rain descend on all promiscuously; and put it in the power of all to attain perfection, happiness and glory? What neglect of every duty and obligation; how many acts of fraud, oppression, and cruelty; how many horrid execrations, and infernal blasphemies, does every day record against the daring race of men around the world? Yet seldom does the Divine vengeance break loose upon the impious offenders. Our wicked species, if there were no other lawless order of creatures in the universe, are ever offending. And yet the thunder seldom strikes the guilty dead. Earthquakes and inundations are rarely let loose. A few cities purged by fire, and a world cleansed by a deluge once in six thousand years, serve just to put unthinking mortals in remembrance that there is a power above them. So that every moment of the duration of the world is an universal witness declaring to all the nations of the earth, in a language distinctly intelli-

ble to all, the goodness of the Maker and Governor of the universe. At the same time that the prince of angels receives from the immediate communications of the Divine Goodness, beatitude past utterance, the humble peasant rejoices in his bounty, with which the fields are enriched, and the fair face of nature is adorned. Even the lonely savage in the wilderness, the sordid reptile in the dust, and the scaly nations, which people the unfathomable deep, all taste of the bounty, and are supported by the unlimited goodness of the Universal Parent, who opens his unwearied hand liberally, and satisfies every living soul.

If human understanding apprehends any thing according to truth and right, the benevolent character is the proper object of the love of every rational mind, as the contrary is the natural object of aversion. If every human, or other finite mind, is more or less amiable, according as it has more or less of this excellent disposition; it is evident, that Infinite Goodness is infinitely amiable. Who is he, that pretends to think and reason, and has no pleasure in contemplating the Divine Goodness? Who can reflect upon such goodness, and not admire it? Who can admire and not endeavour to imitate it? Who can imitate it, and not be an universal blessing? Who can be an universal blessing, and not be happy?

If the Divine Goodness be evidently disinterested, it being impossible that the smallest happiness should, from any enjoyed by the creatures, be added to that of the Creator, which is necessarily infinite; it is plain, what makes real and perfect goodness of disposition in any mind, viz. A propensity to contribute to the happiness of others, without any view to self-interest. In so far as a view to ones' own happiness is the motive to his exerting himself for the good of his fellow-creatures, in so far it has less of the truly worthy and commendable in it. For self-love, being merely instinctive, has nothing praise-worthy. And to promote the happiness of others for the sake of adding to one's own, is what the most selfish and sordid character is capable of. To be truly benevolent, is to imitate the Deity; to do good for the sake of doing good; to be bountiful from the disposition of the mind, from universal love and kindness, from rational considerations

of the intrinsic excellence of that godlike disposition; not from mere weak and effeminate softness of nature.

It is strange, that ever it should have been questioned, whether it is reasonable for dependent creatures to address themselves to their Infinite Creator for the supply of their wants. Yet books have been written to show the unreasonableness of prayer. "The Supreme Being," says an objector, "knows whether I am worthy to receive favours at his hand, and what I most need, before I apply to him. "If I am worthy, he will bestow, whether I ask or not: If not, he will not be prevailed on by any solicitation to bestow upon an unworthy object. If I ask what is unfit for me, he is too wise and good to grant it; and if I ask what is fit, I gain nothing: for he would have bestowed it upon me of his own goodness, without my asking."

There cannot be a more egregious fallacy than that, on which this objection is founded. For it is evident, that, if it be rational to think of ourselves as beings dependent upon the Supreme, it is rational for us to express our dependence; if it be reasonable for us to express our dependence on our Creator, it is unjustifiable in us to neglect it; so that I can in no propriety of speech be said to be a worthy object of the Divine favour, till I actually address myself to him. Again, it is evident, that no degree of homage, or submission, ought to be wanting from dependent creatures to their Creator. But the service of both body and mind is a greater degree of homage, than that of the mind alone. So that till I yield the bodily homage, as well as that of the mind, my service is deficient, which renders me an unworthy object of the Divine favour.

It is likewise remarkable, that many of the more rational and pious writers on this subject, have laboured to represent the whole *rationale* of the duty of prayer as consisting in the advantage which is thereby to accrue to the worshipper by improvement in piety and goodness. It is true, that the moral effects likely to be produced by the constant observance of this most important duty, are of great and inestimable consequence, which renders it a most useful instrument for those noble purposes. Did men habitually observe the practice of addressing themselves to their Creator, with an awful sense of his infinite greatness and authority over them; such a fixed impres-

sion must in time be thereby made upon their minds, as would prove a restraint from vice, at all times, and in all cases, equally powerful. Did people make a point of applying constantly and regularly to the Giver of every good gift, they could hardly miss entertaining in their minds an habitual sense of their absolute dependence upon him; of gratitude for his bounties received; and of studying obedience, in order to his future favour. What man could be so hardened as to go on daily lamenting and confessing his offences, and daily repeating them? Who could presumptuously be guilty of a crime, which he knew he must the same day confess to his all-seeing Judge, and implore the pardon of it? He, who kept up his constant intercourse with his Creator, must find himself very powerfully influenced by it, and improved in every pious and worthy disposition. But besides all this, it is evidently in itself a reasonable service; and is to be considered not only as a noble and valuable means of moral improvement, but as a positive act of virtue; it being as proper virtue to render to God the honour and worship due to him, as to give to men their just rights. And to withhold from him what he has the most unquestionable title to, being as much an injustice (with the atrocious addition of its being committed against the greatest and best of beings) as to withhold from a fellow-creature his just property. There is also plainly a connexion in nature and reason, between asking and receiving, and between neglecting to ask and not receiving. This natural connexion makes it reasonable for dependent creatures to expect to obtain their reasonable requests; and to conclude, that what they do not think it worth while to ask they shall not receive. If there were not such a connexion and foundation in reason for this duty, it had never been commanded by the all-wise Lawgiver of the universe; nor come to be universally practised by the wisest and best of mankind, in all ages and nations. Nor is there any greater difficulty in conceiving the possibility of a pre-established scheme in the Divine economy, according to which the blessings of Heaven, whether of a spiritual or temporal nature, should be granted to those who should ask, and be found fit to receive them, than in any other instance of Providence, or

than in the future happiness of the good part of mankind, and not of the wicked.

If the Supreme Being be One, he is the proper object of the adoration of all reasonable beings, because, having all things in his absolute disposal, without possibility of being thwarted or controled by any one, if we can gain his good-will, we cannot want that of any other. If He be kind and good in the most disinterested manner, and to the highest degree, even extending his bounty to the wicked and rebellious, and preserving them in existence, who make no use of their existence but to offend Him; it is reasonable to hope, that He will lend a propitious ear to the humble requests of the virtuous and pious part of his creatures. If he has all things in his power, and can bestow without measure, gifts both spiritual and temporal, without diminishing his inexhaustible riches, to apply to him is going where we are sure we shall not be disappointed through want of ability to supply us. If he is every where present, we may be sure of being heard wherever we make our addresses to him. If he is within our very minds, we cannot raise a thought toward him, but he must perceive it. If he is infinitely wise, he knows exactly what is fit for us, and will grant such of our petitions as may be proper to be bestowed upon us, and withhold whatever may prove hurtful, though we have asked it. If it be reasonable to suppose, that he expects all his thinking creatures to apply to him, we may do it with this comfortable consideration, to encourage us; that in addressing him, we are doing what is agreeable to his nature and will, and cannot offend him but by our manner of performing it. Were I to have an audience of a prince, it would give me great encouragement to know that he was graciously disposed toward me, that I should not offend him by begging his favour and protection; but that, on the contrary, he expected I should petition him, and would even take it amiss if I did not; that he had it fully in his power, as well as in his inclination, to grant me the greatest favour I should have occasion to ask him; and that it was his peculiar delight to oblige and make his subject happy. There are few princes, of whom most of these things may be said; and none, of whom all may be affirmed. And yet they find, to their no small trouble and

incumbrance, that for the few inconsiderable, perishing favours they have in their power, there are petitioners almost innumerable. Whilst the infinitely Good Giver of all things, whose disposition, and whose power to bestow happiness inconceivable, are equally boundless, is neglected and defrauded of that homage and devotion, to which all his creatures ought to be drawn by a sense of their own absolute dependance upon him; of his ability and readiness to bestow; of his authority, who has commanded them to make their requests to him; and by the spontaneous dictates of their own minds, directing them to the performance of a duty so easy, so reasonable, and so promising of the most important advantages.

Though the principal part of prayer is petition, or addressing Heaven for the supply of our various wants for life and futurity, there are other branches, as confession of our infirmities and faults; thanksgiving for the various instances we have received of the Divine Goodness; and intercession for our fellow-creatures. The subject of our petitions for ourselves ought to be necessities of this life, for which the rich, as well as the poor, depend daily on the Divine Bounty, and the Divine Assistance toward our being fitted for happiness hereafter. The first, if we judge wisely, we shall ask with great submission, and in moderation, as being of less consequence, and too apt to have bad effects upon our moral characters, when liberally bestowed. The latter, being of infinite consequence to us, we may request with more earnestness and importunity.

If we give the least attention to our own characters, we must find our thoughts often trifling and wicked, our words foolish and mischievous, and our actions criminal before God. If we have any consideration, we cannot but think ourselves deplorably deficient in the performance of our duty with regard to ourselves, our fellow-creatures, and our Creator. If we are in reason obliged to think often of the fatal errors of our lives, to view and review them attentively, with all their heavy aggravations, and to mourn and lament them in our own minds; if all this be highly proper and reasonable, it is more peculiarly reasonable to acknowledge our offences before Him, whom we have offended; to implore his pardon, who alone can forgive and deprecate his vengeance, which we have so justly de-

served. We ourselves, when offended by a fellow-creature, expect that he should not only be convinced in his own mind of his misbehaviour, and speak of it with concern to others; but likewise, that he come and make a direct acknowledgment, and ask our pardon. Nor is there any thing unreasonable in all this. How much more, when we have offended Him who is infinitely above us, and from whom we have every thing to fear, if we do not, by sincere repentance, and thorough reformation, avert the deserved punishment. Especially, if we consider that the performance of this duty tends naturally to lead us to real repentance and reformation.

As we ought in our prayers to confess our faults and errors, and that not in general terms, but with particular reflection, in our own minds, upon the principal and grossest of them, which every true penitent has ever upon his heart, and before his eyes; so ought we in all reason to return our sincere thanks to the universal Benefactor, expressly for every particular signal instance of his favour, whether those, in which mankind in general share with us, or those in which we have been distinguished from others.

If we have upon our minds a due and habitual sense of our offences, we shall of ourselves be willing to make confession of them. If we have any gratitude in our nature we shall not fail to express our acknowledgments for our favours received. And if we have any real benevolence for our fellow-creatures, we shall be naturally led to think it our duty to present to the common Father of All, our good wishes for them; that they may be favoured with every blessing which may tend to promote universal happiness, spiritual and temporal.

If it be at all rational to worship God by prayer, it is obviously so to join together at proper times in that sublime exercise. The advantages of public assemblies for religious purposes, are the impressing more powerfully upon the minds of the worshippers, the sublimity and importance of the duty they are employed in, and the powerful effects of universal example. It is pretty evident, that the public worship on Sundays is what chiefly keeps up the little appearance of religion that is still left among us. I think there is no good reason against keeping up in public worship as much pomp and magnificence as may

be consistent with propriety, and so as to avoid ostentation and superstition. We are, in our present state, very mechanical, and need all proper helps for drawing our inclinations along with our duty, for engaging our attention, and making such impressions upon us, as may be lasting and effectual. Public worship ought to be so conducted, as to be most likely to prepare us for a more numerous society, in which more sublime exercises of devotion than any we are now capable of conceiving of, may be a considerable part of our employment and happiness.

Did our leading people think rightly, they would see the advantages of giving their attendance themselves at places of public worship, and using their influence and authority to draw others to follow the same laudable example. Deplorable are the excuses and apologies made by them for their too general and infamous neglect of the unquestionable duty of attending the public worship of God. Nor would it be easy to determine, whether their practice shows more want of sense or of goodness. One mighty pretence made by them is, That as to public instructions, truly they hold themselves to be as good judges of moral and divine subjects as the clergy; and therefore they think it lost time to give their attention to any thing which may be delivered from the pulpit. Now, it seems at least not very probable, that people, who spend most of their time (Sundays not excepted) at the card-table, should as thoroughly understand the extensive sciences of morals and theology, as the public teachers of religion, who have spent many years wholly in those studies. Those very persons, when they chance to be overtaken with sickness, are very ready to call in physicians, and do not pretend to understand, as well as they who have made physic their study, the nature and cure of diseases. But where it strictly true, that the polite people of our age are so wise, that they are not like to hear any thing new, nor any known truth set in a new light by any preacher; still is it not an advantage to have a set of good thoughts, which lay dormant in the mind, excited and called up to the attention of the understanding, by an elegant and judicious discourse? Were there likewise nothing in this, what public-spirited person would not even go out of his way for the sake of setting a good example before the young and ig-

norant who want instruction, if he does not. But when all is said, here is no pretence for neglecting the public *worship* of God, which is one principal end of religious assemblies. So that those, who habitually throw contempt upon this part of duty, are evidently guilty of a breach of common decency and natural religion, and are altogether without excuse.

If public worship, in which the inhabitants of a whole quarter join together, be reasonable, it seems as much so, that families should set apart stated times daily for that purpose. We are social beings, and ought to be social in all things that are commendable. And if heads of families are in reason obliged to take care that their children and dependants have opportunity of consulting the interest of a future life, and of being led by example, or moved by authority, to the observance of their duty; it is obvious, that in this important one of worshipping God, persons in stations of authority and example, ought by no means to be wanting, lest the failures, (through their bad example) of those over whom they have had charge, be hereafter justly imputed to their negligence.

The usual excuses for the neglect of family-religion, made even by many who do not deny its usefulness and propriety, are, want of time; and a certain foolish reluctancy at performing the duty of addressing their Creator in presence of others. As to the former, there is no well-regulated house, in which the family cannot be called together for half an hour before the business, or the pleasure of the day comes on, to address their Creator for his blessing and favour through the day; and the same at night, to join in thanking him for the mercies of the day. That time must be employed in some way different from what has been yet heard of, which is applied better than to the service of God. If we can find time for eating, drinking, dressing, merchandizing, or cards; to pretend to want time for worshipping God is monstrous!

As for the other objection against keeping up the worship of God in families, it is almost too frivolous to deserve any answer at all. Surely nothing is easier, than to choose out a few proper passages from Scripture, or with the help of the common-prayer of the church, and other books of devotion almost innumerable, to compile a set of devo-

tions suited to the use of a family, and for the master of the house, kneeling or standing, with his children and domestics about him, to pronounce them with proper devotion, the rest joining mentally, or with a low voice, in every petition.

If any master of a family chooses to compose a set of devotions for his own use, I will only mention one direction, which might render them more useful, than they could otherwise be: It is, that in them, the moral virtues, or duties of temperance, benevolence, and piety, might be so worked into the petitions, that, in praying for the Divine Grace and Assistance to perform their duty, they should be led to reflect upon it, and put in mind to examine themselves whether they make conscience of performing it. By this means the daily devotions in the family might partly answer the end of homilies or instructions.

Who does not see, that the natural consequences of such an economy, constantly kept up in houses, are likely to be the promoting of fidelity in domestics, obedience in children, and drawing down the Divine blessing upon families; and, on the contrary, that a society, in which no regard is shown to the Supreme Being, is not likely to be blest with the Divine favour or protection?

That all devotions in which others are joined with the person, who utters them, even in a private family, are better pre-composed than spoken extempore, seems to me very clear. There are extremely few, even among men of the best abilities, who are capable of uttering fluently, and without hesitation, tautology, or some kind of impropriety, an unstudied speech of any length. And that a speech made in public to God himself, should be ill-digested, must be owned to be very gross. For it is evident, that in such a case, the speaker, instead of leading along with him the devotion of his hearers, must confound and distract it. And it seems enough in any reason, that the speaker have the manner, and delivery to attend to, without his being obliged at the same time to study the matter.

The supplication of a single person by himself, is, in my opinion, more properly presented in his own thoughts or words, than in those of any other; though the reading

of books of devotion are useful helps to those whose thoughts want to be helped out.

What can be more rational, more sublime, or more delightful, that for a dependent creature to raise his thoughts to his Creator! to fill his mind with a sense of the present Divinity! to pour forth his soul before Him who made it? What so great an honour can an humble mortal enjoy, as to be allowed to speak to God? What exercise can the rational soul engage in, so worthy the exertion of its noblest powers and faculties, as addressing the Majesty of Heaven? How can it, in this present state, approach so near to the Author of its being, or rise to an enjoyment so much resembling the beatic vision, as by this sublime converse with the Omnipresent Deity? To swell the thought with the infinite greatness of the Object of worship; to consider one's self as addressing that tremendous Power, whose word produced the universe; to think that one is going to prostrate his soul before Him who formed it, who is to be its judge, and has the power of disposing of it for eternity!—What can be conceived so wonderfully awful and striking? But to reflect, that the glorious object of worship, though infinitely exalted above the adoration of angels and archangels, is yet ready to hear, and bestow happiness upon the meanest of his rational creatures; to think that the humble petition of the sincere penitent will not be rejected; that the poor and needy are no more beneath his notice, or out of the reach of his goodness, than the rich and the mighty; what can be more comfortable? If God is the awful Judge of mankind, he is also the merciful Father of mankind. If his eye is too pure to behold presumptuous vice without abhorrence, and too piercing to be deceived by the most artful hypocrisy; it is also open to look with pity upon the prostrate mourner, and his goodness ready to forgive the humble penitent what he cannot forgive himself.

Be no longer, unthinking mortal, so much thy own enemy as to exclude thyself from the highest honour thy nature is capable of. Aspire to the sublime happiness of conversing with thy Maker. Enlarge thy narrow mind to take in the thought of Him for whom thou art made. Call forth all that is within thee to magnify and praise Him. Humble thyself to the dust, in the contemplation of his

unequalled Majesty. Open the inmost recesses of thy soul to Him who gave it being. Expose to Him, who knows thy frame, thy weaknesses, and thy faults. Think not to conceal or palliate them before that Eye which is not to be deceived. Hast thou offended? Make no delay to confess before thy Creator and thy Judge, what he already knows. Though he already knows thy folly, he expects thy own confession of it, and that thou deprecate his vengeance. Though he may already have thoughts of mercy for thee, it is only on condition that thou humbly employ it, and by repentance and amendment show thyself worthy of it. Art thou weak and helpless? If thou knowest thyself, thou feelest it. Address thyself then to Him who is almighty, that his power may support thee. Art thou ignorant and short-sighted? If thou dost not think thyself so, thou art blind indeed. Apply then to Him, whose knowledge is infinite, that thou mayest be wise in his wisdom. Art thou in want of all things? If thou thinkest otherwise, thou art wretched indeed. Have recourse then to him who is the Lord of all things, and is possessed of inexhaustible riches. If thou hast a just sense of thy own state, if thou hast proper conceptions of thy Creator and Judge, or if thou hast a soul capable of any thought worthy the dignity of a reasonable immortal nature, thou wilt make it thy greatest delight to worship and adore Him, whom to serve is the glory of the brightest seraph in the celestial regions.

A numerous assembly of people, celebrating with grateful hearts the praises of their Almighty Creator and Bountiful Benefactor, may be for any thing we can conceive, one of the best emblems of some part of the future employment and happiness of immortal spirits, which the present state can exhibit. It were well, if we could by the mere force of cool reason, so elevate our conceptions of the Divinity, as worthily to magnify him in our public assemblies. But so long as we continue the mechanical beings we are, we must be willing to use all possible helps for working ourselves up to what our imperfect faculties of themselves are not, generally speaking, equal to, or however, are not at all times in a condition for. Whoever understands human nature, knows of what consequence associations are. And it is wholly owing to the infirmities of

our nature and present state, that a due regard to decency and solemnity in public worship is of such importance towards our moral improvement. Considering these things, it is with concern I must observe upon the manner of performing the solemn office of praising God in our public assemblies that it very much wants reformation. I know of no application of music to this sublime use, that is not sadly deficient, except what is composed in the manner of anthems. For as in every piece of sacred poesy, there are various and very different tastes, and strains, it is evident, that to apply the same returning set of notes to all alike is inconsistent, and not expressive of the sense and spirit of the piece. The eighteenth Psalm, for example, is one of the noblest hymns in Holy Scripture. From the beginning to the fourth verse, the royal author expresses his, or the Messiah's joy and gratitude for his deliverance from his enemies. It is evident, that the music, which is to accompany this part of the piece, ought to be bold, cheerful, and triumphant: else it will disguise and misrepresent the thoughts, instead of expressing them. The fourth and fifth verses express the Psalmist's, or Messiah's, dreadful distress, by the cruelty of wicked men, or evil spirits. It is plain, that the triumphant strains of music, which suited the former part, are not at all proper to express this; but that on the contrary, it requires a set of the most dreary and horrid sounds which music can utter. The sixth verse represents the Sacred Writer's, or Messiah's, complaint in his great distress. To express this suitably, neither of the former pieces of melody is proper; but a set of melancholy and plaintive notes. The seventh, and some of the following verses, give an account of the Divine appearance in answer to the foregoing prayer, attended with earthquakes, tempests, lightnings, and all the terrors of Omnipotence. Every one of which images ought to be represented by a strain of music, properly adapted to the sense, in taste and expression. But chaunt this whole piece, as is done at cathedral churches, or to sing it, as at parish churches, and meetings, to the same set of notes, returning through every succeeding verse, is not performing the piece so well as if the preacher were to read it to the people. For a person of a good elocution, would utter it in such a manner, as at least should not disguise or

misrepresent the sense, as is the effect of applying to it unsuitable, or bad music, which is worse than none. But, to those, who find proper sentiments excited in their minds by the more imperfect ways of performing the Divine praises, I have nothing to say, to lessen the satisfaction they have. I only would show what is the most effectual and perfect way of applying music to religious purposes. And, after all, a proper disposition of mind is the principal thing, without which no bodily service can be acceptable to Infinite Purity.

To conclude—it is evident, that our duty to our Creator is, as above observed, the most important, and noblest part of what we ought to study and practise, in order to attain the true Dignity of Human Nature. For that Infinite Being, by whom, and for whom we are, though in his essence invisible, in his nature incomprehensible, in his perfections inconceivable, does yet present himself to all our perceptions, bodily and mental. Every object we behold, every sound we hear, every bodily substance we touch, every subject of thought, must be either himself, or the work of his power. Our senses, whenever we exert them, are employed upon some creature of Omnipotence; and when the mind abstracts itself from all the bodily operations, even then it apprehends, it sees, it feels, the sustaining, informing, and invigorating power within it. It finds itself surrounded with the immensity of Divinity, and that itself and all things are established on that universal basis of existence; that all things are full of Deity; and that his presence is the Mind within the mind.

How amazing then the stupidity of numbers of the human species! An order of beings formed with a capacity for apprehending the Creator and Governor of the universe; for contemplating the most delightful and most striking of all subjects; for having their minds enlarged and ennobled by being habituated to the grand ideas of immensity, of wisdom, goodness, power, and glory unbounded and unlimited! Yet how do numbers of them pass through life, without ever endeavouring to form any just notions of that Being, on whom they depend for their very existence; without ever thinking of any duty they may owe him, or any consequence of gaining or losing his favour! What stupendous glories, what wondrous per-

fections, what sublime contemplations, are lost to the gross and insensible minds of many of our species! How is the only Being, who possesses existence in himself, overlooked by those whom he himself has brought into being? How does He, by whom all things exist, seem to such inconsiderate minds not to exist! How do the glories of his works, which were intended to point him out, conceal from such unthinking minds the glorious Maker! How do such ungrateful men basely take up with the gifts, without thinking on the All-bounteous Giver! How much are those men of gross and earthly dispositions their own enemies! How do they strive to feed their heaven-born minds with the unsatisfying and nauseous objects of sense; depriving them of that sublime entertainment, for which they were intended, and which is ever offering itself to them, the contemplation and enjoyment of Divinity, the possession of infinite perfection! Open thy narrow mind unthinking mortal. Enlarge thy confined desires. Raise thy groveling ambition. Quit the trifling objects which now possess and which will in the end disappoint thee. Trample under thy feet the wretched amusements of riches, honours, and pleasures; and aspire to what is worthy the dignity of thy nature, and thy Divine Original. It is thy Maker himself that is ready to take possession of thy mind. It is the Divinity himself, that would pour into thy soul delights ineffable, that would dwell in thee, and join thee to himself in an eternal union, which will raise thee to bliss and glory above thy most extensive wishes, beyond thy most elevated conceptions.

SECTION IX.

Miscellaneous Thoughts, and Directions, chiefly Moral.

IF the reader should find, among the following aphorisms, some thoughts to much the same purpose with others, in other parts of this work; it is hoped, he will excuse such a repetition in consideration of the variety of matter, and the usefulness of the subjects, which will bear being inculcated in the most copious manner.

It is not the part of a wise man to be eager after any thing, but improvement in goodness. All things else may be dispensed with.

To learn to talk well, learn first to hear.

Resist vice at the beginning, and you will conquer it in the end.

A clear conscience is better than a clear estate.

Never think a thought, speak a word, or do a deed, but what you may be safe in setting about with the following preface. "O God my Maker and Judge, I do not forget, that thou art witness to what I am about."

Has not fashion a considerable share in the charities of the age? Let every one, who gives, carefully consider from what motives he acts.

If you have a well-disposed mind, you will go into no company more agreeable, or more useful, than your own. All is not well with those to whom solitude is disagreeable.

It is no shame to learn. The shame is to be ignorant.

Forgive every body rather than yourself.

If you have health, a competency, and a good conscience, what would you have besides? Something to disturb your happiness?

To expect, young man, that your life should be one continued series of pleasure, is to expect to meet with what no mortal, from *Adam* down to the present times, has yet met with; and what by the nature of things would be more strange, than the throwing the same number with a die ten millions of times successively.

When you hear in company, or read in a pamphlet, somewhat smart and lively, and quite new to you, urged against any opinion, or maxim allowed by men of the freest sentiments, and most improved understandings; do not let yourself be immediately perverted by it. But suppose, that, though it may be new to you, it may have been often started and answered; and though you cannot at once confute it, others can. And make it your business, if the point be of consequence, to find out those, who can. Nothing is more weak, than to be staggered in your opinion by every trifle that may fall in your way.

Accustom yourself to think the greatest part of your life already past; contract your views and schemes, and set light by a vain and transitory state, and all its vain enjoyments.

To feel old age coming on, will so little mortify a wise

man, that he can think of it with pleasure; as the decay of nature shows him that the happy change of state, for which, he has been all his life preparing himself, is drawing nearer. And surely it must be desirable, to find himself draw nearer to the end and the reward of his labours. The case of an old man, who has no comfortable prospect for futurity, and finds the fatal hour approaching which is to deprive him of all his happiness; is too deplorable for any words to represent.

It is easy to live well among good people. But show me the man, who can preserve his temper, his wisdom, and his virtue, in spite of strong temptations and universal example.

It is hardly credible what acquisitions in knowledge one may make, by carefully husbanding and properly applying every spare moment.

Are you content to be for ever undone, if you should happen not to live till the time you have set for repentance? If so, put it off a little longer, and take your chance.

It is a shame, if any person poorer than you is more contented than you.

Strive to excel in what is truly noble. Mediocrity is contemptible.

Judge of books, as of men. There is none wholly faultless, or perfect. That production may be said to be a valuable one, by the perusal of which a judicious reader may be the wiser and better; and is not to be despised for a few deficiencies, or inconsistencies.

Do not think of lying for the truth, or working the works of the devil for God's sake.

Honesty sometimes fails: But it is because diligence or abilities are wanting. Otherwise it is naturally by far an overmatch for cunning.

A bad reputation will lie a stumbling-block in your way to rising in life, and will disable you from doing good to others.

If ever you was dangerously ill, what fault or folly lay heaviest upon your mind? Take care to root it out, without delay, and without mercy.

An unjust acquisition is like a barbed arrow, that must

be drawn backward with horrible anguish ; else it will be your destruction.

To excel greatly in music, drawing, dancing, the pedantic parts of learning, play, and other accomplishments, rather ornamental than useful, is beneath a gentleman, and shows, that to acquire such perfection in trifles, he must have employed himself in a way unworthy the dignity of his station. The peculiar accomplishments, in which a man of rank ought to shine, are knowledge of the world, acquired by history, travel, conversation, and business ; of the constitution, interest, and the laws of his country ; and of morals and religion ; without excluding such a competent understanding of other subjects, as may be consistent with a perfect mastery of the accomplishments which make the gentleman's proper calling.

The meanest spirit may bear a slight affliction. And in bearing a great calamity, there is great glory, and a great reward.

A wise man will improve by studying his own past follies. For every slip will discover some weakness still uncorrected, which occasioned his misbehaviour ; and will set him upon effectually redressing every failure.

There is somewhat arch in the *Roman* Catholics putting their carnivals before lent. Mirth is generally the prelude of repentance.

To be drawn into a fault, shows human frailty. To be habitually guilty of folly, shows a corrupt mind. To love vice in others is the spirit of a devil, rather than a man ; being the pure, disinterested love of vice, for its own sake. Yet there are such characters !

Remember, your bottle-companions will not bear you company at your death ; nor lighten your sentence at the dreadful day of judgment. Let the vicious therefore go alone at present ; since their company may heighten, but will not abate your punishment.

Proofs of genuine repentance are, abstaining from all temptations to the same vice, thorough reformation, and all possible reparation.

Take care of those vices which resemble virtues.

To abuse the poor for his poverty, is to insult God's providence.

Seek virtue rather than riches. You may be sure to

acquire the first, but cannot promise for the latter. No one can rob you of the first without your consent; you may be deprived of the latter a hundred ways. The first will gain you the esteem of all good and wise men; the latter will get you flatterers enough; but not one real friend. The first will abide by you for ever; the latter will leave you at death, to shift as you can for eternity.

Moral truths are as certain as mathematical. It is as certain, that good is not evil, nor evil good, as that a part is less than the whole, or that a circle is not a triangle.

What matter what you know, if you do not know yourself?

It is pity that most people overdo either the active or contemplative part of life. To be continually immersed in business, is the way to become forgetful of every thing truly noble and liberal. To be wholly engaged in study, is to lose a great part of the usefulness of a social nature. How much better would it be, if people would temper action with contemplation, and use action as a relief to study?

You may easily know, whether you are in earnest about reforming, and living virtuously. If you be, you will fly from every temptation to vice, and carefully pursue every help to virtue. As you may know whether you love money, by observing, whether you carefully pursue the means for getting, and cautiously avoid occasions of expense or loss.

Never force nature. When study becomes a burden, give it over for that time. You will not improve by it if it goes against the grain.

Preserve, if you can, the esteem of the wise and good. But more especially your own. Consider how deplorable a condition of mind you will be in, when your conscience tells you, you are a villain.

It is not eating a great quantity of food that nourishes most: Nor devouring of books that gives solid knowledge. It is what you digest, that feeds both body and mind. Have your learning in your head, and not in your library.

You had better find out one of your own weaknesses, than ten of your neighbours'.

There is only one single object you ought to pursue, at all adventures; that is virtue: All other things are to be

sought conditionally. What sort of man must he be, who resolves to be rich or great at any rate ?

If you give only with a view to the gratitude of those you oblige, you deserve to meet with ingratitude. If you give from truly disinterested motives, you will not be discouraged or tired out by the worst returns.

Rather be the bubble, than the biter.

Do your duty, if the world should laugh. Obedience to the Almighty Governor of the universe, is what one would hardly think should draw ridicule upon a man. But, however, if men will be so absurd as to laugh at you for what is your greatest wisdom ; wait patiently the final issue, and then it will be seen who acted the ridiculous part.

If it should be hard to do your duty, it is evidently not impossible. To mention none of the christian heroes, there is not a virtue which the heathens have not shown to be practicable. Do not pretend that a christian cannot be chaste, when you know that a young *Scipio* bravely resisted a most powerful temptation of that kind, in yielding to which he would have acted only according to the custom of those times. Do not pretend that it is impossible for a christian to forgive injuries, when you know, that *Phocian*, going to suffer death unjustly, charged it upon his son, with his last breath that he should show no resentment against his father's persecutors. Do not excuse yourself in giving up the truth, through fear of offending those on whom you depend, when you know that *Attilius Regulus* gave himself up to tortures, and death, rather than falsify his word even to his enemies. Let it not be said that a christian, with his clear views of an over-ruling Providence, shall be overcome with affliction, or impiously murmur against the great Disposer of all things, when we find an *Epicteus*, sunk in misery and slavery, vindicating the Divine disposal of himself, and subduing his mind to the dispensations of Providence. Do not excuse yourself from a little expense, trouble, or hazard of ill-will, for the general good, when you know that a *Leonidas*, a *Calpurnius Plamma*, the *Decii*, and hundreds more, voluntarily devoted themselves to destruction, to save their country. If you pretend to be a christian, that is, to profess the most pure and most sublime principles.

in the world, do not infamously fall short of the perfection of unenlightened heathens.

If a temptation solicits, think whether you would yield to it, if you knew you should die next day.

Be assured, whatever you may think now, when you come to a death-bed, you will think you have given yourself up too much to pleasures, and other worldly pursuits, and be sorry that you had so large a share of them.

A good man has nothing to fear; A bad man every thing.

It is not easy to keep the mean between temporizing too much, and giving a proper testimony for decency and virtue, when one sees them outraged.

Do not regard any person's opinion of you, against your own knowledge.

Observe whether vice does not deform the most amiable persons.

Custom will have the same effect, with respect to death as to other frightful things; it will take off its terror.

To understand a subject well, read a set of the best authors upon it; make an abstract of it; and talk it over with the judicious.

There are no little sins.

It is in any man's power to be contented; of very few to be rich. The first will infallibly make you happy; which is more than you can depend on from the latter.

He who begins soon to be good, is like to be very good at last.

Take care not to go to the brink of vice, lest you fall down the precipice.

If you have, or have not, a chance for happiness in the next life, it cannot signify much how you pass the present. Would you pity a person, who was obliged to travel in bad weather, and put up with mean accommodations, as he was going to take possession of a fine estate? Or would you envy one, who had a pleasant day to go to execution?

If you have the esteem of the wise and good, do not trouble yourself about the rest. And if you have not even that, let the approbation of a well informed conscience make you easy in the mean while. Time will come, when you may command the other: I mean when you

have had the public approbation of an infallible Judge before angels and men.

A good man gets good out of evil. A wicked man turns good to evil.

Fashion ought to have no weight in matters of any greater consequence than the cut of a coat or a cap. Numbers do not alter right and wrong. If it should be the fashion of this world to act foolishly and wickedly, depend on it, the fashion of the next will be, for virtue to be rewarded and vice to be punished.

If you can find a place, where you may be hid from God, and your conscience, do there what you will.

Obedience is the great lesson to be taught children. It is what the All-wise Teacher would bring mankind to.

If you act only with a view to praise, you deserve none.

Listen to conscience, and it will tell you, whether you really do as you would be done by.

Virtue in theory only is not virtue.

That bad habits are not quite unconquerable, is evident from *Demosthenes*, *Cicero*, and many others. But that they are very troublesome to deal with, and grow always stronger and stronger, universal experience proves too sufficiently.

Do not deceive yourself: The true preparation for death, is not living at random to threescore, and then retiring from the world, and giving up a few of the last years of life to prayer and repentance: But cultivating in your mind, from the beginning, the substantial virtues, which are the true ornaments of a worthy character, and which naturally fit it for endless happiness.

He only is truly virtuous, who would be so, if he had no prospect of gaining more happiness by virtue than vice: though at the same time, it is reasonable, and commendable, to have a due respect to the recompence of reward, as things are at present constituted.

The lot of mankind, upon an average, is wonderfully equal. The distribution of happiness is not so irregular, as appears at first view. There cannot indeed be any great inequality in the distribution of what is so inconsiderable as the temporal happiness enjoyed by mankind.

The contented, retired, and virtuous man has the best share.

Who could imagine it possible to forget death, which every object puts one in mind of, and every moment brings nearer?

What a strange condition a man must be in, whose judgment and practice are at variance. If a man does not perfectly agree with his wife, they can sometimes avoid one another's company, and so be easy. But can one run away from himself?

Of all virtues, patience is oftenest wanted. How unhappy must he be, who is wholly unfurnished with what is wanted every moment?

He who endeavours to drown thought, and stifle conscience, or who goes on in expensive living, without looking into his affairs, is about as wise, as he who should shut his eyes, and then run towards the precipice, as if his not seeing the danger would annihilate it.

That the ways of virtue are preferable to those of vice, is evident, in that we do not find people in old age, sickness, or on a death-bed, repenting, that they have lived too virtuously; but the contrary. This is a general confession from mankind, and at a time when they certainly are sincere. And they would give the same testimony to virtue at other times, if they could disengage themselves from the prejudices and passions, which blind them.

A good man, when he comes to die, has nothing to do, but to die.

Perhaps no created nature could be happy, without having experienced the contrast of unhappiness.

As no character is more venerable, than that of a wise old man; so none is more contemptible than that of an old fool.

It makes wretched work when the married pair come to disputing about privileges and superiority.

There is nothing more foolish than for those to fall out, who must live together, as husband and wife, and such near relations. But there is no falling out without folly on one side, or the other, or both.

The folly of some people in conversation, is beneath criticism. The only way of answering them, is to go out of hearing.

Consider with yourself, whether the wise and good would value you more or less, than they do now, if they knew your whole character.

It is well when old people know that they are old. Many, on the contrary, still affect to set themselves off as unimpaired in abilities both bodily and mental, long enough after they had outlived themselves.

It is necessary often to find fault. And the only way to do it, so as to be regarded, is to keep up your own dignity. A master who blusters and swears at his servant, is despised; while he, who reproves with mildness and gravity, is likely to be revered and obeyed.

What embitters the common accidents of life to most people is, their entertaining a foolish notion, that calamities are unnatural, and that we have a right to the pleasures of life. Whereas the true state of the case is, that affliction is what we greatly need, and richly deserve, and that the pleasures of life are the mere gift of God, which therefore he may withhold, or bestow, as he sees fit.

The use of reading is, to settle your judgment; not to confound it by a variety of opinions, nor to enslave it by authority.

If you will not listen to calm reason, take care lest you be made to feel the rod of severe affliction. If God loves you he will drive you from your follies, if you will be drawn from them.

If you are ever so sure that you ought to resent an injury, at least put off your resentment till you cool. You will gain every end better by that means, and can lose nothing by going cautiously and deliberately to work; whereas you may do yourself, or your neighbour, great mischief, by proceeding rashly and hastily.

If you find you cannot hold your own with the world, without making shipwreck of conscience and integrity; retire in time with a stock of honesty, rather than continue in business to retire at last with a stock of wealth, which will not yield you happiness when your integrity is gone.

The giver is the creditor; the receiver the debtor. Had you not better be the former than the latter?

Married people ought to consider, that the keeping up of mutual love and peace is of more consequence than any

point, which either the one or the other can want to gain, where life or fortune are not engaged. Let the husband consider, that it suits his superior wisdom to yield to the weaker in ordinary cases. Let the wife remember she solemnly promised to obey.

The devil is feared and hated.

The consciousness of having acted from principle, and without the praise or privity of any person whatever, is a pleasure superior to all that applause can yield.

Why do you desire riches and grandeur? Because you think they will bring happiness with them. The very thing you want is now in your power. You have only to study contentment.

Don't be frightened if misfortune stalks into your humble habitation. She sometimes takes the liberty of walking into the presence chamber of kings.

Be open with prudence. Be artful with innocence: Wise as the serpent, harmless as the dove. If either of these two qualities must predominate, by all means let it be the latter.

It is a shameful wickedness, common in trade, to conceal the faults, or artfully heighten the good qualities of what one wants to sell, or to disparage any article one has a mind to buy, in order to have it the cheaper. That trader, who cannot lay his hand upon his heart, and say, God, who knows all things, knows I use my neighbour as I would wish to be used, is no other, in plain *English*, than a downright knave.

To love a woman merely for her beauty, is loving a corpse for the sake of its being covered with a fair skin. If the lovely body has a bad soul in it, it becomes then an object of aversion, not of affection.

Never think yourself out of danger of a disorder of body by sickness, or of the mind by passion.

Those who have not courage to resist fashion, would ill resist tortures.

Nothing can materially hurt you, but what hurts your virtue.

When we hear of one dead suddenly, we are surprised. Whereas the greater wonder is that a machine of such frail materials, and exquisite workmanship, as the human body is should hold in motion for an hour together.

Let a man consider what the general turn of his thoughts is. It is that which characterises the man. He who thinks oftenest, and dwells longest on worldly things, is an earthly man. He whose mind is habitually employed in divine contemplation, is a heavenly man.

Absolute resignation to the Divine disposal, teaches neither, to desire to live nor to die.

In proportion to the grief and shame which a bad action would have caused you, such will be your joy and triumph on reflecting that you have bravely resisted the temptation.

Are not the great, happiest when most free of the incumbrances of greatness? Is there any happiness in greatness?

Forgive others who have fallen, and be on your guard lest you yourself fall. The angels in heaven, and the first of our species in innocence have fallen.

The hand of time heals all diseases. Human nature cannot long continue in violent anger, grief, or distress of any kind. Spare yourself immoderate uneasiness. The time will come, when all these things which now engage you so much, will be, as if they never had been; except your own character for virtue or vice.

If you live such a life, that you may be able, upon rational grounds, to be patient at the last hour, when your near friends lose all patience, you will show yourself a true hero.

Don't be uneasy if you cannot master all science. You may easily know enough to be good and happy.

He who suffers lust to steal away his youth, ambition his manhood, and avarice his old age, may lament too late, the shortness of the useful part of his life.

If you have a family, it is no more allowable, that you squander, away your substance, than for a steward to embezzle the state of which he is manager. You are appointed steward to your children; and if you neglect to provide for them, be it at your peril.

A truly great mind, from mere reverence for itself, would not descend to think a base thought, if it was never to be known to God or man.

This book is not likely to be read by any, whose station in life is not such, that thousands and millions of mankind would think worthy of envy. It will then be very strange, if it should be read by any discontented person.

He that has no shame, has no grace.

Before you think of retiring from the world, be sure that you are fit for retirement. In order to which, it is necessary that you have a mind so composed by prudence, reason, and religion, that it may bear being looked into; a turn to rural life; and a love for study.

He who is free from any immediate distress, and cannot be happy now, it is in vain for him to think he ever shall, unless he changes the temper of his mind, which is what hinders his happiness at present.

Do not grieve for him who is departed out of a troublesome and dangerous state into a better. If a relation, or an acquaintance, is gone into the other world, wholly unprepared for it, his case is truly lamentable.

The advantage our passions have over us, is owing to ourselves. We may easily gain such a knowledge of our own weakness, as to feel them rising before they be got to the height: And it is our own fault if we do not restrain them in time.

The most violent shaking will no shake the limpid water in a glass muddy: But a little disturbance will defile that in the well, or river. If it were not for the impurity of the mind itself, the shock of temptation would have no effect.

Whoever knows his own weaknesses, and has the sense to endeavour to get rid of them, will find himself as fully employed, in his own mind, as a physician in an hospital.

It may not be in your power to excel many people in riches, honours, or abilities: But you may excel thousands in what is incomparably more valuable, I mean substantial goodness of heart and life. Hither turn your ambition. Here is an object worthy of it.

Nothing is of any value to you that you make a bad use of.

You cannot, you say, find time to examine yourself, whether you are prepared for death. It is no matter, you must find time to die.

It is no matter what you spend your life in, if you neglect the very business of life.

You may acquire great knowledge, and be the worse for it at last.

Don't think of giving a shilling, while you owe a pound.

Shall hypocrisy get footing among christians? And

shall a heathen have the character of having rather desired *to be* virtuous than to be *thought* so?

I know no sight more nauseous than that of a fond husband and wife, who have not the sense to behave properly to one another before company: Nor any conversation more shocking than that of a snarling couple, who are continually girding at one another.

Consider how uncommon it is to live to old age: and take care to hold yourself in constant readiness for death.

The unthinking bulk of mankind are ever amusing themselves with some pursuit foreign to themselves. A wise man is ever looking inward.

It is no wonder if he who reads, converses and meditates, improves in knowledge. By the first, a man converses with the dead; by the second, with the living; and by the third, with himself. So that he appropriates to himself all the knowledge which can be got from those who have lived, and from those now alive.

Let no man refuse a pardon to others, but he who does not need it for himself.

A very ignorant man may have a very learned library. A very learned man may be a very contemptible creature.

If it were safe to put off repentance and reformation to the very last day of life, how do you know this is not it?

Endeavour to do all the good in your power. Be as active with prudence, as if you was sure of success. When you meet a disappointment, let it not abate your diligence, nor put you out of humour. And when you have done all, remember you have only done your duty.

The *Dutch* will not suffer the smallest breach in their dykes for fear of an inundation. Do not you suffer the smallest passage for vice into your heart, lest you find your virtue quite overflowed.

Do not be unhappy if you have not married a professed beauty. They generally admire themselves so much they have no love left for their husbands. Besides, it might not perhaps have been very agreeable to you, to see every fellow, as you went into public places, look at your wife, as if he could devour her with his eyes.

Take no counsel with flesh and blood, if you aspire at what is truly great.

A foolish youth makes a crazy old age.

Take care of natural biasses, as self-love, pleasure, &c. Be sure, you will always incline enough toward the biass side. Therefore, you need have no guard upon yourself that way.

The angels are said in Scripture to desire to look into the Christian scheme, as if to learn somewhat. Do not you then think it beneath you to learn, while you are so much inferior to them. The most knowing are the most desirous of knowledge. The most virtuous the most desirous of improvement in virtue. On the contrary, the ignorant think themselves wise enough; the vicious are in their own opinion good enough.

In bestirring yourself for the public advantage, remember, that if you should not accomplish all that you propose, you will however have employed yourself to good purpose, and will not fail of your reward, if you should of success.

Let no man complain of the shortness of life, but he who can say he has never mispent one hour.

Make sure first, and principally, of that knowledge, which is necessary for you as a man, and a member of society. Next, of what is necessary in your particular way of life. Afterwards, improve yourself in all useful and ornamental knowledge, as far as your capacity, leisure, and fortune will allow.

If you would not have affliction visit you twice, listen at once to what it teaches.

Never cast your eye upon a good man, without resolving to imitate him. Whenever you see an instance of vice or folly in another, let it be a warning to you to avoid them.

Where is yesterday now? With the years before the flood. But if you have employed it well, it stands recorded above to your eternal honour and advantage. If you have mispent or neglected it, it will appear against you at the last day.

Would you have one general universal remedy for all diseases, study religion. The only rational ground for consolation in the various distresses of life, is the consideration, that religion proposes a positive reward for bearing with dignity, and improving by affliction, and that afflictions are in truth our greatest blessings and proofs of the Divine favour.

If you unhappily fall into some fatal miscarriage, which wounds your conscience, and makes your life a burden, confess it, with all its circumstances, to some judicious and tender-hearted person, in whose fidelity you can confide, and whose advice may be of service to you. If it be of such a peculiar nature, that you do not think it prudent, to confess yourself guilty of such a thing, send a full account of it, written in a disguised hand, desiring an answer in writing. When you have the opinion of a judicious person upon the heinousness of your crime, which you may find you have either, through self-love thought too slightly of, or through an excessive tenderness of conscience, blamed yourself too much for, impress your mind properly with a sense of your fault: humble yourself deeply before God; and resolve bravely no more to be guilty of such folly. When you have done so, and find you can keep to your resolutions, it is not necessary that you continue to afflict yourself without end for what is irrecoverably past. The principal part of repentance is reformation.

I know no way of laying out a few shillings to more advantage, either for profit or pleasure, than upon an entertaining and instructing book. But this expence is greatly overdone by some, and ill laid out by others.

While you are unhappy because your tailor has not cut your coat to your mind, many an honest man would be glad to have one that would only keep out the cold, and cannot. While you are in a passion with your cook, because he has spoiled you one dish among six, many a poor family, who are fellow-creatures, and your fellow Christians, are at a loss for bread to supply the wants of nature. Think of this, and give over with shame your foolish and impious complaints against that goodness of Providence, which has placed you in circumstances so much above persons of equal merit with yourself.

It is the unhappiness of human life, that in every man's conduct there has always been some miscarriage, or some misfortune in his circumstances, which has prevented his carrying his improvements in knowledge and virtue the length which might have been wished or imagined. To make the most of life, such a number of concurrences are necessary, that it is no wonder they seldom all fall to the share

of any one person. Health, long life, fortune; great and various natural abilities, and a good disposition; an extensive education, begun early; indefatigable diligence to carry on improvements; a set of acquaintance capable of assisting in the pursuit of knowledge, and of encouraging in virtue; and happening to live in an age favourable to freedom of inquiry. If we consider the improvements some towering geniuses have made in knowledge, and the lengths gone in exemplary virtue by many who have laboured under innumerable disadvantages, we cannot help lamenting, that they were not favoured by Providence with the others, nor imagining what immense heights they must in some circumstances, have reached. The most remarkable concurrence of all kinds of advantages that ever was; and the most stupendous effects in consequence of it, will probably, as long as this world lasts, be the admiration and delight of all who are judges of the sublime labours of the greatest of philosophers, and best of men, the glory of our country, and of Human Nature. Yet even in him (though a sort of superior being, when compared with the rest of the species,) it is possible to imagine some circumstances different, and to the advantage. To what heights then may our nature rise in future states, when every possible advantage shall concur!

Do not pretend to neglect or trifle with your duty, unless you have found out unquestionable and demonstrative proof, that the general sense of mankind in all ages and nations, that virtue is the perfection of Human Nature, and the sure way to happiness, and vice the contrary, is a gross absurdity and falshood; that the Bible is a forgery; and that the belief of a judgment to come is a dream. If you be not as sure of all this, as that twice two are four, if there be the smallest possibility that it may be otherwise, it is the very desperation of madness to run the least hazard of the destruction of your soul by living a wicked life.

Death-bed repentance, and death-bed charity, are much of a kind. Men give up their vices and their money when they can keep them no longer.

Can any person seriously think that he was formed capable of reason, virtue, and religion, only to eat, drink, divert himself, and die?

Accustom yourself to the strict observance of your duty

in all respects, and it will in time be as troublesome to omit, or to violate it, as it is to many people to practise it.

Study to grow every day wiser and better: For every day brings you nearer to death.

It is strange to hear unthinking people descant upon the actions of men of universally acknowledged abilities, and to see them take it for granted, that they have acted a part entirely inconsistent with their known characters; which people very rarely do, and which it is therefore very unreasonable to suppose. If you were told of a miser's having done a generous thing, would you not be apt either to doubt the fact, or to conclude, that it must have appeared to him a likely way of getting somewhat? If you were told of a very passionate man's bearing an insult with exemplary patience, would you not be surprised? Why then should you rashly give into the belief, that a person, whose good understanding you are apprized of, has played the fool? on one, whose integrity is known to you, has acted a treacherous part? Hear the accused before you condemn.

Value learning as much as you please. But remember, a judicious thinker is incomparably superior to a great reader.

What can be more monstrous than the common excuses for unfaithfulness to the marriage-bed? People give their vows to one another in the most solemn manner; and then their first work is to think how to break them. They marry for better for worse; for richer or poorer, younger or older; handsomer or plainer. And then, when they come to repent of their rash choice, they pretend to excuse the breach of solemn vows by the pretext of defects they find in one another; of which it is wholly their own fault if they were not sufficiently apprized before their coming together.

To defeat calumny, 1. Despise it. To seem disturbed about it, is the way to make it be believed. And stabbing your defamer will not prove you innocent. 2. Live an exemplary life, and then your general good character will overpower it. 3. Speak tenderly of every body, even of your defamers, and you will make the whole world cry, Shame on them who can find in their hearts to injure one so inoffensive.

You say, your misfortunes are hard to bear. Your

vices are likewise hard to be forgiven, It is terrible to think of your suffering pain, sickness, poverty, or the loss of dear friends or relations? It is more terrible to think of your having offended the infinitely great and good Creator, Preserver, and Judge of the world, your kind and bountiful Father and best Friend. Is pain a great evil? Vice is a greater. It is rebellion against the Supreme Authority of the universe. Is the loss of a beloved wife like tearing limb from limb? So is falshood, cruelty, or ingratitude, like unhinging the universe, and bringing chaos back again: For they tend to universal disorder, and the destruction of the creation of God. Do you shudder at the thought of poverty or disease? Think with what eye Infinite Purity must behold wickedness? with what abhorrence absolute Perfection must see the ruin produced in his works by irregularity and vice. Do you desire to escape misery? Fly from sin. Do you wish to avoid punishment? Above all things avoid wickedness, the cause of it.

THE
DIGNITY
OF
HUMAN NATURE.

BOOK IV.

OF REVEALED RELIGION.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT it is in itself agreeable to rectitude, necessary to the Dignity of Human Nature, and the requisite concurrence of moral agents with the general scheme of the Governor of the universe, that we study above all things to perform our whole duty, viz. Taking proper care of our bodies and of our minds, loving our fellow-creatures as ourselves, and loving and serving our Creator; that this is our indispensable duty, and that the habitual neglect, or violation of it, upon whatever pretence, will expose us to the Divine displeasure, as the conscientious observance of it is most likely to gain us his favour, and consequently final happiness; all this appears clear to human reason, separate from any consideration of the truth of revelation, and deducible from universally acknowledged principles.—And if it may be supposed in the lowest degree probable, that the kind and merciful Parent of his creatures, who would have all men to be saved, and, in a consistency with eternal and immutable rectitude, to come to that happiness, of which their nature was formed capable; if it may be conceived in the lowest degree probable, that God should from the beginning have ordered

things so, that one method, among others, for promoting universal goodness and happiness, should be, the appearance of an express message, or revelation from himself, with a set of clearer and more striking instructions, than had been any other way communicated to mankind; if this be conceivable without any direct absurdity, then it is likewise evident from the principles of natural religion or reason, that it is the indispensable duty of all those of our species, to whom any such supposed Divine message or revelation, may be offered, to bestow the utmost diligence in examining its pretensions, and, if found sufficient, to admit them with candor and sincerity of mind, and to receive the revelation itself with that veneration and submission, which it becomes dependent creatures to express to Him who sent it.

That there is nothing directly absurd, or contradictory to reason, in the supposition of the possibility of a revelation given from God, for the reformation and improvement of mankind, is evident from its having been the opinion and the hope of the wisest and best of mankind, in all ages and various nations. *Socrates, Plato, Confucius*, and others, the bright and burning lights of antiquity, have given their authority to the opinion of the probability of a revelation from God. They have declared, that they thought it an affair of great consequence to re-ignite the light of reason, almost extinguished by vice and folly; recal a bewildered race of beings into the way of virtue, to teach mankind, with certainty and authority, how they ought to behave toward their Creator, so as to obtain his favour, and the pardon of their offences. They who were the best qualified of all uninspired men of those ancient times for instructing mankind, were ready to own themselves insufficient for the task of reforming the world. And it is notorious, that their worthy labours were in no respect adequate to the universal, or general amendment of manners, even in the countries in which they lived and taught. For that themselves greatly wanted instruction, appears plainly from what they have writ upon some of the most important points of morals, as the immortality of the soul; the nature, degree, and continuance of the rewards and punishments of the future state, and the means of obtaining the pardon of sin. And that their lessons should have

any considerable or powerful influence upon the people in general, was not to be expected, as they could at best but give them as their opinions; reasonable indeed, and clear in the main, to any understanding, which should take the trouble to examine; but backed with no authoritative sanction, or Divine attestation, to command attention and obedience.

It is evident, that, as there can be, on one hand, no merit in believing what is true, even religious truth, without examination; (for nothing is virtuous, or praise-worthy, that is irrational; and it is irrational to receive for truth what one has no solid reason to think is true) so on the other, to reject truth, especially religious truth, on any indirect or disingenuous account, or for any reason, besides some unsurmountable inconsistency in the doctrine, or deficiency in the evidence, is perverse and wicked. The faith, therefore, that is acceptable to God, who is like the Author of both reason and revelation, is that rational reception of religious truth, which arises from candid and diligent examination, and a due submission to Divine Authority. And the unbelief, which is condemned in Scripture, is that rejection of the revealed will of God, which is owing to prejudice, negligence, pride, or a fatal attachment to vice.

The guilt of wilfully rejecting or opposing Divine truth must be more or less atrocious, according as the advantages for inquiry, and satisfaction upon the subject, are greater, or less. The inhabitants of the dark and barbarous parts of the world, and even of the countries, which are over-run by Popish superstition will therefore be found more excusable for their deficiencies both in faith and practice, than we of this enlightened age, and nation, who enjoy every imaginable advantage for free enquiry, and labour under no kind of bias either toward credulity or the contrary, but what we choose to subject ourselves to.

Besides our being indispensably obliged, in point of duty, to take the utmost care, that a genuine revelation from God do not meet with neglect, much less disingenuous opposition, from us; it is also to be considered, what conduct wisdom prescribes in such a case. Were there no guilt in treating revelation with contempt, or opposing, yet no man of prudence would wilfully deprive

himself of any probable advantage for information and improvement, from whatever quarter it might come. Nor will any wise man think lightly of a scheme intended, as Divine revelation is, for the important ends of republishing, with a set of authoritative sanctions, the religion of nature, and fixing beyond all dispute the duty of mankind, and the means for attaining their greatest happiness; and for communicating to them various important truths not known before, nor discoverable by human reason. That revelation has effectually done these things, will appear by the general view of it, that will be exhibited in the second section.

A direct, explicit law, given by Divine authority, is the very thing which such a short-sighted, and imperfect order of beings as mankind, were peculiarly in want of. Nor is any method so fit for governing a set of creatures generally unqualified for reasoning out, with a proper clearness and certainty, the means of attaining happiness, as a distinct system of rules of conduct guarded by proper sanctions. Is not all human government constituted on that foundation? When a new state or colony is to be settled, do the founders trust to the reason of a mixed multitude for the observance of equity, the security of property, and happiness of the whole? And was it not a more effectual way to lead mankind to the love of God, and one another, to give them an express law to that purpose, than to leave it to their own reasonings, to find out their Creator, and to one another, and whether they might trifle with it, or resolve faithfully to perform it? Therefore mankind have probably, in no age been wholly left to their own reason: but a standing positive institution has all along been kept up in one part of the world, or other; and would in all probability have been more universally, as well as more conspicuously established; but for the wickedness of mankind, which rendered them unworthy of partaking universally of this blessing, and occasioned its being imparted to them in a more obscure and limited manner.

We are at present in a state of discipline; and every thing is intended as a part of our trial, and means of improvement. Revelation may be considered in the same light. A message from heaven is brought to our ears,

attended with such evidence, as may be sufficient to convince the unprejudiced mind of its being genuine; but at the same time not so ascertained, but that pretences for cavilling at, and opposing it, may, by disingenuous men, be found. If this gives an opportunity for the exercise of honest inquiry, and exhibits in the fairest light the different characters of the sincere, but cautious, and inquisitive lover of truth; of the indolent, unthinking, and credulous, who believes with the multitude; and of the perverse and disingenuous, who rejects whatever is not suitable to his ways of thinking or living; if revelation does these things, is it not to be reckoned one of the noblest trials of the present state? And is it not promulgated in the very manner it ought to have been?

Standing oracles were probably some of the first methods which the Divine Wisdom made use of to communicate particular express information to mankind. There was an appointed place, to which worshippers resorted, and consulting, received answers, and directions. Spiritual beings were employed in revealing the Divine Will to mankind. And in visions and dreams, communications were given to men of characters eminent for virtue and piety. A race of prophets, or persons under Divine Influence, succeeding to one another, so as there should be no long period without one or more such inspired men, kept up an impression of the superintendency of God, and of the necessity of obedience to Him. But we know of no method so proper for communicating to mankind in general, a set of useful informations; so as to be of lasting, constant, and extensive advantage to them, as their being committed to writing, by which means they are easily accessible to all, to be consulted at all times and in all places.

The revelation, therefore, with which we are blessed, has been, by the Divine Providence directed to be penned by *Moses*, the Prophets, and Apostles; and has been wonderfully preserved for many ages, free, for any thing we know, or have reason to suspect, from material corruptions and alterations; and in it we have all informations necessary for our conduct here, and happiness hereafter.

Whoever chooses to enlarge the sphere of his inquiry as wide as possible, may examine the several schemes of religion, which have pretended to a Divine Original, and

by comparing them together, he will soon find which bears the characters of being truly from heaven.

As to us, who live in these happy realms of knowledge and freedom of inquiry, the religion contained in the scripture of the Old and New Testaments offers itself more immediately, and challenges our chief and most attentive examination; it is therefore evident, that it lies immediately upon us to inquire into its pretensions; and that we may more safely neglect all the others; none of which the Divine Providence has given us so fair an opportunity of examining, or made so clearly our duty to inquire into. But to inquire into religion in an impartial manner, a man must begin with shaking off all prejudice, from education and general opinion, and must suppose himself a mere unprincipled *Indian*, not biassed to any species of religion in the world. He must likewise resolve to go through the whole of what he is to examine; not contenting himself with a partial and imperfect view of things, which is the way to acquire imperfect and mistaken notions. He must also go directly to the fountain, if he would know the true virtues of the water of life; that is, he must, to know the religion of the scriptures, go directly to the scriptures, and study them more than all the systems or bodies of divinity in the world.

There is no greater hindrance to the candid examination and ready reception of so pure and strict a scheme of religion as the christian, than a fatal attachment to vice. This was the original obstacle, which retarded its establishment in the world, at its first appearance; has prevented its progress ever since; has disguised and deformed its native beauty; has almost wholly defeated its genuine intention, in one church; and raised enemies against it, even in this land of light, in an age immediately succeeding to the times, in which it stood the examination of the ablest inquirers, and came out established upon a more rational foundation, than ever it stood upon, from the apostolic age downwards. It will therefore be necessary, above all things, for the inquirer into the truth of christianity, to purge his mind from every corrupt affection, that may prompt him to wish to find it suspicious or false; to take no counsel with flesh and blood; but to labour to work himself up to that pitch of heavenly-mindedness, which it

requires; that so he may not only be wholly unprejudiced against it, but may be supposed to listen to reason in its favour, and may find within himself a witness to its truth.

SECTION I.

Previous Objections against a Revelation in general, and that of Scripture in particular, considered.

A revelation had not been given to mankind, had there been no need of it, in such a sense as that it must prove wholly useless. But the question is, whether it is not an absurdity to talk of a genuine revelation's being needless, or useless. Can any thing be said to be needless, or useless that is calculated to improve mankind? If a set of moral instructions from one person will be of any service to me, can it be said, that more of the same kind will be useless? if I had already digested all the knowledge, that is to be got in books, and by conversation with the wise and learned of my own species, would the conversation of a superior being be needless and useless to me? Nay, if the archangel Gabriel had in his power to receive some new informations by revelation from God, would he neglect them, as needless and useless, because his knowledge is already immensely extensive? Those objectors to revelation, who talk of its being unnecessary, do not seem to have clear ideas to their words. For if they had, they never would think of limiting the Divine goodness to his creatures, or of alleging, that their advantages for happiness were too great. Nor would one think that revelation should ever have been looked on as superfluous, by any person who knew the world; but on the contrary, that all such would readily acknowledge, that if it were possible to have yet another additional revelation, or advantage for virtue, mankind would not then be at all too good. Nor can any one help seeing the real eventual advantage of revelation, who knows any thing of the difference between the condition, as to knowledge and virtue, of those ages and nations, which have, and those which have not enjoyed the light of it. And here it is to be remembered that in all probability it is a very small part of our knowledge that is the genuine acquisition of mere human reason, wholly unassisted. The very use of letters seems to have

pretensions to a greater author than *Cadmus*, or than *Moses*. And probably the whole of the religious knowledge we possess, is originally owing to revelation.

The deplorable darkness and ignorance, in which those of our species are found involved, who have lived detached from the rest of mankind, and have never enjoyed, or have wholly lost, all traces of revealed knowledge (if that be really the case of any people, which is to be doubted, is a proof of the advantage of revelation. And it is only from what we find to be the case of those newly discovered nations, who have undoubtedly few supernatural advantages, that we can fairly judge, what the state of mankind in general would have been, if the species had been left wholly to themselves. For, as to this side of the globe, it is to be questioned, if there ever was any people upon it, who could be said to be in a perfect state of nature, as will afterwards appear.

The despisers of revealed religion, on account of the all-sufficiency of human reason, are desired to consider the following proofs of its boasted sufficiency in matters of both belief and practice.

The only account we have of the antediluvian manners, is that given by *Moses*, viz. That all flesh corrupted their ways to such a degree, as to render it necessary to purify the earth by a general deluge. Of the patriarchal times, the only accounts we have are likewise from the same venerable writer; which show the people of those ages, except a few families, to have been wholly given to polytheism and idolatry. The destruction of the five cities by fire from heaven, for the most abominable and unnatural crimes, shows the state of corruption to which the people of those times were sunk. The accounts we have from *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus*, of the religion of the *Egyptians*, the fathers of wisdom and learning, are the disgrace of human reason. Their worshipping the most contemptible and hateful animals, as crocodiles, storks, cats, monkeys, and calves; to kill which sacred animals, was death by their law, and which they carefully embalmed, and solemnly deposited in tombs; and their adoration even of plants, as leeks and onions; these are strange instances of the sufficiency of reason for judging in religious matters! They also (according to the same author) allow-

ed of theft; and made marriages between brothers and sisters a part of religion. What were all the popular religions of the *Pagans* in general, but a heap of absurdities? What can be said of their deities; whose characters were too shocking, for men and women of such manners to be suffered to live among us? And lest there should be any want of such hopeful objects of worship, they multiplied them to such a number, that *Varro* reckons up a little army of them, and *Lucian* represents the heavens as in danger of being broke down with the weight of such a multitude. The horrid practice of appeasing them with human blood, and even with that of the children of the zealous votaries themselves, with the abominable impurities ascribed to them, and practised by their blind worshippers in honour of them, show what notions of the object, and nature of worship, human reason, left to itself, is apt to run into. Those, who had better notions of the superior powers, represent them as either quarrelling and fighting (*Homer* makes his goddesses treat one another with the language of *Billingsgate*) or as a set of idle luxurious voluptuaries, spending their whole time in quaffing of nectar, wholly regardless of human affairs. In some ancient nations, every young woman was obliged to prostitute herself in the temple of *Venus*, as a religious ceremony. *Thucydides* says, that both *Greeks* and *Barbarians* thought robbery and plunder glorious. The whole ancient heroism was indeed little else. And it was chiefly by violence and brutal fury, that the *Macedonian*, *Roman*, and other states acquired such an extent of dominion. From *Homer*, and other writers, down to the *Roman* historians, we see how the manners of ancient times allowed to treat captives in war. Princes and princesses were dragged in triumph after the chariot of the conqueror; and they, and the inferior people by thousands, butchered in cold blood, or condemned to slavery: The beautiful part of the female captives shared among the heroes, and condemned to prostitution, and infamy. The laws of *Lycurgus* were founded in war and savage heroism, and allowed stealing, unless the person was caught in the fact. Adultery was also in certain cases established by law. Exposing of children was, among the *Romans* according to *Luctantius*, a daily practice. Gladiators butchering one another by thousands, was the reign-

ing diversion among those lords of the world for ages. And it was common, when one had got the other down, for the conqueror to look at the people for their orders, whether to spare or kill him, which they often gave for the latter; and even the ladies, if we may believe their own writers, would often give the signal to dispatch a poor, conquered, helpless victim, that they might feast their savage and unwomanly hearts with scenes of cruelty and blood. The authors of the *Grecian* wisdom were almost all addicted to one vice or other, some more, some less scandalous. Their snarling, and impudence, got them the appellation of *Cynics*; and disputes about words run through all their writings. Too many of both *Greek* and *Roman* philosophers, or wise men, flattered the vices of princes. *Socrates* himself, the father of wisdom, and opposer of polytheism, encouraged to consult the oracles, and to offer sacrifice to idols. *Plato's* morals were so obscure, that it required a life-time to understand them. *Cicero* excuses and countenances lewdness in some parts of his writings. And those of *Seneca* are not without their poison. What were the manners of the polite court of *Augustus* (to say nothing of the sea of blood, through which he swam to the imperial throne) is pretty evident from the abominable and unnatural filthiness scattered through the writings of the wits of that elegant age. Which of the ancient sages did not too far temporize, and conform to the national superstition, contrary to their better knowledge, and even make the worst species of dissimulation a part of the duty of a good citizen; the consequence of which was the effectual rivetting of error, and prevention of reasonable inquiry and reformation. It is certain, that whole nations have placed virtue on directly opposite sides; and that the wise ancients differed in their notion of what the chief good of man consisted in, to such a degree, that one author reckons up several hundred different opinions on the subject. This shows that the understanding, or moral sense, though sufficient, when illuminated by Divine revelation, to judge of truth, is not, for all that, capable of striking out of itself sufficient light, safely to guide itself, especially overwhelmed and oppressed as it is by vice and prejudice. The most sublime of the Heathen philosophers never put the immortality of the soul (the founda-

tion of all religion) out of doubt. On the contrary, they represent it as at best only a very desirable scheme. Of a general resurrection of the body, an universal public judgment, and final happiness of the whole Human Nature, soul and body, in a state of everlasting glory, it does not appear that they had any clear notions; or that they carried their views beyond the *Elysian* state. None of them could satisfy a thinking mind about the proper means for propitiating the Deity, or whether guilt was like to be pardoned at all: nor could any of them prescribe an acceptable method of addressing the object of worship. On the contrary, *Plato* represents the wise *Socrates* as at a full stop, and advising not to worship at all, till such time as it should please God to inform mankind, by an express revelation, how they might address him acceptably. Nor did any of them sufficiently inculcate humility, the foundation of all virtues. On the contrary, the very schemes of some of the sects were rather founded in pride and obstinacy. Nor did any of them go so far as to show that forgiving injuries, loving enemies, and setting the affections upon the future heavenly state, were absolutely necessary. The utmost that any of them did, was to recommend the more sublime virtues to the practice of such persons as could reach them. So much for the Heathen doctrines and morals.

Mahomet is known to have abandoned himself to lust all his life long. His impostures were so gross, that when he first broached them, his best friends were ashamed of both him and them. His religion sets upon the foot of direct violence and force of arms, and makes sensual gratifications, to the most excessive degree of beastliness, the final reward of a strict attachment to it. The *Koran*, so far as it is an original, is a heap of absurd doctrines, and trifling or bad laws. The few miracles which *Mahomet* pretends to have performed, are either things within the reach of human power, or are hideous and incredible absurdities, or are wholly unattested.

The papists, who pretend to be christians; but have in fact forged a religion of their own; have they done any honour to the opinion of the all-sufficiency of reason in matters of religion? Let every one of their peculiar doctrines be examined, and let it be considered what advan-

tage it is of to mankind, for regulating their belief, and practice. Their invocation of saints, who ought to be omnipresent, to hear their prayers; which, according to their own account of the matter they are not. Their purgatory, out of which the priest can pray a soul at any time for money, which must defeat the very design of a purgatory. Their penances, pilgrimages, fines, absolutions, and indulgencies; whose direct tendency is to lead the deluded votaries of that cursed superstition into a total neglect of the obligations of virtue, defeating the very end of religion. The infallibility of their popes, while one thunders out bulls and decrees directly contrary to those of another. And, last and worst (for it is endless to enumerate the absurdities of popery) that most hideous and monstrous of all productions of the human brain, transubstantiation, which at once confounds all sense, overturns all reasoning, and renders all truth precarious and uncertain. These are the triumphs of reason; these the productions of human invention, when applied to making of religions.

Upon the whole, from this brief and imperfect representation of the state of those parts of the world which have enjoyed but a very little of the light of genuine Divine revelation, (for it is to be doubted, whether any was ever wholly without it) and of those which have wickedly extinguished, or foolishly forsaken it, from this very brief representation, I say, human reason, unassisted from above, shows itself so far from sufficient for leading mankind in general into a completely right belief and practice, that in almost every point, beyond mere simple right and wrong, it misleads into error, or falls short of truth. As the naked eye, though very fit for directing our way on earth, yet misrepresents, through its weakness, every celestial object; shows the sun no bigger than a chariot wheel, the moon flat like a plate of silver, and the planets like lucid points. The same eye strengthened by a telescope sees the sun, and moon, and planets, large and globular, as they really are. Revelation is that to reason, which a telescope is to the eye; an advantage and improvement. As he, who would see the wonders of the heavens, arms his eye with a telescope, so does the judicious inquirer into religious truth, apply to revelation for those informa-

tions, which reason alone would never have given, though it judges of, and approves them, when given. And as the astronomer does not think of putting out his eye, in order to see better with a telescope; so neither does the judicious advocate for revelation desire to oppose it to reason, but to examine it by reason and to improve his reason by it.

The abominable priestcraft, and horrid persecution and blood-shed, which have been the disgrace of a religion, whose distinguishing characteristic is benevolence, is no confutation of what I have been advancing in support of the natural tendency and actual good effects upon a great number of mankind, of pure religion; and only shows that even a Divine appointment may be perverted to the purpose of establishing the kingdom of Satan. At any rate, the abuse of revelation, is no better objection against revelation, than that of reason (of which every hour presents us various instances) is against reason; which nobody ever thought of urging, as an argument that it was not of Divine original.

The disputes among the many different sects of christians, which have rendered it very difficult for those, who search for the doctrines of revealed religion, any where, but in the Bible itself, to settle their judgment upon many points; those disputes are no just objection against revelation, any more than against every branch of human science whatever; upon every one of which, not excepting even the pure mathematics, controversies have been raised. A revelation, upon which it should be impossible for designing, subtle men to raise disputes, is hardly conceivable; or, however, is altogether inconsistent with the idea of a contrivance intended for the improvement of a set of free moral agents; who must be expected to treat revelation, as well as every other kind of information, according to their respective capacities, and tempers of mind.

If it has been alleged, that for God to have recourse to a direct message, or revelation, for reforming or improving mankind, or supplying the deficiencies of reason, looks like a defect in the make of the creature; and that reason ought alone to have been made originally equal to the purpose of enabling mankind to secure their final happiness; the answer is easy, to wit, That if human reason were supposed

more equal to the purpose for which it was given than it is, a revelation might still be of great advantage. And that to suppose an express contrivance for mending the moral world necessary, or useful, is no more unphilosophical, or to speak properly, more unworthy of God, than one for the same purpose, in the natural world. And this latter is by our great philosopher allowed to be probable.

Supposing it reasonable to believe that the Divine power, either immediately, or by means of the intervention or instrumentality of inferior agents and causes, does continually actuate the natural world, and conduct the moral; is not this a continued interposition? Why then should the thought of an extraordinary interposition on an extraordinary occasion, in order to a great and important end, be so difficult to conceive? At any rate, what must those gentlemen, who are so startled at the notion of an extraordinary step taken by the infinitely wise and absolutely free Governor of the world; what must they say of the creation of the universe? Did the universe come into existence by settled laws of nature? Is there any law of nature by which nothing becomes something? And does that law take place at such and such precise times, and no other? Let the opposers of extraordinary interpositions make the most of that difficulty, they must acknowledge somewhat extraordinary, as they choose to call it, to take place now and then in the universe on occasion of the creation of a world. And it does not appear to me, that the restoration, or (as it may be called) making a-new a world, is of much less consequence, or less worthy of a particular interposition, than the first creation of it.

But after all, what is it those gentlemen puzzle themselves with? Are they sure, that in order, the giving a positive revelation to mankind, and the restoration of a world by means of such an institution as the christian, there is any thing to be done out of, or contrary to the common course of things? Can they be positive, that there never was, or will be, any scheme, analogous to this, contrived for any other order of beings in the universe? To affirm this, would be about as judicious as the opinion of the vulgar, that thunder is an immediate expression of the Divine displeasure, and that comets are sent on purpose to give notice of impending judgments. Whereas a lit-

the knowledge of nature shows, that, whatever moral instructions those phenomena are in general fitted to communicate at all times to mankind, the cause of them is part of the mere constitution of nature. And who can say, that superior beings may not have such extensive views of the august plan of the Divine government, as to see the whole scheme of revealed religion in the same light?

Nor are there wanting various particulars, in the Divine government of the moral world, analogous, in a lower sphere, to the grand scheme of revelation. How much are we in the present state dependant on others for various advantages spiritual and temporal? What gift of God do we receive without the interposition of some agent? How are parents, teachers, spiritual pastors, and guardian angels, made the channels of the Divine goodness to us? Is there not in this something similar to our receiving the inestimable advantages of the perfect knowledge of our duty, the pardon of our sins, and all the blessings which religion bestows, through the channel of a Mediator between God and us? Our Saviour's taking upon himself certain sufferings, by which we are to gain great advantages, is by no means foreign to the common course of the world, in which we see very great hazards run, and actual inconveniences suffered by friends and relations for one another. He and his apostles allow of this analogy.

In the common course of things, thoughtlessness and folly, which though not innocent, are yet pitiable, are the causes of very terrible misfortunes; and are therefore in many cases provided for by the goodness of the wise Governor of the world, so that they do not always prove irretrievable. A thoughtless person by intemperance, runs himself into a quarrel, in which he is wounded. Without help, he must perish. And it is not to be expected that he should be miraculously recovered. Is it not the Divine goodness, which has furnished the materials necessary for his cure, made provision in the formation of the human body for the accidents it might be liable to, so that every hurt should not prove fatal to it; and engaged us to be kind and helpful to one another; so that we should be sure of comfort from one or other in our distress? In the same manner, and by the same goodness, exerted in a higher degree, revelation teaches us, a remedy is pro-

vided for the recovery to the Divine mercy (in a consistency with the wisdom and rectitude of his moral government) of a fallen, offending order of beings. In the case of the unfortunate person here exemplified, his being convinced of his folly; his being heartily concerned for it; and his resolving never more to be guilty of the like, is not sufficient for his recovery; any more than repentance and reformation alone could be supposed sufficient to put offenders on a footing with innocent beings.

Natural ends are produced by natural means: so are moral. Natural means are many of them slow, and seemingly unpromising, if experience did not show their fitness. It may therefore be concluded, and hoped, that the design of giving a revelation to mankind, however unpromising of extensive success, will eventually, and upon the whole, be gained, in such a measure as it may not be wholly defeated. Natural means come short, in some particular instances, of their direct and apparent ends; as in abortions of all kinds in the animal and vegetable world. In the same manner it is to be feared; that all the moral means used by Divine goodness, for the reformation of mankind, and revelation among the rest, will, through their perverseness, come greatly short of the direct end, the happiness of the species; though it shall not be in the power of all created beings to prevent the secondary and more indirect intention of the Divine moral institutions.

Some opposers of revelation have run themselves into a great many difficulties, by forming to themselves a set of groundless and arbitrary notions of what a revelation from God ought absolutely to be, which not taking place according to their theory, they have concluded against the credibility of revelation; than which nothing can be imagined more rash and unreasonable, to say the least. They have for example, laid it down for an infallible position, that a truly Divine revelation must contain all possible kinds and degrees of knowledge. But finding that the modern astronomy, and other sciences, have no place in scripture, or that the expressions in those ancient books do not always suit the true philosophy, they conclude that scripture is not given by inspiration. But when it is considered, that the design of revelation was not to make men philosophers, it may very well be supposed, that the spirit which con-

ducted it did not see it necessary to inspire the sacred penmen with any knowledge not directly necessary for improving men's hearts and lives. Finding some inconsiderable variations in the historical accounts, as of our Saviour's resurrection and other particulars, they conclude, that the narration is not authentic: for that inspiration must have prevented any such variation in the accounts of the different writers. But it is to be remembered, that the measure of inspiration must be supposed to have been limited; that every single article and syllable was not necessary to be expressly inspired; that where the human faculties of the writers were in the main sufficient, it was not to be supposed inspiration should interpose; and that revelation was designed to be perfect (as all things which we have to do at present) only to a certain degree.

The want of universality is an objection of the same kind. But if the consideration of the true religion's not being communicated alike to all mankind, proves any thing against it, the same objection lies against reason. For it is given to men in such different measures, as almost to render it doubtful whether they ought not to be pronounced of different species. Nor is there any injustice in the different distribution of gifts and advantages; if we take in the due allowance made for those differences in the final judgment. If a *Hottentot*, be hereafter judged as a *Hottentot*, he ought as much to own the justice of his sentence, as a *Newton*, when judged as a philosopher.

Could we have formed any just notion what the measure of human reason, what the reach of human sagacity ought to have been? Whether it ought to shine forth in its greatest brightness at first, or to come to its maturity by slow degrees; whether it ought in its exertion to be wholly independent on the body, or if it should be liable to be disordered with the disorder of the corporeal frame; whether it ought to be always equal, or weak in youth and in extreme old age. Who would have thought the seemingly precarious faculty of invention, a proper method for improving arts and sciences! Who would have thought that writing and printing could ever have been made the means of carrying human knowledge to the height we know they have done? If we find that Divine wisdom can, by the most unpromising causes, produce the greatest effects,

and that hardly any thing is constituted in such a manner as human wisdom would beforehand have judged proper, why should we wonder if we cannot reconcile the scheme of Divine revelation to our arbitrary and fantastical views ; which for any thing we know, may be immensely different from those of the Author of revelation ?

With all our incapacity of judging beforehand what revelation ought to have been, it does not follow, that we may not be sufficiently qualified to judge of its evidence and excellence now it is delivered. And that is enough to determine us to what is right and safe for us, I mean, to pay it all due regard. For, in all cases, it is our wisdom to act upon the best probability we can obtain.

A supernatural scheme contrived by Divine wisdom, an express revelation from God, may well be expected to contain difficulties too great for human reason to investigate. The ordinary economy of nature and providence, is founded in, and conducted by a sagacity too deep for our penetration, much more the extraordinary parts, if such there are, of the Divine government. In the works of nature, it is easy for men to puzzle themselves and others with difficulties unsurmountable, as well as to find objections innumerable ; to say, Why was such a creature or thing made so ? Why was such another not made in such a particular manner ? The ways of Providence are also too intricate and complex for our shallow understandings to trace out. The wisdom, which guides the moral, as well as that which framed the natural system, is Divine ; and therefore too exquisite for our gross apprehensions. Even in human government, it is not to be expected, that every particular law or regulation should give satisfaction to every subject, or should be perfectly seen through by individuals at a distance from the seat of government : which is often the cause, especially in free countries, of most unreasonable and ridiculous complaints against what is highly wise and conducive to the general advantage. But in inquiring into nature, providence, and revelation, one rule will effectually lead us to a proper determination, to wit, to judge by what we know, not by what we are ignorant of. If in the works and ways of God, in nature, providence, and revelation, where, comprehended by us, we find a profusion of wisdom and goodness exhibit-

ed in the most perspicuous and striking manner; is any thing more reasonable than to conclude, that if we saw through the whole, we should perceive the same propriety in those parts which are intricate, as we now do in the clearest? And it has been the peculiar fate of revelation, much more than either of the other two, to be opposed on account of such difficulties in it, as arise from our weakness. Especially, it has very rarely happened, that the existence of God, and the doctrine of his being the Creator of the world, has been questioned merely on account of any difficulties in tracing out the wisdom of any part of the constitution of nature. And yet it would be as rational to argue, that there is no God, because the brutes have in some inferior respects the advantage of the lord of this lower world, as to question the truth of revealed religion, after examining its innumerable evidences, presumptive and positive, merely because we may think it strange, that the Saviour of the world should die the death of a criminal.

Here it is proper to enter an express caveat against whatever may pretend to the sacred character of a point of faith or religion, and on that pretence elude or baffle reason. There can nothing be imagined to be intended for the use and improvement of reasonable minds, which directly and explicitly contradicts reason. If reason and revelation be both the gifts of God, it is not to be expected that they should oppose one another; but that they should tally, as both coming from the same wise and good Author. Whatever therefore is an express absurdity, or contradiction, we may be well assured can be no genuine doctrine of revealed religion, but a blundering invention of weak or designing men. It is one thing for a point of revealed religion to be, as to its *modus*, above our reach, and quite another matter, for a doctrine to be clearly contradictory to human understanding. That the direct connexion in the nature of things betwixt the death of Christ and the salvation of mankind, should be utterly inexplicable by human reason, is no more than what might have been expected, and, if unquestionably a doctrine of revealed religion, is to be received without hesitation upon the credit of the other parts which we understand more perfectly. But, that on a priest's muttering a few words over a wafer, it should immediately become a whole Christ, while

at the same time it is certain, that if a little arsenic had been put into the composition of it, it would have effectually poisoned the soundest believer ; and while we know that there can be but one whole Christ, though the Papists pretend to make a thousand Christs in a day ; this is not to be considered as a difficult or mysterious point, but as a clear express contradiction both to sense and reason.

It is also proper here to mention, that whatever doctrine of religion (supposing it to be really genuine) is beyond the reach of human understanding, cannot be imagined necessary to be received, any farther than understood. For belief cannot be carried the least degree beyond conception. And it is to be remembered, that a doctrine may be contained in scripture, and yet not a necessary point of faith. For example : It is said in scripture, that the angels desired to look into the scheme of the redemption of mankind. But nobody has ever thought, of making an article of faith necessary to salvation, That we are to believe, that the angels are interested in the scheme of our redemption. Unless scripture itself expressly declares a doctrine necessary to be received, we cannot, without rashness, pretend to pronounce it absolutely necessary to be believed in any precise or determinate sense whatever.

It has been objected against the scheme of revelation which is received among us, That great part of the precepts contained in it are such as appear at first view agreeable to sound reason ; whereas it might have been expected (say those objectors, or rather cavillers) that every article in it should be quite new and unheard of. At the same time the same gentlemen think proper likewise to object, That many of the scripture-expressions are very different from those used by other ancient authors. So that it is, it seems, an objection against scripture, That *it is* what it might have been expected to be ; and that *it is not* what it might have been expected to be.

To the former of these cavils it may be briefly answered, That the general agreement between reason and revelation, shows both to be of Divine original ; while revelation's being an improvement and addition to reason,* shows its usefulness and expediency. The latter difficulty

* See page 408.

will vanish on considering that many of the scripture expressions are visibly accommodated to human apprehension, while others on the same subjects are raised to a sublimity suitable to the nature of the thing; by which means the narrowest mind receives an information suitable to its reach, whilst the most elevated conception is enlarged by views of the noblest and most sublime nature. Thus, to mention only one instance at present, the meanest reader of Scripture, is struck with fear of One, whose eye is quick and piercing, to search the hearts, and try the reins of the children of men, and whose hand is powerful, and his out-stretched arm mighty, to seize and punish offenders. At the same time the profound philosopher is in the same writings informed, that God is a spirit filling heaven and earth, and not contained within the limits of the heaven of heavens, but inhabiting immensity and eternity, in whom all live and move, and have their beings; necessarily invisible, and altogether unlike to any of his creatures; having neither eyes, nor hands, nor passions like those of men; but whose ways are infinitely above our ways and his thoughts above our thoughts. Thus the Scripture language is such, as that of a revelation intended for the improvement of men of all different degrees of capacity, ought to be. It is, in short, fit for the use of a whole species.

That the Old Testament particularly, which is the only book extant in that language, should be so well preserved and understood as it is, so long after the *Hebrew* has ceased to be a living language: that we should at this time be able to make out a regular history, and a set of consistent thoughts and views, from writings of such antiquity, is much more to be wondered, than that there should be found in them difficulties, seeming contradictions, and thoughts or expressions different from those found in productions of a later date. But above all things, that the thoughts and expressions in Scripture should so far exceed in sublimity all other compositions, seems unaccountable upon every other scheme, but their being of Divine original. Of the truth of this assertion, let the following instance, among innumerable others, serve as a proof.

The loftiest passage, in the most sublime of all human productions, is the beginning of the eighth book of *Homer's Iliad*. There the greatest of all human imagina-

tions labours to describe, not a hero, but a God; not an inferior, but the Supreme God; not to show his superiority to mortals, but to the heavenly powers; and not to one, but to them all united. The following is a verbal translation of it.

“The saffron coloured morning was spread over the whole earth; and *Jupiter*, rejoicing in his thunder, held an assembly of the gods upon the highest top of the many-headed *Olympus*. He himself made a speech to them, and all the gods together listened.

“Hear me, all ye gods, and all ye goddesses, that I may say what my soul in my breast commands. Let not therefore any female deity, or any male, endeavour to break through my world; but all consent together, that I may most quickly perform these works. Whomsoever, therefore, of the gods I shall understand to have gone by himself, and of his own accord to give assistance either to the *Trojans* or the *Greeks*, he shall return to *Olympus* shamefully wounded; or I will throw him, seized by me, into dark hell, very far off, whether the most deep abyss is under the earth; whether there are iron gates, and a brazen threshold, as far within hell, as heaven is distant from the earth. He will then know, by how much I am the most powerful of all the gods.

“But come, try, O ye gods, that ye may all see. Hang down the golden chain from heaven, hang upon it all ye gods, and all ye goddesses; but ye shall not be able to draw from heaven to the ground *Jupiter* the great counsellor, though ye strive ever so much. But when I afterwards shall be willing to draw, I shall lift both the earth itself, and the sea itself. Then I shall bind the chain round the top of *Olympus*, and they shall all hang aloft. For so much am I above gods and above men.”

With this most masterly passage of the greatest master of the sublime, of all antiquity, the writer, who probably had the greatest natural and acquired advantages of any mortal for perfecting a genius; let the following verbal translation of a passage from writings penned by one brought up a shepherd, and in a country where learning was not thought of, be compared; that the difference may appear. In this comparison, I know of no unfair advantage given the inspired writer. For both fragments are

literally translated; and if the critics are right the *Hebrew* original is verse, as well as the *Greek*.

“ O Lord, my God, thou art very great ! Thou art clothed with honour and majesty ! Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment : who stretchest out the heavens like a canopy. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters : who maketh the clouds his chariots : who walketh upon the wings of the wind. Who maketh his angels spirits ; his ministers a flame of fire. Who laid the foundation of the earth, that it should not be moved for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep, as with a garment : the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled ; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains ; they go down by the vallies unto the place thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound, that they may not pass over ; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

“ O Lord, how manifold are thy works ? In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide sea, wherein are creatures, innumerable, both small and great. There go the ships. There is that leviathan, which thou hast made to play therein. These all wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their food in due season. That thou givest them they gather. Thou openest thy hand : they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face : they are troubled. They die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit ; they are created ; and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure forever. The Lord shall rejoice in his works. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth. He toucheth the hills ; and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise unto my God, while I have my being.”

I appeal to every reader, whether the former of these two fragments is not, when compared with the latter, a school-boy's theme, a capucinade, or a Grub-street ballad, rather than a production fit to be named with any part of the inspired writings. Nor is it only in one instance, that the superiority of the Scripture stile to all human compositions appear. But taking the whole body of sacred poesy, and the whole of profane, and considering the character of the *Jehovah* of the former, and the *Jupiter* of the latter,

every one must see the difference to be out of all reach of comparison. And, what is wonderfully remarkable, Scripture poesy, though penned by a number of different hands, as, *Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah*, and the rest, in very distant ages, gives a distinct and uniform idea of the Supreme Being, no where deviating into any thing mean, or unworthy of him; and still even where he is spoke of in a manner suited to the general apprehension of mankind, his dignity and majesty duly kept up. Whereas, there is not one of the ancient Heathen poets, who gives a consistent idea of the Supreme God, or keeps up his character throughout, *Homer*, in the same poem, describes his *Jupiter* with a great deal of majesty, and in another represents him as deceived by his wife *Juno*, and overcome with lust and sleep, while the inferior deities are playing what tricks they please, contrary to his intention. In short, the Supreme God is by *Homer* described as a bully; by *Virgil*, as a tyrant; by *Ovid*, as a beastly voluptuary; and by *Lucretius*, as a lazy drone. So that, if the cavils of the opposers of Revelation, with respect to the style of Scripture, were of so much more consequence than they are; it would still be the easiest, and indeed the only rational way of accounting for the amazing superiority of those writings to the greatest human productions, in spite of the disadvantages, of want of learning, and the like, which the sacred penmen laboured under; to ascribe the sentiments in them to Divine Inspiration.

Other objections, as, that the genuineness of some of the books of the Bible has been disputed; those of various readings; of seeming contradictions; of doubtful interpretations; of obscurity in the Scripture Chronology, and the like; all these difficulties are sufficiently cleared up by the learned apologists for Revealed Religion. Nor does it suit the purpose of this work to obviate all objections. Nor is it indeed necessary for the candid inquirer into the truth of Divine Revelation, to attend to the various difficulties started by laborious cavillers. It is of very small consequence, what circumstantial difficulties may be raised about a scheme, whose grand lines and principal figures show its Author to be Divine; as will, it is presumed, appear to every ingenuous mind, on a careful perusal of the following general view of the whole body of

Revelation. Some other objections are occasionally obviated in other parts of this fourth Book; and for a full view of the controversy between the opposers and defenders of Revealed Religion, the reader may consult the authors on that subject, recommended page one hundred and sixty. In whose writings he will find full answers to the most trivial objections; and will observe, that the cavils started from time to time, by the Deistical writers, have all been fully considered, and completely answered over and over; so that nothing new has been, for many years past, or is likely ever to be, advanced on the subject.

SECTION II.

A compendious View of the Scheme of Divine Revelation.

HOLY Scripture comprehends (though penned by a number of different authors, who lived in ages very distant from one another) a consistent and uniform scheme of all things that are necessary to be known and attended to by mankind. Nor is there any original writing besides, that does this. It presents us with a view of this world before its change from a chaos into an habitable state. It gives us a rational account of the procedure of the Almighty Author in forming and reducing it into a condition fit for being the seat of living inhabitants, and a theatre for action. It gives an account of the origination of mankind; representing the first of the species as brought into being on purpose for discipline and obedience. It gives a general account of the various dispensations and transactions of God with regard to the rational inhabitants of this world; keeping in view throughout, and no where losing sight of, the great and important end of their creation, the training them up to goodness and virtue, in order to happiness. Every where inculcating that one grand lesson, which if mankind could but be brought to learn, it were no great matter what they were ignorant of, and without which all other knowledge is of no real value; to wit, That obedience to the Supreme Governor of the Universe is the *certain*, and the *only* means of happiness; and that vice and irregularity are both naturally and judicially the causes of misery and destruction. It shows innumerable instances

of the Divine displeasure against wickedness; and in order to give a full display of the fatal consequences of vice, it gives some account, either historically or prophetically, of the general state of this world in its various periods from the time of its being made habitable from a chaos, to its reduction again to a chaos by fire, at the consummation of all things. Comprehending most of the great events which have happened, or are yet to happen, to most of the great empires and kingdoms, and exhibiting in brief, most of what is to pass on the theatre of the world. Setting forth to the view of mankind, for their instruction, a variety of examples of real characters the most remarkable for virtue, or wickedness, with most signal and striking instances of the Divine approbation of, or displeasure against them.

It is only in scripture, that a rational account of this world is given. For in scripture, it is represented as God's world. The inhabitants of it are every where spoken of, as no other way of consequence, than in the view of their being his creatures, formed for Religion, and an immortal state of happiness after this life, and at present under the laws and rules of discipline, to train them up for the great end of their being. Even in the mere historical parts, there is always an eye to the true state of things. Instead of informing us, that one prince conquered another, the scripture account is, that it pleased God to deliver the one into the hand of the other. Instead of ascribing the revolutions of kingdoms and empires to the counsels of the wise or the valour of the mighty, the scripture account of them is, that they were the effect of the Divine disposal, brought about by Him, "in whose hand are the hearts of kings, who turns them which way he pleases; and who puts one down, and sets another up; who does in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, whatever seems good to Him, and whose hand none can stay, or say,—What dost thou?" The view given in scripture of our world, and its inhabitants, and their affairs, is that which must appear to an eye observing from above, not from the earth. For scripture alone gives account of the original causes of things, the true springs of events, and declares the end from the beginning: which shows it to be given by one who saw through all futurity, and by the same, who has been from the beginning at the

head of the affairs of the world, who governs the world, and therefore knew how to give an account (so far as to his wisdom seemed fit to discover) of the whole current and course of events from the creation to the consummation.

We have no where, but in scripture, a display of the wonders of Divine mercy for a fallen guilty race of beings. We have no rational account any where else of a method for restoring a world ruined by vice. In scripture we have this great *desideratum*: Holy scripture shines forth conspicuous by its own native heavenly splendor; enlightening the darkness, and clearing the doubts, which, from the beginning of the world, hung upon the minds of the wisest and best of men, with respect to the important points, of the most acceptable manner of worshipping God; of the possibility of gaining the Divine favour and the pardon of sin; of a future state of retribution; and of the proper immortality, or perpetual existence of the soul: giving more clear, rational and sublime notions of God; teaching a more perfect method of worshipping and serving Him; and prescribing to mankind a distinct and explicit rule of life, guarded with the most awful sanctions, and attended with the most unquestionable evidences, internal and external, of Divine authority. Bringing to light various important and interesting truths, which no human sagacity could have found out; and establishing and confirming others, which, though pretended to have been discoverable by reason, yet greatly needed superior confirmation. Not only enlightening those countries, on which its direct beams have shone with their full splendor; but breaking through the clouds of heathenism, and superstition, darting some of its Divine rays to the most distant parts of the world and affording a glimmering light to the most barbarous nations, without which they had been buried in total darkness and ignorance as to moral and religious knowledge. Drawing aside the veil of time, and opening a prospect into eternity, and the world of spirits. Exhibiting a scheme of things incomparably more sublime than is any where else to be found; in which various orders of being, angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, rise in their several degrees, and tower above another towards the perfection of the Divine Nature; in comparison of which, however, they are all as

nothing. Holy scripture, in a word, takes in whatever of great or good, can be conceived by a rational mind in the present state ; whatever can be of use for raising, refining, and spiritualising human nature ; for making this world a paradise, and mankind angels ; for qualifying them for that eternal bliss and glory, which was the end of their being. And it is highly probable, that while the world stands, learned and inquisitive men will be from time to time discovering new wonders of Divine wisdom in that inexhaustible treasure. The continual improvement of knowledge of all kinds, and the farther and farther completion of prophecy, give reason to expect this. They, who know what amazing lights have been struck out by *Mede*, *Locke*, and a few others who have pursued their plan, will readily agree, that, as a century or two past have shown us the Bible in a light, in which it was probably never seen before, since the apostolic age ; so a century or two to come may (if mankind do not give over the study of scripture) exhibit it in a light, at present inconceivable.

That it may in a satisfactory manner appear, how important the subjects, how wide the extent, and how noble the discoveries of Scripture are ; it may be proper to trace the outlines of the vast and various prospect it exhibits, I mean, to range in order the principal subjects of Revelation, as they lie in the holy books. This I will endeavour to draw out of the Bible itself, in such a manner as one wholly a stranger to our systems and controversies, and who had studied Scripture only, might be supposed to do it.

Holy Scripture begins with informing us, that God was the Author and Creator of the Universe ; which truth is also consistent with human reason ; and the direct consequence to be drawn from it is, That all creatures and things are his, and that all thinking beings ought to dedicate themselves to his service, to whom they owe their existence, and whatever they have, or hope for. As the Almighty Creator is a pure spirit, wholly separate from matter, or corporeal organs of any kind, it is evident, that what he produces, he does by an immediate act of volition. His power reaching to the performance of all possible things, nothing can resist his will. So that his willing, or desiring a thing to be, is producing it. His saying, or thinking, *Let there be light*, is creating light.

Scripture informs us, that the human species begun in two persons, one of each sex, created by God, and by himself put directly in the mature state of life ; whereas all the particulars of the species, who have been since produced, have been created indeed by God, but introduced, into human life by the instrumentality of parents. We learn from scripture, that the first of our species were brought into being, not only in a state of innocence or capacity for virtue, but likewise naturally immortal, being blest with constitutions so formed, that they would of themselves have continued uninjured by time, till it should have been thought proper to remove the species to a new and more spiritual state.

The appointment of one day in seven, as a day of rest ; the sanctifying a seventh part of our time to religious purposes, was an ordinance worthy of God ; and the account we have in scripture of its having been appointed so early, by Divine authority, and as law for the whole world, explains how we come to find the observance of a seventh day as sacred, by universal custom, mentioned in such ancient writers as *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Callimachus*. Nor can any appointment be imagined more fit for keeping up an appearance of religion among mankind, than this. Stated solemnities, returning periodically, have, by the wisdom of all lawgivers, been thought the best expedients, for keeping up the lasting remembrance of remarkable events. And it is evident, that no event better deserved to be kept in remembrance than that of the completing of the work of creation ; till such time as the work of redemption, the second and best creation of man, was completed in the resurrection of the Saviour of the world. Upon which the first christians sanctified the first day of the week, and, according to the best authority now to be had, the seventh likewise ; though neither with the strictness required by the *Mosaic* constitution ; but with that decent liberty, with which christianity makes its votaries free.

The design of creating the human species, was to put them in the way toward such a happiness as should be fit and suitable to the nature of free moral agents. This rendered it necessary to place them in a state of discipline ; the only possible method for learning virtue ; and we accord-

ingly find a lesson of obedience* prescribed them immediately on their coming into existence. A law, to all appearance, very easy to keep. Only to abstain wholly from one particular indulgence, being at liberty, within the bounds of moderation, with respect to others. In the state of things at that time, it would not have been easy to prescribe a particular trial, which should not turn upon the government of passion or appetite. Being the only two on the face of the earth, they could not be guilty of a breach of duty to fellow-creatures. And with the frequent intercourse, scripture gives us reason to think, they had with angels, and celestial beings, they could hardly bring themselves to any positive violation of their duty to God; and were under no temptation to neglect it. That they should fall into this fatal transgression of the first law given for trial of their obedience, was to be expected from beings newly created, and wholly unexperienced and unprincipled. Thus we see, that young children have no fixed principles sufficient to prevent their yielding to temptation: for virtue is an attachment to rectitude, and abhorrence of all moral evil, arising from reason, experience, and habit. But though this, and other deviations from obedience, were to be expected from the first of mankind, it does not follow, that such deviations were wholly innocent. Pitiably undoubtedly their case was, and the rather, in that they were misled by temptation from a wicked being more experienced than themselves. Accordingly their case, and that of the rest of the species, has found such pity, and such interpositions have been made in their favour, as we have reason, from scripture, to suppose other offending orders of beings, particularly the fallen angels, have not been favoured with. For it is expressly said, that nothing equivalent to the christian scheme restoration and salvation has been planned out in favour of them; but that they are left to the consequences of their disobedience.

The natural tendency of the least deviation from moral rectitude is so dreadfully and extensively fatal, as to render it highly necessary that the righteous Governor of the World should inflict some signal and permanent mark of

* This point is not here stated as the author now thinks it ought. See the note, page 253.

his displeasure on the occasion of the first transgression of the first of the species. As a wise father, who has found his child once guilty of a breach of truth, or any other foul crime, seems at first to disbelieve it, and then punishes him with the loss of his favour for a very long time after, and otherwise ; in such a manner as may be likely to make a lasting impression on his mind, and deter him from a repetition of his fault. Scripture informs us, accordingly, that immediately upon the first offence, the transgressors, and in them the whole species, were sunk, from their natural immortality, and condemned to a state obnoxious to death.

Whether eating the forbidden fruit was not the natural as well as judicial cause of disease and death, it is needless to dispute : but what is said of the tree of life in the book of *Genesis*, and afterwards in the *Apocalypse*, as if it were a natural antidote, or cure for mortality, and the means of preserving life, is very remarkable.

Death, the consequence of the first transgression, and which has been merited by innumerable succeeding offences, was pronounced upon mankind, on purpose to be to all ages a standing memorial of the Divine displeasure against disobedience. With the same view also, scripture informs us, the various natural evils, of the barrenness of the earth, inclement seasons, and the other grievances, under which nature at present groans, were inflicted ; that men might no where turn their eyes or their thoughts, where they should not meet a caveat against vice and irregularity.

Here I cannot help observing, by the by, in how ridiculous a light the scripture account of the fatal and important consequences of the first transgression shows the usual superficial apologies made by wretched mortals in excuse of their vices and follies. One crime is the effect of thoughtlessness. They did not, forsooth, consider how bad such an action was. Another is a natural action. Drunkenness is only an immoderate indulgence of a natural appetite ; and so on. Have such excuses as these been thought sufficient in the case before us ? The eating of the forbidden fruit was only indulging a natural appetite directly contrary to the Divine command. And it is very likely, that our first parents did not duly attend to all the probable consequences of their transgression. But nei-

ther of these apologies, nor the inexperience of the offenders, nor their being overcome by temptation, were sufficient to avert the Divine displeasure, the marks of which, we and our world bear to this hour. Disobedience to a known law given by our Creator and Governor, is always to be looked upon with horror. And no false apology ought to be thought of: for we may assure ourselves, none will be admitted before our All-seeing Judge, who is not to be deceived.

The next remarkable object of our consideration, in this general survey of scripture, is a dark prophecy of a conquest to be gained, by one miraculously descended of our species, over the grand enemy and first seducer of mankind; which also implies some comfortable hopes of a restoration of the human race to the Divine favour.

The next dispensation of heaven, which we read of in scripture, is that most awful and remarkable judgment of the universal deluge, by which the human race were, for the universal corruption of their manners, at once swept off the face of the earth, and the world cleansed from the impurity of its inhabitants. Nothing can be conceived more proper for making a powerful and lasting impression on mankind, or convincing them of the Divine abhorrence of vice and disobedience, than to be informed that it occasioned the cutting off, or unmaking, the whole species, except eight persons, whom their singular virtue preserved amidst the general wreck of nature.

It is remarkable, that after the flood, we find the period of man's life considerably reduced below the standard of it in the Antediluvian age. This is no more than was to be expected, considering what use the ancients had made of the great length of life they enjoyed. The abridging the term of human life is also a standing memorial of the Divine displeasure against vice. It naturally tends, by bringing death nearer the view of even the youngest, to lessen men's attachment to the present state, and lead them to think of one better and more lasting. By this means also, the opportunities of offending being lessened, the guilt and punishment of wretched mortals comes to be very considerably diminished.

The laws given to *Noah* upon his coming out of the ark, seems to be intended for mankind in general, as he

was the common father of all who have lived since his time. And we know of no general repeal of them. The liberty of killing animals for food is derived wholly from hence; a right which we could not otherwise pretend to. Nor can the opposers of the Divine authority of scripture, show any pretence for killing a living creature for food, or any shadow of the title which the human species have to the life of any creature whatever, but this grant from the Author of life, and Maker of all creatures, who alone has a right to dispose of the lives of his creatures.

The command for putting to death every murderer without exception, which law is no where repealed, seems effectually to cut off all power of pardoning that atrocious crime. And many crowned heads have accordingly made it a rule never to extend their mercy to offenders of that sort.

As to the prohibition of blood, its obligation on us has been disputed. But, as the blood is the seat of almost every disease, and is a gross, unwholesome, and nauseous substance, consisting of earth, salt, and phlegm, the best way is evidently to abstain from it, and so make sure of avoiding a breach of a prohibition. And indeed, in all doubtful cases, prudence will always direct to keep on the safe side. At the same time, the excessive scrupulousness of the *Jews* about the least particle of blood is absurd. The prohibition is only against eating an animal with the blood in it. And the intention was probably two-fold. One for the advantage of health; the other religious; that, in shedding the blood of the animal, a libation or offering might thereby be paid to the Lord of life, and Giver of all gifts.

The account we have in scripture of the building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues, and scattering the people abroad into different countries, is most naturally solved by supposing their design to have been, to set up an universal empire, whose established religion should be idolatry and polytheism. This being quite contrary to the Divine intention in blessing mankind with a revelation from himself, it was not fit, that it should be suffered to take place, at a time when there was no nation in the world in which the worship of the true God prevailed. The disappointment of such a design is therefore a Divine dispensation fit to be recorded in scripture.

The destruction of the cities of the Plain, for their

abominable and unnatural vices, is a Divine judgment very fit to be related in the records of the dispensations of God to mankind. For such exemplary vengeance on the inhabitants of whole towns, upon kingdoms and empires, and upon the whole world together, as, we have authentic accounts of in scripture, shows, that numbers, instead of alleviating, do in fact aggravate the guilt of offenders, and draw down a swifter and surer destruction. When we read in scripture of kingdoms broken in pieces, of cities destroyed by fire from Heaven, of nations partly driven from their own country, and scattered abroad over the face of the earth, and partly given up to be massacred by a bloody enemy; and of the whole inhabitants of the world swept at once into a watry grave; all for vices fashionable in those times, and patronized by the great; when we read such accounts of the effects of following fashion and imitating great examples, we must have very little thought, if we can bring ourselves to imagine, that, there is any safety in giving up conscience to fashion, or that such an excuse will at all alleviate our guilt, or punishment. While we are in the full pursuit and enjoyment of folly and vice, we rejoice in going along with the multitude not considering, how much we shall wish hereafter, that we had been singular and unfashionable, like the illustrious heroes of ancient times, *Noah*, *Lot*, and *Abraham*, who had the courage to stand the empty raillery of their contemporaries; singular in their virtue, and singular in the reward of it. Those, who now encourage us in vice and folly, will not hereafter assist us in suffering their appointed consequences. And the appearance of God, angels, and just men, on the side of virtue at last, will make another sort of show for keeping its votaries in countenance, than that of the fine folks does now for the support of the opposite practice.

The most remarkable instance that ever was given of the Divine approbation, and distinguishing favour for singular goodness, is in the case of *Abraham*. This venerable patriarch, according to the scripture account, was a faithful worshipper of the true God, while the whole world was sunk in idolatry and superstition. He is on that account honoured with the glorious titles of Father of the Faithful, and Friend of God; appointed head of the fam-

ily, from whence the *Messiah* was to spring; and his posterity chosen of God for a peculiar people, the keepers of the Divine oracles, and the only witnesses for the true God, against an idolatrous world. He himself is called from his own country, and directed by Divine authority to remove to a distant land; he is tried and improved by difficulties; for hardships are often marks of the Divine favour, rather than the contrary. That the honours shown him in consequence of his singular piety might be conspicuous to the whole world, they do not drop with him; but are continued to his posterity, who have been, and are likely to be, the most remarkable people on earth, and distinguished from all others, as long as the world lasts.

It is very remarkable, that there is hardly a great character in scripture, in which we have not an express account of some blemish. A very strong presumption, that the narration is taken from truth; not fancy. Of this illustrious pattern of heroic and singular virtue, some instances of shameful timidity, and diffidence in the Divine providence, are related. Of *Moses* some marks of peevishness are by himself confessed. The character of the divine psalmist is shaded with some gross faults. *Solomon*, the wisest of men, is recorded to have been guilty of the greatest folly. Several of the prophets are censured for their misbehaviour. The weakness and timidity of the apostles in general, in forsaking their Master in his extremity, are faithfully represented by themselves, and even the aggravated crime of denying him with oaths (to say nothing of *Judas*' treachery) not concealed. This is not the strain of a romance. The inventors of a plausible story would not have purposely disparaged the characters of their heroes in such a manner, to gain no rational end whatever.

One useful and noble instruction from this remarkable mixture in the characters of the scripture-worthies, is, That human nature, in its present state, is at best greatly defective, and liable to fatal errors, which at the same time, if not persisted in, but reformed, do not hinder a character from being predominately good, or disqualify a person from the Divine mercy; which, it is to be hoped, has been the case of many in all ages, nations, and religions, though none perfect. Which teaches us the proper course we ought to take, when we discover in ourselves any wicked

tendency, or have fallen into any gross error ; to wit, Not to give ourselves up to despair ; but to resolve bravely to reform it, and recover our virtue.

We are told in scripture, that the descendants of *Abraham* were, by a peculiar providence, carried into *Egypt*. The design of this was, probably, to communicate to that people, the parents of learning in those early times, some knowledge of the God of *Abraham* which might remain after they were gone from thence, and from them might spread to the other nations around. The signal miracles wrought by *Moses* ; the ten immediate judgments inflicted upon the people of *Egypt* ; the deliverance of the *Israelites* from their bondage, with a high hand, in open defiance of the *Egyptian* power, under the conduct of a shepherd ; and the destruction of the whole *Egyptian* army in their endeavour to stop their flight ; these conspicuous interpositions ought to have convinced that people, that the God whom the *Israelites* worshipped, was superior to their baffled idol and brute deities. But bigotry and the force of education, are hardly to be conquered by any means whatever.

We have an account in scripture of *Moses*' conducting the *Israelites* through the vast desart of *Arabia*, for forty years together, with a continued series of miraculous interpositions, (their march itself one of the greatest miracles) in order to their establishment in the country appointed them. The design of their not being sooner put in possession of the promised country, was, as we are informed by *Moses* himself, to break and punish their perverse and rebellious temper, for which reason also, only two of those, who came out of *Egypt*, reached the promised country : all the rest dying in the wilderness. Nor did even *Moses* himself attain the happiness of enjoying the promised land ; which he also foresaw he should not, and therefore could have no selfish views for himself, in putting himself at the head of this unruly people, to wander all his life, and at last perish in a howling wilderness ; when he might have lived in ease and luxury in the *Egyptian* court. And that he had no scheme for aggrandizing his family is evident from his leaving them in the station of common *Levites*.

The people of *Israel*, arriving at the promised country,

proceed by Divine command, to extirpate the whole people, who then inhabited it, and to take possession of it for themselves and their posterity. And there is no doubt, but any other people may, at any time, do the same, upon the same authority. For, He, who made the earth, may give the kingdoms of it to whom he will. And it is fit, that they who are not worthy to inherit a good land, should be driven out of it. Which was the case with the people, who inhabited the land of *Canaan*, upon the arrival of the *Israelites* there. For at that time, we are told, the measure of their iniquity was full. The *Israelites* therefore were authorised utterly to destroy them, for their enormous wickedness; and to take possession of their country, not on account of their own goodness; but, as expressly and frequently declared, in remembrance of *Abraham*, the pious founder of the nation. If the ancient Pagan inhabitants of *Canaan* were driven out before the *Israelites*, as a proof of God's displeasure against their idolatry, and other crimes, nothing could be a more proper warning to the people of *Israel* to avoid falling into the same vices, which they saw bring utter extirpation upon the natives of the country. Nor could any surer proof be given the nations around, of the superiority of the God of the *Israelites*, to the idols they worshipped, than his giving victory to his votaries (a seemingly fugitive, unarmed, mixed multitude of men, women, and children) over powerful and warlike nations, under regular discipline, and in their own country.

Here is again, another pregnant instance of the different consequences of virtue, and of vice. Several great and powerful kingdoms overturned for national wickedness.

It is evident from the strain of scripture, that the people of *Israel* were set up as an example to all nations, of God's goodness to the obedient, and severity to disobedience. It was from the beginning, before their entrance upon the promised land, foretold them by *Moses*, that, if they continued attached to the worship of the true God, and obedient to his laws, they should be great and happy above all nations; the peculiar care of Heaven, and the repository of the true religion: But if they revolted from their God, and degenerated into idolatry and vice, they were, as a punishment, to be driven out of their country,

and scattered into all nations under heaven. Which punishment was also to turn to the general advantage of mankind, as the more pious among them would naturally carry the knowledge of the true God into all the countries where they were scattered ; which happened accordingly.

In order to the settlement of this remarkable people in the land appointed them, as a theocracy, or government immediately under God, a body of civil laws is given them directly from heaven by the hand of *Moses* ; a visible supernatural glory, called, the *Shekinah*, abiding constantly among them, as an emblem of the Divine Presence, and an oracle to have recourse to in all difficulties. A civil polity established for them, calculated in the best manner possible for preventing avarice, ambition, corruption, exorbitant riches, oppression, or sedition among themselves, and attacks from the surrounding nations upon them, or temptations to draw them into a desire of conquest : in which last particulars, the *Jewish* constitution exceeded the *Spartan*, the most perfect of all human schemes of government, and the best calculated to secure universal happiness.

In a theocracy, or Divine government, it was to be expected, that religion should be the foundation of the civil constitution. And had that people been able to bear a purely spiritual scheme of religion, there is no doubt, but such a one had been given them. As it is, we plainly trace their laws up to their Divine original. In the decalogue, the foundation of their whole legislation, we find the very first law sets forth the Divine scheme in separating them from the other nations of the world, viz. To keep up, in one country at least, the knowledge and worship of the true God, against the universal idolatry and superstition, which prevailed in the rest of the world. The foundation of all their laws, civil and religious, is therefore laid in the first commandment ; in which they are expressly forbid to hold any other deity, but that of the Supreme. As their whole law is summed up in the two great precepts of loving God, and loving their fellow-creatures.

In this compend of the original law given to the *Jews*, it is extremely remarkable, that these two grand precepts are directly obligatory upon the mind. Which proves either, that this body of laws was given by Him who knows

the inward motions of the mind, as well as the outward actions, and can punish the irregularities of the one, as well as the other, or that the author of it, supposing it a mere human invention, was a man of no manner of thought or consideration. For what mere human lawgiver, who was in his senses, could think of making a prohibition, which he never could punish, nor so much as know, whether his laws were kept or violated? But the whole character of *Moses*, the wisdom of the laws he framed for the people of *Israel*, his plan of government, preferable to the best human schemes and which accordingly continued longer than any of them ever did, without the addition, or repeal of one law; these show this most ancient and venerable legislator to have been above any such gross absurdity, as would have appeared in making laws obligatory on the mind, which is naturally free, and whose motions are cognizable by no judge, but the Searcher of hearts; and all this without any authority above human. And, that intentions, as well as actions, were accordingly commonly punished in that people, is plain from their history. But to proceed.

In the second commandment, the worship even of the true God, by images or representations, is prohibited, as leading naturally to unworthy ideas of a pure, uncorporeal, infinitely perfect mind; and as symbolizing with the idolatry of the nations round. In the third, the due reverence for the name, and consequently the attributes, and honours of the Divine Majesty, is secured by a most awful threatening against those, who should be guilty of any irreverent manner of treating the tremendous name of God. And the fourth sets apart one day in seven, as sacred to God and religion.

The remaining six laws secure the observance of duty with respect to the life, chastity, property, and reputation of others; which set of laws are very properly founded in due reverence to parents, from whom all relative and social obligations take their rise. And in the tenth commandment, there is again another instance suitable to the Divine authority, which enacted those laws; this precept being obligatory on the mind only, and having no regard to any outward action.

The people of *Israel*, as observed above, were of a tem-

per too gross and earthly to be capable of religion, like the Christian, wholly spiritual. Those early ages of the world were not sufficiently improved, to be, in general, fit for any thing above mere sense; or however, where more likely to be affected by what was fit to act upon the senses, than what might be addressed to the understanding. A body of religious ceremonies was therefore incorporated with, and made a part of their polity, or constitution. But even in them, the ultimate design of separating that people from all others, is every where visible, and almost every particular holds it forth. For the religious ceremonies may in general be considered as tending to give typical representations of the Christian scheme, which was the finishing of all the Divine dispensations; under which head may be comprehended the various sacrifices and obligations, and to keep the people continually in mind of their being in a state of guilt before God; for which purpose the ceremonial purifications were properly adapted; to prevent their deviating into idolatry, by giving them a religion, which might employ them, and in some respect suit their gross apprehensions; accordingly, the ceremonies of the law are in scripture called imperfect statutes, and carnal ordinances; to prove a yoke and punishment for their frequent tendency to idolatry, and image-worship; the ceremonial law is therefore called in scripture an intolerable yoke; and to convey many noble morals under sensible signs; of which one considerable one may be, That by the frequent infliction of death on the victims offered, they might never be suffered to forget, that death is the wages of sin.

We have in scripture the history of that most extraordinary people, partly related, and partly predicted, during a period of above three thousand years, making a continued series of miraculous interpositions (for their present state is as much so, as any of the past) in which the various unexampled vicissitudes they have undergone, and which they are yet to pass through, are evidently owing to direct interpositions of Divine Providence, and are all along the immediate consequence of their behaviour to their God.

Thus, to mention a few remarkable instances, if they murmur against *Moses* in the wilderness, and worship idols of their own making, their carcasses fall there, and

none of them is allowed to enter the promised land, which is given to their children. If they avariciously, and contrary to command, keep the spoils of the heathenish enemy, they are vanquished in the next engagement. If they be obedient to God, and attack their enemies in full confidence of the Divine strength, they conquer. If one king sets up the worship of idols, the Divine vengeance punishes him and his people. If another destroys the high places, where those infamous rites were celebrated, all goes well in his time. If a succession of inspired prophets is raised among them, to keep them in mind of their allegiance to God, and they put them to death, one after another, for their unacceptable freedom, in reproving the prevailing vices of both king and people, and deviate, from time to time, through the infection of the neighbouring countries, into idolatry and vice, they are carried away captive to *Babylon*. If they repent of their fatal degeneracy, and remember their God, whom they have forsaken, he turns their captivity, and brings about their restoration to their own land once more. And lastly, if they fill up the measure of their iniquity by imbruing their wicked hands in the blood of their *Messiah*, they are totally rooted out of the land, which was given to their fathers; their temple is demolished; their country given to the *Gentiles*, and themselves so scattered abroad in all nations, that greater numbers of them may be found almost in any country than their own; and to this dispersion which has already continued for upwards of seventeen hundred years, is added, according to the prediction of *Moses*, such uncommon distress, as is not to be equalled in the history of any other nation.

The early and total dispersion of the ten tribes, without any return hitherto (though it is expected, according to ancient prophecy, in the last ages of the world) ought to have been considered by them as an awful warning of what the remaining part of that people might expect to be their own fate, if they proved disobedient. And from the history of the whole twelve tribes, one of the noblest and most important morals may be drawn, viz. That a nation, may expect to prosper, or sink, according as it is favoured by Divine providence, or the contrary; and that therefore, virtue is the only sure foundation of national happiness.

But after all their irregularities and degeneracies from their God, and his obedience and worship, they are all, (the posterity of the ten tribes, as well as the two) according to ancient prophecy, to be finally replaced in their own country, in greater happiness and glory than ever. All which peculiar honours, important dispensations, and singular interpositions for this people, the posterity of *Abraham*, are intended as a standing proof, during a period of near four thousand years already, and how much longer God knows, of what value in the sight of God, the singular piety of that venerable patriarch was, for whom it seems as if he could not (so to speak) do favours enough even to the latest posterity of him who had greatly stood up alone for the worship of the true God against a whole world sunk in idolatry.

Prophecy makes a very considerable part of revelation. In the predictions of scripture, there is found some account of the future fate of many of the empires and cities which have made the greatest figure in the world. From whence we learn, that the author of prophecy is the God of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*. That neither his presence, nor his power, is limited to the affairs of any one nation whatever.

No branch of scripture prophecy is so interesting to us as those which hold forth the coming of the *Messiah* and his kingdom, which shine more and more clearly from the first obscure one given immediately after the fall, "That the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head;" down through a period of four thousand years, to those plain ones given by *Zacharias*, the priest, *Simeon*, *Anna*, and *John* the baptist, his immediate fore-runner; and thus the important designs of God, with regard to mankind, opened by degrees, every great prophecy carrying on the view to the last glorious ages; till at length our saviour himself comes as a light into the world, and carries his sublime informations and heavenly precepts immensely beyond what had been done by all the prophets, law-givers, and philosophers, opening a prospect into eternity, and bringing life and immortality to light. Of prophecy more hereafter.

The history of our Saviour's birth, life, miracles, doc-

trine, predictions, death, resurrection, and ascension, makes a very considerable part of scripture.

The christian scheme itself may be considered as the publication of an act of grace to a rebellious world, and of the terms upon which God will mercifully receive mankind into favour. The sublime, the interesting, and comfortable views it exhibits, are these :

God, the original of all being, the father of mankind, who brought the species into existence with a view wholly to their happiness, willing to forgive his offending, guilty creatures upon any terms consistent with the honour of his government ; but at the same time displeased with vice and irregularity, and not to be reconciled to offenders, but upon proper conditions. Or in other words, the christian religion represents almighty God in the twofold character of the wise and righteous governor of the moral world, and of the tender and merciful father of his creatures.

The christian scheme represents the human species, who were originally, as all orders of rational beings, obliged to a perfect obedience to the Divine authority, and, in consequence of that, insured of a happy immortality, universally degenerate, and become obnoxious to punishment by disobedience. Which renders some expedient necessary for saving them from destruction, consistently with the dignity of the Divine government.

The third character concerned in the christian scheme, is the *Messiah*, the Son of God, who is in it exhibited as leaving his celestial state, and assuming the human nature, to give up voluntarily his life for the sins of mankind, in order to their being restored to a capacity of pardon upon repentance and reformation.

In the blameless life of this glorious person, while on earth, a perfect example is set before mankind, of obedience to the Divine laws ; and in his sufferings, of patience and resignation to the will of God.

In his doctrines, the perfections of God are more clearly manifested to mankind, than by any, or all the other teachers that ever appeared, the evil of vice, the excellency of virtue, and their respective connexions with happiness and misery, more fully set forth. The dignity of the human nature more gloriously manifested in the im-

portance of the scheme for the restoration of man, and the high elevation to which christianity teaches to aspire. The proper and acceptable method of worshipping God, declared. The certainty of obtaining pardon upon repentance and reformation. The future resurrection of the body, and the everlasting and increasing happiness of the whole man, ascertained beyond doubt.

In his laws, the whole duty of man is more fully and perfectly declared, and with an authority to which no other lawgiver could pretend; which authority he confirms by unquestionable miracles and predictions fully accomplished; by conferring on his followers the power of working miracles; and especially by rising from the dead, according to his own prediction. The substance of the preceptive part of christianity is contained in the following paragraph.

On account of the death and intercession of the *Messiah*, that perfect and blameless obedience, which is naturally the indispensable duty of man, and all rational creatures, the defect of which made an expiation and intercession necessary, is graciously dispensed with; and instead of it, through repentance for all our offences, which implies the reformation of them, as far as human frailty will admit, and a candid reception and steady belief of the Christian religion, and sincere endeavours to obey its laws, and to attain the perfection of its graces and virtues, accepted, and made the condition of pardon and everlasting happiness: Which are, love, reverence, gratitude, and obedience to God. Love, gratitude, and obedience to Christ; through whom, as the appointed intercessor, we are by revelation taught to address the Almighty father of all, and whose death we are to commemorate according to his appointment. Thankfulness to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Inspirer. Benevolence to men. Temperance with respect to their own passions and appetites. Humility, meekness, chastity, purity of heart, integrity in thought and word; mercy, charity, and the performance of all the social and relative duties of life; forgiving of injuries, loving enemies, prudence without cunning; zeal without rancour; steadiness without obstinacy; contempt of riches, honours, pleasures, and all worldly things; courage to stand up for the truth in spite of the applause or threatenings of men;

attention above all things to the concerns of futurity : vigilance against temptations from within, and from the allurements of the world, and perseverance to the end in aspiring after the inestimable prize of a glorious and happy immortality.

Christianity proposes the noblest motives to obedience that can be conceived, and the fittest for influencing such an order of beings as mankind. The most sordid and stupid is likely to be alarmed by the threatenings of a punishment inconceivably terrible, and of immense duration. The natural consequence of which fear is, its being deterred from vice, and forced to think of reforming. From whence the next step is into sobriety, or negative goodness : which leads naturally to the practice of direct virtue ; and, as practice produces habit, the issue to be expected is, a habit of virtue ; an attachment to goodness ; farther and farther degrees of improvement ; and in the end such a perfection in the government of passion and appetite, in benevolence to mankind, and piety to God, as will, upon the Christian plan, qualify for future happiness.

Thus the denunciation of future punishment for vice, which christianity sets forth, is evidently a wise and proper means for promoting virtue : especially, if we add the encouragement of certainty of pardon upon repentance and reformation, which important point we owe wholly to revelation. And if we also take in the views of the supernatural assistance which christianity encourages well-disposed persons to expect in their conflict with temptation and vice ; and those high honours, and that sublime happiness, which revealed religion sets before mankind, as the consequence of a victorious perseverance in virtue. The fitness of such motives for powerfully influencing such an order of beings as the human species, is a proof, that the religion which proposes them is of Him who formed the human species ; who endowed mankind with reason, with hope, and fear, and made the mind susceptible of habit, and stamped upon it the idea of immortality. For none but He, who formed the mind, and perfectly knew its springs, could address it in a way so proper for influencing it, and for bringing it, in a consistency with its nature and present state, to the steady love and practice of virtue.

We have likewise in scripture an account of the estab-

lishment of the christian religion, and the firm adherence of its first professors in spite of persecution. Addresses from the first propagators of christianity to their proselytes, explaining more fully the doctrines of religion, solving their difficulties, encouraging them to constancy, and giving them useful directions for the conduct of life. And predictions of the future state of the church, its degeneracy into Popery, and the consummation of all things.

Here the amazing scheme, being completed, comes to a period. The Divine dispensations with regard to mankind, in their present state; having been finished in the establishment of the christian religion in the world, nothing more is to be expected, but the completion of the predictions yet unfulfilled, of which the chief are, the restoration of the *Israelites* and *Jews* to their own country, with the conversion of the world in general to the christian religion, which makes way for the last glorious ages; for the renovation and consummation of all things; for the general judgment of the whole human race, according to the characters they have sustained in life, the condemnation and utter destruction of such of the species as shall be found to have rendered themselves unworthy and incapable of the Divine mercy, and the establishment of the pious and virtuous in an everlasting state of glory and happiness, in order to their improving and rising higher and higher to all eternity.

Can any man, who only runs through this brief and imperfect sketch of the whole body of revelation, bring himself to believe that such a scheme could have been begun with the beginning of the world, carried on through a succession of four thousand years by the instrumentality of a number of different persons, who had no opportunity of concerting measures together; exhibiting to the view of mankind all that is great, important, and useful to be known and practised, all the Divine dispensations with respect to a species of rational moral agents, the scope and purpose of the whole, being wise, good, worthy of God, and suitable to the wants of men, uniform in its purpose throughout, teaching one grand and useful lesson from the beginning to the end, agreeing with itself, with the constitution and course of nature, the strain of history, and the natural reason of man, in which there appears a perfect agreement be-

twixt types and antitypes, doctrines and precepts, predictions and completions, laws and sanctions, pretensions and truth; and the whole leading directly to the highest improvement and perfection of Human Nature; can any man bring himself to believe such an universal, all-comprehensive scheme to be really no more than human contrivance? But of this more hereafter.

SECTION III.

Considerations on some particulars in Revealed Religion.

The reader may remember, that I put off the subject of Providence, though commonly reckoned a doctrine of Natural Religion, till I should be upon Revelation, because it is from thence that it receives its principal confirmation and establishment.

The opinion, that the world, and all things animate and inanimate, are by the infinite Author of all, supported in their existence, and conducted in all the changes of state, which they undergo, is as ancient as the belief of the Divine existence.

As to the natural or material world, it is certain, from reason and experience, that the inactivity of matter is inseparable from its nature. All the laws of nature, as deduced from experience, and observation, are founded upon this axiom, That matter does necessarily continue in that state in which it is at present, whether of rest or of direct motion, till it be put out of that state by some living agent. To imagine matter capable of itself, of changing its state of rest into that of motion, or of motion into rest, would be supposing it something else than matter; for it is essential to the idea of matter, that it resists all impressions made upon it. Unresisting matter is a self-contradictory idea, as much as noisy silence, vicious virtue, or the like. There is not one appearance, or effect, in the natural world, that could have been brought about by unresisting matter. Upon the *inertia* of matter, the whole course of nature depends. To say, that matter, however modified, is capable of being made to have any tendency to change its place or state, would be ascribing to it a power of choosing and refusing. For before it can of it-

self change its state of rest for motion, or of motion for rest, it must choose for itself. If a particle of matter is to move itself, which way shall it move? If you determine eastward, westward, southward, or northward; the question immediately arises, why should it move eastward rather than westward, or southward rather than northward? To ascribe thought or choice, or activity of any kind, to matter, however modified, is ascribing to it what contradicts its very nature and essence. For its nature and essence is to continue for ever inactive. So that, wherever we see a portion of matter in motion, it is certain, that it is moved by the action of some living agent. Farther, if we found in the natural world no motions carried on, but what proceeded in direct lines, it might be conceivable, that the matter of the universe had received such an impulse at the beginning, as had continued its motions till now. For, matter, put once in motion, must, if left to itself, move on in a direct course to eternity. But whoever has considered the natural world, will reflect, that there are a great many different motions continually going on in the universe, some of which are directly contrary to others. That the forces, with which bodies tend to one another, and with which some solid substances cohere, are immensely great, while the ease, with which the lightest bodies pass through the space, in which those forces prevail, makes it inconceivable, that any thing material is the cause of those strong tendencies. This therefore obliges us to have recourse to something immaterial, as the cause of the endlessly various, complicated, and contrary tendencies, which we see prevail in nature. In the solar system, supposing, as some have fancied, a set of subtle particles continually flowing inward, toward the sun, to produce the effect of gravitation, there must be another influx of the same sort of particles from all parts toward each of the planets, for they too are endowed (to use the common expression) with the power of attracting toward themselves whatever is within the sphere of their attraction. It is evident, that the course of the particles, which cause gravitation toward the sun, must be in part directly contrary to that which causes the gravitation of the satellites of a planet toward it. And the streams of particles flowing inward toward each of the satellites of a planet, must be in part

directly contrary to the course of those which flow toward the planet itself. The planet also continually changing place, no possible influx of particles towards it can produce the effect required, because, that direction of such influx, which would be favourable in one situation, must of course be quite contrary in another. And upon the planet itself, if there are any animals or vegetables, any material substances, in which there is either secretion, motion of fluids, corruption, decay, or renovation, the contrariety of the course of the particles, by which such internal motions are carried on, must be such as to produce absolute confusion; for we must at last conceive throughout all created space, an infinite number of streams of small particles flowing in all directions, which could, by the very supposition, produce no regular motion in the material system. Besides, we know, that the forces of attraction and gravitation are not as the surfaces of bodies attracting one another; but as the number of particles contained in them, which requires a power that shall freely pervade the most solid bodies, not merely effect their surfaces. We likewise know, that elastic matter tends every way, or endeavours to diffuse itself wider and wider, and to repel its own particles, and every surrounding body. This power, or tendency (to use the common improper term) is by no means consistent with any theory of streams of particles flowing any one way; but is easily explicable by that of an Infinite Mind within all matter.

There is, in short, no solution of the various and opposite tendencies of the parts of the material system, that is not palpably absurd, besides having recourse to an Infinite mind, in which the visible world has its being, and by which it not only was at first put into motion, like a clock wound up and set a-going; but is continually, from moment to moment, actuated according to certain fixed rules or methods, which are what we call the Laws of Nature.

If therefore we find it necessary, on account of the necessary inactivity of matter, which has nothing in its nature equal to the complicated motions, which we see in the system of the world, to conclude, that the Infinite author of nature does continually, either mediately or immediately, exert his indefatigable power in conducting and actuating the inanimate machine; we cannot suppose less,

than that he bestows as much of his attention and superintendency upon the moral system, as upon the natural; for the latter, having been produced for the sake of the former, shows the former to be of superior value.

The superintendency of a world infinite in extent, and containing an infinite number of particulars, would evidently be no more than what Infinite power and Omnipresence would be fully equal to. So that the thought of any shadow of difficulty in governing the universe, ought never to enter into our minds.

To suppose great part of the scheme of Providence carried on by the ministration of angels, or other created beings, comes to the same, as ascribing all to the immediate agency of the Supreme. For every created being in the universe, the highest seraph, as well as the meanest reptile, derives all his powers from the Supreme, and depends from moment to moment, upon the Universal Author of existence, for his being, and the exertion of all his powers.

The promiscuous distribution of happiness and misery in this life, or what we commonly call good or bad fortune, is no sort of objection to the doctrine of a Providence. The continual and certain consequences of virtue and vice respectively, the immediate interposition of heaven, on every occasion, would have been wholly inconsistent with a state of discipline. And yet there is a general scheme as visibly carried on in the moral world, as in the natural; though many particulars in both lie out of the reach of our weak faculties.

To say, that it is disparaging the Divine wisdom to allege the necessity or propriety of a continual exertion of power in the natural world, which ought rather to be supposed to have been so constituted at first as to proceed of itself, without the continued application of the Almighty hand; this objection duly considered, has no manner of weight. For, if the material world was to exist at all, it was necessary it should be what by the very nature of matter it must be; that is, inanimate and inactive. And if so, it must be actuated, or be motionless, or at least, it must have no complex motions.—The truth is, a self-moving complicated material machine, is a contradiction in terms; and therefore what could not possibly exist.

If we consider that the Infinite mind inhabits all created and uncreated space, we shall think it as proper in Him to actuate continually the immense machine of the Universe; to every atom of which he is immediately present, as for a human mind to actuate the body it inhabits. And no one in his senses ever thought it would have been better, that the body should have been made to perform its functions like a clock once wound up, than that it should be continually, from moment to moment, at the command of the mind, to actuate it at pleasure.

In the same manner, with respect to the moral world, it is not lessening the wisdom or power of the universal moral Governor, to suppose interpositions necessary. There are various considerations which show the contrary.

In general, that of the present frail and pitiable state of Human Nature; the circumstance of an evil being's having got an ascendancy over mankind; of the first introduction of vice being through temptation, which may be our peculiar misfortune; of our being perhaps one of the lowest orders of moral agents; these circumstances may render it proper, that *we at least* should have some extraordinary assistance given us, that there should be some peculiar interpositions in our favour. Now, to suppose a positive providential economy and superintendency carried on, is supposing the easiest possible scheme for gaining such ends as might be wanted for the advantage of our species.

Communities seem to require a providence, to reward or punish their behaviour in their rational and public character, as on occasion of the observance or breach of laws of nations, or alliances. The rewards and punishments of the future state will be personal. Good men, being guilty of faults, ought to suffer in this world, though they come to final happiness in the next; that evil may not wholly escape: which seems to infer the propriety of a providence. The wonderful discovery of the perpetrators of horrid crimes, particularly murder, is a strong presumption of the truth of this doctrine.

But revelation puts this matter wholly out of doubt; as it every where goes upon the supposition of a continual Divine superintendency over the natural and moral world.

For it represents this world as God's world, created,

preserved, continually conducted, and hereafter to be judged by him. It exhibits a scheme of Divine conduct of the affairs of the world in general, and of one nation in particular,* which is altogether inconsistent, without taking in the idea of a Providence. Prophecy, and miracles, of which elsewhere, necessarily suppose Divine interposition. And holy scripture in a variety of places expressly affirms the doctrine of Providence. For it informs us,

“That God preserveth, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power; and that they continue to this day according to his ordinance. That he has appointed seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter; and that they shall not cease, while the earth remaineth. That with him is the foundation of life. That he preserves man and beast, and gives food to all flesh. That in his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of every creature. That in him we live, and move, and have our being, who holds our souls in life, and will be our guide even to death. That he preserves us, while we sleep, and when we wake; when we go out, and when we come in, even from the womb, making us to dwell in safety. That he is the universal King, and Judge of all, and does according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. That angels, archangels, principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, are subject to him, and that they rejoice to do his commandments, hearkening to his word. That he gives fruitful seasons on earth, and crowns the year with his goodness; and again, at his pleasure shuts up heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her increase; turning a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives to whomsoever he will. That he puts down one, and sets another up. That by him kings reign, and princes bear rule. That unless he keep the city, the watchmen watch in vain. That he encreases the nations; and again destroys them; that he enlarges and straitens them at his pleasure. That whenever he speaks concerning a nation, to build and to plant, or to pluck up and destroy it, his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

That from him comes every good and perfect gift ; and at the same time, there is no (penal) evil in the world, which he has not sent. That he kills, and makes alive ; that he wounds, and heals ; brings down to the grave, and brings up again, at pleasure. That the preparations of the heart and the answer of the tongue, are from God, who gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who know understanding ; and when it seems good to him, hides the thing from the wise and prudent, which he reveals to babes. That he makes poor, and makes rich ; brings low and lifts up. That riches and honours come from him. That the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ; nor bread to the wise, nor favour to men of skill ; but it is the hand of God, that has wrought all these things. That though the horse be prepared against the day of battle, safety is from God. That he makes wars to cease, and sends the sword among the nations, at his pleasure. That the wrath of man shall be made to work out his praise, and the remainder shall be restrained. That when the lot is cast, the disposing of it is of God. That he works all things according to the counsel of his own will, and is accountable to no one."

The truth of the doctrine of Providence is therefore established upon reason and revelation.

To proceed to another subject : The account we have in scripture of our species in general suffering by the first offence of our grand parents, may seem at first view somewhat difficult to understand ; as if it were a hardship that we should be in any respect losers by what we are innocent of. That we should be in danger of being condemned to any future or final punishment upon any account, but our own personal voluntary guilt, is contrary to the whole tenor of scripture, and would indeed render revelation, as well as reason, wholly useless for directing us to the means of working out our own salvation, and avoiding destruction. That perfect Justice should determine one person to final destruction for what was done by another, many ages before his birth, at once overturns all our notions of right and wrong. And if we cannot Judge of right and wrong, we cannot be expected, nor should ever have been commanded, to forsake the error of our ways, and do that what is lawful and right. So that this opinion grossly misrep-

resents the character of the Judge of the world, and subverts religion, natural and revealed, from the foundation. But that the natural, as well as judicial effects of the first violation of Divine authority, followed by innumerable succeeding transgression, might be the sinking of the species some degrees lower; the subjecting them, and the world they inhabit, to visible marks of Divine displeasure; and their being, upon the whole, of course, in a situation less promising for universal virtue and happiness; may be reasonable enough to suppose, and may be found to have been intended for valuable moral purposes. For, as the case of our species is, that they have continued disobedient ever since the first offence, it is but reasonable, that they be exposed to sufferings and afflictions. And as the natural tendency of affliction is reformation, and every instance of our world's being in a ruined state, and under a curse, ought to furnish a memorial of the great evil of vice; on these considerations, the present state of the world is evidently an effect of the Divine goodness, as well as severity. If man is sunk below the station, in which the species were first placed, he has no room for complaint: for he might have been placed there at his creation. If our condition seems less promising for virtue and happiness, than that in which the first of the species were at their creation placed; it is on the other hand to be remembered, that revelation shows, very great things have been done for us, more than sufficient to make up for what seems disadvantages we may labour under. And thus all ground of complaint is effectually precluded.

The scripture account of the destruction of mankind by a general deluge, is a subject which deserves to be briefly considered.

Though it is not to be positively affirmed, that this, or the other, was the true cause of a particular supernatural phenomenon, or the method in which it was brought about; we may yet conclude in general, that it is more suitable to the ways of God, to bring about all effects, as well natural, as those we call supernatural, or miraculous, by certain adequate means, and, as far as possible, consistently with the stated laws and course of nature. That a mighty wind should, according to the Scripture account, separate the *Red Sea* for the passage of the people of *Is-*

rael, was as proper a miracle wrought in their favour, as if the immediate word or will of God had done it. And if the general deluge was brought on by some pre-established natural means, it was no less a Divine judgment upon a race of creatures, whose wickedness was foreseen, than if it had been caused by the immediate exertion of Omnipotence. What constitutes a particular wonderful event, a proper miracle, in a theological sense, is, its being expressly appealed to by some person, as a confirmation of a new pretended doctrine or mission from heaven. The general deluge was accordingly foretold, and the people of those ancient times forewarned of it by *Noah*, but in vain. Should a person, pretending to a Divine mission, foretel an earthquake some months or years before, and an earthquake should happen exactly at the threatened time, all reasonable men would yield that measure of assent to his assertions and pretensions, which might be thought justly due to the authority of one single miracle, taken in conjunction with the other circumstances of his own character, and that of his doctrine. Yet earthquakes are effects of natural causes. And if any person thinks it disparages the miracle of the flood to say, that it was brought about by the instrumentality of an intervening cause, the objection is the same, taking it for an immediate effect of Divine Power. For the end being the destruction of a race of degenerate mortals, it may as well be said, Why were not all struck dead in a moment by a word from the mouth of God, without the instrumentality of the suffocating element of water? as, Why was the flood brought on by the means of any intervening cause? No one doubts, whether the old world was destroyed by God, as an exemplary punishment for their wickedness. Why should any one think it less a Divine judgment, for its being brought about in a consistency with the regular and uniform procedure of nature, than if it had been an effect quite detached from, and unconnected with the universal scheme; which is not so beautiful, so masterly, nor so worthy of an universal Governor.

Since the decision of the question of the cause of the tides, which puzzled all antiquity, and has been shown by our incomparable philosopher to be the effect of the mutual gravitation of the earth and moon; it is very

easily conceivable that a nearer approach of the moon toward our earth, by a third part of her whole distance, would cause an enormously high tide. If therefore we suppose the moon, or any other celestial body, to approach very near to the earth, the effect must be such a tide, as would rise higher than the highest lands, and, rolling round the globe, would wash down all terrestrial creatures into the deep where they must perish. As we know that comets, from time to time, come from all parts of the heavens, and enter into the planetary regions; it is no unnatural supposition, to imagine that a comet, passing near the earth at the time of the deluge, might have been the appointed instrument of the Divine vengeance, by producing, by means of attraction, a disruption of the outward shell of this earth, under which it is probable a great collection of waters was lodged; which being by attraction raised into an excessive tide, must occasion the immersion and destruction of all land animals. And which might in great part be afterwards absorbed into vast empty caverns in the earth, which might by the same means be opened for its reception, and thus the present dry land left. The scripture account, of the "breaking up of the fountains of the great deep," seems to countenance this notion; which whoever would examine thoroughly, may read *Whiston's Theory of the Earth*. That it is made very probable in that work, that a comet did pass near the annual path of the earth, about the time of the general deluge, is acknowledged by the most judicious astronomers. That, upon every theory, the account of the flood is attended with difficulties, must likewise be confessed. But I think it a satisfaction, that upon the supposition of its being brought about by a comet, the possibility of it is fairly made out, and even a sort of analogy to the common course of nature, in the tides, which at times rise to such heights as to produce partial deluges.

However the flood was brought about, there are too many visible and unquestionable marks of a general disruption of the outside of this our planet, in the hideous mountains, mishapen rocks, hollow vales, and other ruinous appearances, with quantities of sea-shells, bones of animals, and large trees, found at a great depth in the earth; there are, I say, too many marks of a general con-

cussion and ruin over the whole face of the earth to leave any room to doubt that it has undergone some very great and universal change; which we have all the reason in the world to conclude, was no other than that of the general deluge, which, as it is described in scripture, seems fit to have produced exactly the effects we observe.

It is true, that telescopes discover, on the face of the moon, and the planet *Venus*, irregularities and roughnesses, which make an appearance somewhat like to those which we may suppose might be observed from the moon upon the face of our earth. But we cannot be certain, that those inequalities have not been part of the original make of those bodies; unless we could examine them, as we can those of our own planet. So that what we observe of this sort upon those bodies, does in no degree affect what has been said with respect to the probability that a general deluge was the cause of the visibly ruinous state of our earth; for we cannot be sure, that the inequalities on the face of the Moon and *Venus* are of the same ruinous kind with those of our world. The Moon, especially differs from our planet in two essential particulars. For it is certain beyond all doubt, that she has neither sea, at least on the face which is always towards us, nor atmosphere of air. So that we cannot reason on any minute circumstances from one to the other; but may judge of what we find in our own world, the state of which seems perfectly to answer to what might have been expected to be produced by such a deluge as *Moses* describes.

One particular, with regard to the flood, is too remarkable to be omitted. We have in the book of *Genesis* an exact account of the measures of the ark in cubits. In the time of *Moses*, it is not to be supposed, that the world was so well known, or natural history carried such a length, that the variety of different species of terrestrial animals should be guessed at to any nearness. So that it was to be expected, the measures of the ark should be taken either too small or too large, if the calculation of the room necessary for the lodging seven of every clean species, and two of every one of the others, had been taken according to mere human knowledge, or conjecture. Instead of which, it is found by calculations made in our times, when it is, by means of our extensive commerce over the world,

known how many different species of terrestrial animals there are in all different climes and countries; that the measures we have of the ark would have afforded just sufficient room for all the creatures to be stowed in it, and one year's provision. No human sagacity could, in those early times, in which there was so little intercourse among the inhabitants of different countries, have guessed at the true number of different species of land animals in all the various climates of the world, every one of which almost has its peculiar set. It is therefore evident, that the size and capacity of the ark was ordered by Divine appointment. For a human architect would undoubtedly have given its measures too large or too small.

There being somewhat seemingly difficult in the scripture account of those degenerate beings, the fallen angels, it may be proper to throw together a few thoughts on that head.

Whether the angelic species were, at the time of their fall, in a first stage of trial, such as that in which we are at present, or whether they had gone through their first state of discipline, and deviated afterwards, as it seems inconsistent with the nature of finite moral agents to suppose them in any state out of all danger, or possibility of deviation; whatever particular state, I say, they were at that time in the possibility of their degenerating into disobedience may be accounted for in a way comprehensible by us; though we cannot be sure, that we have the true and full account of that whole matter. The most probable account of the transgression and degeneracy of those once illustrious beings, may be, That they disallowed of the just pretensions of the *Messiah* to be the general Governor of their whole order; as the perverse *Jews* afterwards rejected him, when he came in the flesh. To suppose that the angels, now fallen, were capable of resolutely and deliberately opposing themselves to Omnipotence, or raising rebellion against God, *as God*, is absurd. But it is no way inconceivable, that they might at first question the *Messiah's* pretensions to authority over them; which might, for any thing we know, be disputable, as his mission appeared to some even of the sincere, though not sufficiently considerate, *Jews*. In consequence of this we can easily enough conceive the possibility of their being misled, by pride, by example, and persuasion of *Satan*, the leader of

the adverse party, who probably himself had aspired to a superiority over his fellow beings, and could not brook a rival. As to the difficulty of supposing a set of beings of such superior wisdom as we commonly suppose they possessed, capable of error; scripture itself expressly affirms, that the angels are chargeable with folly. Besides, we pronounce rashly, when we pretend to assert, that the angels were at the time of their fall greatly superior to the most knowing of our species. We find indeed those who kept their integrity, spoke of in scripture as raised to very high degrees of elevation. But nothing can from thence be argued with respect to those who fell many ages before, when perhaps they might not be risen to any such degree of perfection as the good part of that species now enjoy, which may be the reward of their virtue and fidelity. Besides, supposing those beings to have fallen from a state of happiness to which they were raised in consequence of their having with success passed through one state of trial or discipline, we know not whether one stage of discipline was all that was allotted them. We know not but they were to pass through two, or more, as one properly speaking seems appointed for us, though, as observed before, no state of freedom can be wholly secure from all possibility of deviation, but only more and more so, according to the increasing experience, longer habitude, and greater wisdom of moral agents. We know not, but the angelic species were raised to the happiness, from which they fell, in consequence of their going through a more advantageous and easy first stage of probation, than what is appointed us; and that, to balance that advantage, the happiness they were raised to was more precarious than that which is destined for those of our species, who shall acquit themselves with honour of a more difficult one. This seems no more than equitable, and natural, that the consequence of an easier state of trial passed through with success should be a lower degree, and more precarious kind, of happiness; and of a more difficult one, a higher and more certain kind of happiness. And besides, it is very probably the nature of all moral agents to value most, and be most afraid of losing, what has cost them the greatest pains to attain, and what only a few have attained. However it be, there is plainly no absurdity in the scripture

account of the fall of a certain number of beings, of a rank prior in existence, and superior in dignity to ours; nor of their being driven, by a total despair of recovery to the Divine favour, to a confirmed habit of perseverance in vice, and opposition to all good: which, increasing, must increase their punishment, and multiply their damnation. That those desperate beings, who know themselves to be sealed to destruction, should, as far as permitted, exercise an implacable envy and hatred against our species, of whom they foresee the same part will rise to that happiness, from which they are irrecoverably fallen, is not to be wondered at. *Nero*, a *Duke d'Alva*, a bloody father inquisitor*; are not these dæmons? If we have such diabolical beings in our own species, who have had so short a time to improve in wickedness, and are still under a dispensation of heavenly grace; why should we wonder at any accounts we have in scripture of the confirmed wickedness of spirits abandoned to despair, and who have had many thousands of years to improve and harden themselves in vice?

Some have made a difficulty of the incarnation of *Christ*; as if there were in that doctrine somewhat peculiarly hard to admit, or next to absurd. But in such cases, where nothing is required to be granted, but what is analogous to the course of nature; it does not seem reasonable to hesitate at any supposed difficulty, which, if removed, would leave another confessedly as hard to surmount. How a spiritual being, of any rank whatever, comes to be immured in a material vehicle, is to us wholly inconceivable. The incarnation of a human soul is a mystery utterly inexplicable by human sagacity. Nor is it at all more incomprehensible, how an angel or archangel, should animate a body, than how a human mind should. The difficulty does not arise from the rank, or dignity, of the spiritual being, but from the nature of spirits in general; whose power of animating and actuating a material vehicle, and the *nexus*, which forms the union between two natures so different, are to us wholly inconceivable.

And as to the objection, of its being improbable, that a being of such dignity, as that of the *Messiah*, should condescend to assume, for a time, the lowest station of rational nature; it will presently vanish, on considering the im-

portance of the purpose, for which he did so. For if, in consequence of this amazing condescension, there should, in a consistence with the divine rectitude, and established order of the moral world, and the freedom of the creature, many thousands, perhaps millions, of our species, be raised hereafter by degrees to such greatness and goodness, that the present station of the archangel *Gabriel* will be regarded by them as an inferior one (which will certainly one day be the case) who can think any apparatus, to gain such an end, too costly, or operose? Whoever duly considers the stupendous excellence of a nature, which, however mean and low at present, is yet formed capable of an endless progression in every noble quality; will not think any contrivance ill bestowed, or any condescension too low, to gain the moral improvement of such a species. Add that condescension on a proper occasion, and for some important end, is suitable to a superior nature; and peculiarly agreeable to every great mind. And let the consideration of the high exaltations of the *Messiah*, in consequence of his gracious interposition for the recovery of a ruined species, be taken in. Add likewise the Divine pleasure of exerting a benevolence so extensive, that an eternity will be employed by a race of beings, delivered by it from utter destruction, in celebrating its praises, and expressing that gratitude, which every succeeding period of their happy existence will heighten, every new enjoyment will inflame with ever growing raptures.

To pretend to dispute whether it was possible for mankind to be restored by any other means than those which, Infinite Wisdom has chosen, is both presumptuous and useless. It is our wisdom to consider what we have to do, as the moral constitution of things is; not to amuse ourselves with vain speculations upon what could do us no service to know, and what it is impossible we should by our own sagacity ever discover. In general, it is evident, that the repentance and reformation of offenders was not of itself, without some additional apparatus, sufficient, consistently with the Divine scheme, to restore a guilty order of beings to a capacity of being received to pardon. For Divine wisdom never uses a more operose method of proceeding, when one less so will answer the end.

Whether we shall at all, in the present state, be able to

determine wherein the principal propriety or necessity of the death of *Christ* consisted, and how it came to be efficacious for our restoration to the Divine favour, is greatly to be questioned; as scripture has only declared to us the fact, that it is chiefly by his laying down his life for mankind, which was the great end of his coming into the world, that we are to be received to pardon and mercy; but has given us no precise account of the *modus* of the operation of his death for that purpose, nor how the ends of the Divine government were answered by it. In general, may it be said, that the consideration of so important a scheme found necessary for restoring an offending order of beings, is likely to strike all rational minds, who may ever come to the knowledge of it, with a very awful sense of the fatal evil of vice, which made it necessary. And as they must see the difficulty of finding such a mediator for themselves, in case of their offending, they may thereby be the more effectually deterred from disobedience. It may impress them with high notions of the Divine purity, and aversion to evil, which made the restoration of offenders a work so difficult and expensive. And we know not how wide each particular in the moral scheme of the Divine government may extend. We are told in scripture, that the angels desire to look into the mystery of our salvation: that some of them have actually fallen from their obedience is doubted by none who admit revelation: That there is any state of finite virtue and happiness so secure, as that it is impossible to fall from it; or that created beings can, consistently with freedom, be raised to any such state as to defy weakness and error, and to be above all advantage from instruction by precept or example, is by no means to be affirmed. And if there be no reason to doubt, but in all states free agents are fallible (though more and more secure of continuing in their obedience, as more perfect) since according to scripture even the angels are chargeable with folly; it may then be put as a conjecture, whether the scheme of the restoration of mankind may not have immensely extensive and valuable effects upon various orders of moral agents throughout the universe for preserving them in their obedience. This effect the consideration of it ought to have especially, above all, on us, who are most nearly interested in it; and we ought not to hope

to escape, if we neglect so great salvation; and ought therefore, if we name the name of *Christ*, to resolve to depart from iniquity. It is also to be expected, that the consideration of what our everlasting happiness cost, should immensely enhance the value of it to those of our species who shall hereafter be found fit for it; especially with the additional consideration of the hideous ruin we shall have escaped, which is such as to render it necessary for the Son of God to leave for a season his eternal glory, to descend to our lower world, and give himself to death, to deliver as many of us as would from it. That our Saviour died a witness to the truth of his own mission and doctrine, as well as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind, is certain. But it is evident, that his death was very different both in intention and consequences, from those of the martyrs: That his death was also a glorious instance of obedience, and a noble example for our imitation, and that of all rational agents, is also to be taken in, and heightens the grandeur of the scheme. A consequence from the obedience and death of *Christ*, mentioned in scripture, and hinted above, is his being "highly exalted, and receiving a name above every name in heaven and earth, to the glory of God the Father." Of which likewise we can see the propriety and justice. And scripture also countenances the opinion, that the high exaltation of such a number of mankind, as shall be found capable of it, is given him as a reward for his sufferings.

However, none of these considerations, nor all of them together, come up to the point in question, viz. What connexion in the nature of things there is between the death of *Christ* and the salvation of mankind. This will probably be a *desideratum* as long as the present state lasts.

To expect that we should be informed of the Divine economy with the same distinctness as of our own duty, would be a piece of arrogance above ordinary. It is by experience we are instructed in temporals, as well as spirituals; and we proceed according to it, and are successful in the affairs of life, while we know little or nothing of the means by which the Divine wisdom acts in the natural world, and ought in all reason to expect to know still less of his scheme in a supernatural interposition; as the plan of our redemption may be called. Did we know,

which probably it is not proper we should, more of the foundations and connexions of the various parts of that sublime scheme, we should then know nothing useful to us but our duty. That we know now; and with such clearness, as will render us wholly inexcusable, if we be not found in the full and faithful performance of it.

The doctrine of the future resurrection of the body may, as properly as any one, be said to be peculiar to revelation. For there is no reason to think, that even the more civilized heathen nations had generally any notion of it. On the contrary we find the enlightened *Athenians*, in the apostolic times, startled at it, as altogether new to them. But, to use the words of the great apostle of the *Gentiles* to his hearers, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" To give life and being at first to what was once nothing, is certainly at least as difficult as to restore a bodily vehicle from a state of corruption, and to re-unite to it the mind, which had still preserved its existence during the state of separation. And the same Omnipotence, which was equal to the former, may be fairly concluded equal to the latter. The precise *modus*, in which this re-union of the material and spiritual parts of the human nature at the resurrection will be executed, is to us, as well as innumerable other effects of the divine power, wholly unknown. The following hypothesis, or conjectures, (the author of which I cannot recollect) has been thought ingenious. That there may be originally disposed, in the structure of the human frame, a system of *stamina*, in miniature, of the future æriel or ætherial resurrection-body, so enveloped or wrapt up, as to continue incorruptible, till the consummation of all things; at which time, by a pre-established law of Nature, it may unfold itself in a manner analogous to conception or vegetation, and the soul being re-united to it, the perfect man may again appear, renewed in his nature and state, and yet in general the same compound being he is at present, consisting of soul and body, or, perhaps more properly, of body, soul, and spirit. The apostle *Paul's* comparison of the death and burial of the body to the sowing of a grain of wheat; and the resurrection of the future body to the springing up of the stalk, which we know to be nothing else than the unfolding of

the minute *stamina* originally disposed in the grain sown, gives countenance to this conjecture, and probably furnished the first hint of it. It is not my purpose to establish any one hypothesis whatever. The only end answered by mentioning a conjecture for solving this difficulty, if it be a difficulty, is to show the doctrine of a future resurrection to be conceivable, without any absurdity. It must even be owned, that the scheme of a restoration, or renovation, of the whole human nature is incomparably more beautiful and regular, and consequently more likely to be the true one, than that received by the heathen world, which supposed the total loss or destruction of one essential part of the nature, I mean the body, and made the future man a quite different being, an unbodied spirit, instead of an embodied one. Whereas the Christian scheme represents the dissolution and separation of the body for a time as the effect and punishment of vice, and its restoration as the effect of the kind interposition of our glorious Deliverer; by which means the whole existence of the human species (I mean, that part of them which shall be found fit for life and immortality) appears uniform, and of a piece; and after the conclusion of the separate state, goes on as before, only with the advantage of being incomparably more perfect, though still the same in kind.

The views held forth in Scripture of the future restoration, glory, and happiness of the peculiar people of God; of the universal establishment of the most pure and perfect of religions; of the *millenium*, or paradise restored, with the general prevalency of virtue and goodness; by which means a very great proportion of those, who shall live in that period, will come to happiness; all these views are sublime, worthy of the Divine revelation which exhibits them, and suitable to the greatness of the moral economy. But as the future parts of prophecy are, and ought to be, difficult to understand in all their minute particulars, as is evident from the diversity of opinions given by the commentators on those parts of holy writ; while they generally agree, that the above-mentioned particulars are in scripture held forth as to be hereafter accomplished; as as this, I say, is the case, it may not be necessary that I attempt to fix any one particular scheme of the completion of those parts of prophecy.

The doctrine of a future general judgment of the whole human race by the same Divine Person, who, by the power of the Father, made the world, and who redeemed it, is held forth in scripture in a manner suitable to the pomp with which so awful a scene may be expected to be transacted. That the whole Divine economy, with respect to this world, should conclude with a general inquiry into, and public declaration of, the character, and so much of the past conduct, as may be necessary, of every individual of the species; and that, in consequence of the different behaviour of each, during the state of discipline and probation, their future existence should be happy or miserable; that every individual should be disposed of according to what he has made himself fit for; all this the perfect rectitude of the Divine nature indispensably requires. And without this conclusion of the whole economy, the moral government of the world must be imperfect; or rather, without it, the very idea of moral government is absurd. That the decision of the future state of men will turn chiefly upon their general prevailing characters; the habits they have acquired; the dispositions they have cultivated; their attachment to virtue and obedience, or to irregularity and vice, seems probable both from Scripture and reason. So that, as on one hand a few errors, if not persisted in, but repented of and reformed, being consistent with a prevailing good character, may be overlooked; so, on the other, a thousand acts of charity or virtue of any kind, if done from indirect views, or by persons of hypocritical or bad hearts, will gain no favour from the general Judge. Of what consequence is it then that we be sure of our own integrity! And how dreadful may the effects prove of going out of the present state of discipline, with one vicious habit uncorrected, or with a temper of mind defective in respect of one virtue!

Whether all the more secret errors of persons of good characters, of which they have sincerely repented, which they have for years lamented with floods of undissembled tears, and which they have thoroughly reformed, will be displayed to the full view of men and angels, seems a questionable point: For it does not to reason appear absolutely necessary: It being easily enough conceivable, that the character of a person may be determinable by

Divine Wisdom, and capable of being set forth to the general view in a manner sufficiently satisfactory, without so minute an examination. And if so it may be concluded, that the sincere penitent will be put to no needless pain. And if there is a pain more cruel than another, it is for a generous mind to be exposed to public shame. Besides what reason may suggest on this head, the numerous expressions of Scripture, of "blotting out the sins of penitents from the books of remembrance; of hiding, covering, and forgetting them," and the like, seem to favour the opinion, that the character and conduct of penitents will be only so far displayed, as to show them to be fit objects of the Divine mercy.

SECTION IV.

Considerations on the Credibility of Scripture.

IT is not only to the studious and learned, that the proofs of Revelation lie level. All men, who will apply their faculties with the same diligence and attention which they every day bestow upon the common affairs and even the amusements of life, may be rationally convinced, that they are under Divine Government, and must feel, that they are accountable creatures; upon which fundamental principles the whole scheme of Revelation being constructed, they may easily bring themselves to see the force of the evidence arising from miracles and the completion of prophecy, particularly those relating to the *Jewish* people; which, in conjunction with the character of *Moses* and the Prophets of *Christ* and his Apostles; a due attention to the nature and tendency of the doctrines and precepts contained in scripture; and the consideration of the establishment of Christianity, so wholly unaccountable upon any other footing, than its being from God; may give full and well grounded satisfaction to any considerate person, that all the objections of the opposers of Revealed Religion can never amount to such a degree of weight in the whole, as to over-balance the positive proof for it, or yield a sufficient proof that the whole is a forgery.

At the same time it must be observed, that to be qualified for examining in a proper manner all the various ar-

guments in favour of Revelation, requires a very extensive knowledge in various ways, as in philological and critical learning, history, and philosophy, natural and moral. Which shows in a very strange light the presumption of many men of supernatural and narrow improvements, who pretend to oppose religion, and rashly enter into a dispute for which they are so ill furnished.

For it is the unfair and fallacious proceeding of many disingenuous opposers of revealed religion, to detach some single branch of proof, or some doubtful argument, and by caviling at that, endeavour to overturn the whole evidence for revelation. But whoever will consider the subject with candour, will see, that it is of such an extensive nature, comprehends so many different views, and is established upon such a variety of arguments, drawn from different parts of knowledge, that the true state, and full result, of the evidence, upon the whole, cannot, by the nature of the thing, be reduced to one point; and consequently that taking any one narrow view of it, and judging from that, is the way to deceive ourselves and others. It is indeed as if a man were rashly to pronounce that the earth is of no regular figure whatever, merely from observing the irregularity of the *Alps*, and other ranges of mountains, which fill the eye of the traveller, while the whole globe is too large, and too near, for the human sight to comprehend its general figure. Yet the very first principles of geography show, that the protuberance of the highest mountain of the world, being but three miles perpendicular, is no greater irregularity upon a globe, eight thousand miles in diameter, than the little roughnesses upon an orange are derogations from the general roundness of its figure; as a mite, or other very small insect, might be supposed to imagine them.

To consider any complex subject in a partial manner, exclusive of any material part, and without taking in the whole of it, is not considering it as it is; and subjects will not be understood otherwise than as they are. Men of narrow minds may run themselves, and designing men others, into endless labyrinths, and inextricable errors: but Truth stands upon its own eternal and immoveable basis: and Wisdom will in the end be justified of her children.

The whole evidence of Revelation is not prophecy alone,

nor miracles alone, nor the sublimity of its doctrines alone, nor the purity of its precepts alone, nor the character of *Moses* and the Prophets, *Christ*, and his Apostles alone, nor the internal character of simplicity in the writings of scripture alone; nor any one of the other branches of proof alone; but the joint coincidence and accumulated effect of them all concentrated. Now, he who can bring himself to believe seriously, that such a number of amazing coincidences, such a variety of evidence, presumptive and positive, circumstantial and essential, collateral and direct, internal and external, should by the Divine Providence be suffered to concur, to the effectual and remediless deception of the most inquisitive, judicious, and ingenuous part of mankind, must have strange notions of the Divine economy in the moral world. And he, who, in spite of the super-abundant and accumulated evidence for the truth of Revelation, will suffer himself to be misled into opposition against it, merely on the account of some single circumstantial difficulty, must have no head for judging complicated evidence; which yet every man has occasion to weigh, and to act upon almost every day of his life. And he, who, from indirect views of any kind, labours to mislead mankind into opposition against what would be infinitely to their advantage to receive, is the common enemy of truth, and of mankind.

If the sacred history of scripture has not the internal marks of truth, there is no reason to give credit to any history in the world. And to question the veracity of ancient history in the gross, would be (to mention no other absurd consequences) doubting whether there were any men of integrity in the world, till these four or five centuries last past. The remarkable coincidence betwixt sacred and profane history shows the genuineness of the former; and its delivering grave and credible accounts of things, while many of the ancient writers amuse us with fables evidently drawn from imperfect accounts of the sacred story, plainly discover scripture to have been the original from which the other is an imperfect copy. Of the foundation and measure of certainty attainable by testimony, I have treated elsewhere.*

The fragments of ancient *Phœnician* historians preserved by *Eusebius*; with what we have of *Zeno*, the

* See page 226.

Egyptian writers, whose opinions and accounts of things are preserved by *Diogenes*, *Laertius*, *Diodorus Siculus*, and others; the fragments we have ascribed to *Linus*, *Orpheus*, *Epicharmus*; the remains of *Sanchoniathon*, *Berosus*, *Menetho*, *Philo Bybilus*, *Eurysus* the *Pythagorean*, *Hipparchus*, *Amelius* the *Platonist*, *Hærclytus*, *Timæus*, *Chalsidicus*, (who writes of *Moses*) *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Callimachus*, *Aristohanes*, *Plato*, *Cicero*, *Ovid*, all these in what they say of the creation, agree in the main with *Moses*' account of it. *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Callimachus*, *Aristobulus*, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*, *Lucian*, *Dion Cassius*, *Suetonius*, *Josephus*, *Philo*, *Tibullus*, mention, or allude to, the universal custom of resting every seventh day. The *Egyptian* writers, *Plato*, *Strabo*, *Ovid*, *Virgil*, and others, mention the state of innocence, and the Fall. *Philo Byblius*, from *Sanchoniathon* and *Plutarch*, show, that several particulars of that Fall were received by the most ancient heathens. *Ferdinand Mendesius* testifies, that many particulars relating to *Adam*, *Eve*, the forbidden tree, and the serpent, are to be found among the natives of *Peru*, and the *Philippine* islands. And the name of *Adam* is known among the *Indian Brachmans*, which word has been by some thought to have been a corruption of *Abrahamans*; and it has been thought probable that the religion of *Zoroustræ* and the *Magi* is derived from that patriarch. The truth of *Moses*' account of the flood is attested by *Berosus*, *Diodorus*, *Varro*, *Pliny*, *Plutarch*, *Lucian*, *Molo*, *Nicolaus*, *Damascenus*, and others; some of whom mention the name of *Noah*, the ark, and the dove. *Josephus Acosta*, and *Antonio Herrera* affirm, that at *Cuba*, *Mechoana*, *Nicaragua*, and other parts of *America*, the memory of the flood, and the ark, are preserved, and were found, with several other doctrines, of mere revelation, upon the first discoveries of those places by the *Europeans*. But to proceed, *Berosus*, *Manetho*, *Hesiod*, *Nicolaus*, *Damascenus*, and others, mention the age of the first men to have been almost a thousand years. *Plutarch Maximus*, *Tyrius*, *Catullus*, and others, speak of an intercourse between God and men in ancient times.—*Porphyrus*, *Jamblicus*, and others, speak of angels. The history of the tower of *Babel*, under the poetical disguise of the giants to scale heaven, is found in *Homer*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Ovid*, *Lucan*, and the

Sybilline Oracle quoted by *Josephus*. *Diodorus Siculus*, *Strabo*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny*, and *Solinus*, mention the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. The history of *Abraham* and other patriarchs, agreeable to the writings of *Moses*, is found in *Philo Byblius*, from *Sanchoniathon*, and in *Berosus*, *Hecateus*, *Damocenus*, *Artapanus*, *Eupolemus*, *Demetrius*, and *Justin* from *Trogus Pompeius*, who also gives *Joseph's* history agreeable to scripture. By several of these the principal acts of *Moses* are related. Of whom mention is also made by *Manetho*, *Lysimachus Chereimon*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Longinus*, *Strabo*, *Pliny*, and *Tacitus*. *Diodorus* speaks of the drying up of the Red Sea. *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, *Strabo*, *Philo Byblius*, *Aristophanes*, *Tacitus*, *Horace*, and *Juvenal*, mention the ceremony of circumcision. *Eusebius* tells us, that a book was written by *Eupolemus* on *Elijah's* Miracles. The History of *Jonah* is in *Lycophron* and *Æneas Gazæus*. *Julian* the Apostate owns that there were inspired men among the *Jews*. *Menander* mentions the great drought in the time of *Elijah*. The histories of *David* and *Solomon* are given in a pretty full manner in the remains of the *Phœnician Annals*, and *Damascenus' History*, in *Eupolemus*, and *Dius' Phœnician History*, who speaks of riddles, or hard questions, sent betwixt *Solomon* and *Hiram*; of which also *Menander* the *Ephesian* Historian, *Alexander*, *Polyhistor*, and others, give an account. *Hazael*, king of *Syria*, is mentioned by *Justin*. *Menander* the Historian mentions *Salmanasor*, who carried the *Israelites*, or ten tribes, into that captivity, from which they are not yet returned. The name and expeditions of *Sennacherib*, king of *Assyria*, are found in *Berosus' Chaldaic's* and *Herodotus' History*, which last relates the destruction of his vast army (2 *Kings* XVII) with a mixture of fable. *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny* the younger, and *Numenius* testify, that there was such a person as *Jesus Christ*. His miracles are owned by *Celsus*, *Julian* the Apostate, and the *Jewish* writers, who oppose Christianity. *Porphyry*, though an enemy to the Christian Religion, says, "after *Christ* was worshipped, no one received any benefit from the gods." *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny*, *Julian* the Apostate, and the *Jewish* writers mention his being put to death. And *Tacitus* affirms, that many were put to death for their adherence to his religion.

A very particular and favourable account of the character and behaviour of the first Christians is given by *Pliny*, in a letter to the Emperor *Trajan*, still extant. *Phlegon*, in his *Annals*, mentions the miracles of *St. Peter*. And *St. Paul* is celebrated in a fragment of *Longinus* among eminent orators. The History of our Saviour's life, death, resurrection, and ascension, was declared by the Apostles in the face of his enemies, and in the very country, where he lived, died and rose again.—They wrote their accounts in *Greek*, which was universally understood, and related the things, as they passed a very few years before, and which must have been fresh in every body's memory. The name of *Jesus*, must have been entered into the public tables, or registers, at his birth. To which accordingly *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* appeal. And the account of his death and resurrection must, according to the custom, when any thing remarkable happened in any of the provinces of the empire, have been sent to the court of *Rome*. The memory of the slaughter of the innocents is preserved by *Augustus'* remark on *Herod's* cruelty. The miraculous darkness at our Saviour's crucifixion (which was undoubtedly supernatural; it being impossible that the sun should be eclipsed by the moon, which was then in opposition) is affirmed by *Tertullian* to have been upon record in his time in the public registers. Our Saviour is several times mentioned by *Josephus*; though not in such a manner as so extraordinary a character deserved. But nothing is more common than such expected neglects in historians. Besides, it is probable that *Josephus* might be under some constraint in touching upon the subject of *Christ* and his Religion; as he makes honourable mention of *John Baptist*, and of *James* the brother of *Jesus*; to whose murder he ascribes the destruction of *Jerusalem*.

Such public passages as the dumbness inflicted on *Zacharius*, while the people were waiting without the temple; of the wise men from the east; of the murder of the innocents; of our Saviour's driving some hundreds, probably, of people out the outer court of the temple, immediately after his triumph, which must have alarmed the whole city; the prodigies at his death; the dreadful end of *Judas Iscariot*; the names of the *Roman* Emperor, and Governor, of *Herod*, of the High Priest, of *Nicodemus*, of *Joseph*

of *Arimathæa*, of *Gamaliel*, *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, *Sergius Paulus*, *Simon Magus*. *Felix*, king *Agrippa*, *Tertullus*, *Gallio*, and many other persons of the highest rank mentioned with great freedom, shows, that the historians were under no apprehension of being detected; and, at the same time, establish the genuineness of the New Testament History by chronological and geographical evidences. Nor would any set of imposters have overloaded their scheme with such a number of circumstances no way necessary to it, for fear of committing some blunder, which might have detected them. The miraculous power of inflicting death upon offenders, as in the case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and blindness in that of *Elymas*, was not a thing to be boasted of, if it had not been true; because of the danger of being called to account by the civil magistrate. And that the New Testament History is not a forgery of latter times, is much better established, than that the *Æneid*, the *Metamorphosis*, and *Horace's* works, were writ in the *Augustan* age. For none of them was authenticated by whole churches, nor are they cited by multitudes of authors cotemporary with them, as the apostolical writings are by *Barnabas*, *Clemens*, *Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, and the rest, and acknowledged to be the genuine works of the authors, whose names they bear, by enemies, as *Tripo*, *Julian* the Apostate, and others of the earliest ages, and authenticated by succeeding writers through every following period. The numerous ancient apologists for Christianity, in their addresses to the Emperors, confirm the particulars of the New Testament History by their appeals to records then extant, and persons then living. And history shows, that those appeals were so convincing as to gain the Christians, from time to time, favour and mercy from the Emperors.

That the Mosaic history of the Patriarchs, and their posterity the *Jews* and *Israelites*, is genuine, is in a manner visible at this day from the present circumstances of that part of them, who are distinguished from all other people, I mean the *Jews*, or the posterity of the two tribes; for those of the ten are, according to the predictions of prophecy, at present undistinguished, though hereafter to be restored with their brethren the *Jews* to their own land. There is no such minute and circumstantial proof,

that the *Italians* are the descendants of the ancient *Romans*, or the *French* of the *Gauls*.

It is to be observed, that the miraculous and supernatural parts of the sacred story depend on the very same authority as the common, and accordingly related in the same manner; and the whole hangs so together, and rests on the same foundation, that they must either be both true, or both false. But no one ever imagined the latter to be the case.

The simplicity of the Scripture accounts of the most striking and amazing events any where related, their being described in the same artless and unaffected manner as the common occurrences of history, is at least a very strong presumption, that the relators had no design of any kind, but to give a true representation of facts. Had *Moses*, the most ancient of historians, had any design to impose upon mankind; could he, in his account of the creation, the flood, the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by fire, from heaven, of the escape of the *Israelitish* people from *Egyptian* tyranny, and their passage through the wilderness under his own conduct (a retreat more remarkable than that of the ten thousand under *Xenophon*, which makes such a figure in history, could the relator of these amazing events have avoided expatiating and flourishing upon such astonishing scenes, had they been mere invention? Would the fabulous writer of a set of adventures, of which himself was the fictitious hero, have spoke of himself with the modesty which appears in the Mosaic history? Would he have represented himself as capable of timidity, diffidence, or passion? Would he have immortalized his own weaknesses? Had the inventor of the scripture account of *Abraham*, and his posterity, intended his fictitious history as an encomium upon that people, as *Virgil* did his *Æneid* on his countrymen, would he have represented them as perverse, disobedient people, so often under the displeasure of their God; condemned to wander forty years, and perish at last to the number of many thousands in the wilderness, to the seeming disparagement of the wisdom of their leader; ever deviating into the worship of idols, contrary to what might have been expected from the numerous miracles wrought in their favour by the true God, a circumstance very improper

to be dwelt on, as being likely to bring the truth of those miracles into question with superficial readers?

Would the inventors of the New Testament History, supposing it a fiction, have given an account of such a series of miracles in the cool and unaffected manner they do, had they not been genuine? Could they have avoided some flights of fancy in describing such wonders, as the feeding of thousands with almost nothing; the curing of diseases, calming of tempests, driving evil spirits from their holds and calling the dead out of their graves, with a word? Could they have given an account of the barbarities inflicted on the most innocent and amiable of all characters, without working up their narration to the pitch of a tragedy?

Must not a man be out of his wits before he could think of writing a set of grave directions about the conduct of miraculous and super-natural gifts, as of speaking foreign languages which the speakers had never learned; for telling future events, and the like; must not a man be distracted, who in our times, when no such miraculous gifts subsist, should write of them as common and unquestionable? This the Apostle *Paul*, one of the most judicious writers of antiquity, sacred or profane, does in a variety of places; mentioning them incidentally and without going out of his way to prove the existence of them, and even depreciating them in comparison with moral virtues. What is to be concluded from hence, but that those miraculous gifts were at that time as notorious, and common, as perhaps the knowledge of mathematics, or any other science, is now among us?

Miracles being a very important part of the evidence for Revelation, it is proper to consider a little that subject. And first, one would wonder, that ever it should have occurred to any person, that the proof from miracles is a weak or suspicious one, supposing the miracles to be really such, and nothing inconsistent in the doctrine they are brought in proof of. For nothing seems more reasonable to expect, than that, if the Author of Nature should choose to be likewise Author of Revelation, he should show his concern in the establishment or promulgation of such Revelation, by exerting that power over nature, which we know he is possessed of, and for which we be-

lieve and adore him, as the Author of Nature. Can any thing be more reasonable to expect than that He, who first breathed into man the breath of life, should, in order to assure mankind, that a particular message comes from Him, give power to those he employs in carrying such message, to restore life to the dead; or than that He, who made the elements of the natural world, should authenticate his revealed laws by giving to those, whom he employs in promulgating them, a power over nature, a command of the elements of air and water; so that winds may cease to rage, and waves to roll at their word? There is indeed all the reason in the world to believe, that those very objectors against the propriety of miracles, as a proof of a Revelation coming from God, would have found fault with christianity, had there been no account of miracles in scripture, as deficient in one very strong and convincing evidence of a Divine original.

The proper definition of such a miracle as may be supposed to be worked by Divine Authority for proof of a Revelation from God, is, An immediate and extraordinary effect of power superior to all human; exhibited in presence of a competent number of credible witnesses, in such a manner as to be subject to their deliberate examination expressly declared to be intended for establishing a doctrine in itself reasonable, and useful for the improvement of mankind in virtue.

First, a proper miracle, in the theological sense, must be an immediate and extraordinary effect of power, exhibited expressly for the purpose. For the application of any of the constant and regular powers or properties of natural bodies, in however artful, or to common people inconceivable, a manner, is no miracle; else all the arts, especially chemistry, might be said to be systems of miracles. The pretended miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of Saint *Januarius*, with which the priests in Popish countries yearly delude the ignorant people, is no more than the natural effect of a certain liquor dropped upon a mass of a particular gummy, or resinous substance, which dissolves in a manner as little miraculous, as that of a lump of sugar, upon which water is dropped. But to proceed. The miraculous work performed must be the effect of a power *superior* to all *human*. It is not neces-

sary that it be superior to angelic power. Because our best notions of the Divine economy lead us to believe that spiritual beings are the instruments of God for the advantage of mankind. So that while we believe this, to question a miracle performed by a good angel, would be insulting Heaven itself. And we may reasonably conclude from the tendency of the doctrine or laws to be established, whether the miracle is wrought by a good or evil being, according to our Saviour's reasoning, *Matth. xii. 25.* A miracle performed in confirmation of a doctrine tending to promote and establish virtue in the world, and to defeat the designs which evil beings may have against mankind, may reasonably be concluded to be wrought by the power, not of a fiend, but a good spirit, and contrariwise. For it is reasonable to expect a being to exert his power for the advancement of what is agreeable to his own character, and not for the contrary purpose.

Some miracles may be conceived not to be *clearly*, and *indisputably*, above all human power; and yet to be genuine miracles. Some of the works of *Moses* were such, that the *Egyptian* artists could imitate them in some manner, delusive indeed, and defective; but which rendered it at least disputable whether they were wholly above human power, or not. Nor is it necessary, that every Divine mission be so authenticated as to put its genuineness beyond all *possible question*. It is enough, if, upon the whole, there be a considerable overbalance of credibility. For, after all, direct Revelations of all kinds, are ever to be considered as *exuberances* of Divine Goodness; as advantages *beyond* what rational agents, in most cases, have any ground to expect; and are therefore by no means to be thought deficient, if they want this or that evidence, and be not attended with all the circumstances of conviction which our fantastical imaginations could invent. The least and lowest degree of supernatural assistance is more than we had any reason to expect, or pretence to demand. And had we never been blest with any clear and extensive Revelation, we should have been altogether without excuse in acting a wicked part, and stifling the light of natural conscience.

Others of the scripture miracles, and those by far the most considerable part, are such as to be clearly and un-

questionably above all human power. Of this sort are the dividing of the Red Sea, the curing inveterate diseases with a word, and raising the dead.

A miracle ought (in order to its being received by those who were not eye-witnesses) to have been wrought in the presence of such a number of credible witnesses, as to render it unlikely that there should have been any delusion. Though it may be possible, that the senses of one or two persons may be deceived, it is not to be supposed, that those of any number should. And the greater the number of the witnesses is (supposing them credible) the probability of their being all at the same time under a delusion becomes the less, till it comes to be wholly incredible and inconceivable. And then their testimony becomes unquestionable. This necessary condition effectually excludes such pretended miracles as those of *Mahomet's* vision, which passed wholly *without witness*. For our Saviour's reasoning is undeniably just; *if a man bear record of himself, his record is not true*; that is, the mere assertion of a person, who, for any thing that appears, may be interested to deceive, is not a sufficient ground of credit. On this account also that most monstrous insult upon all the senses and faculties of mankind, Transubstantiation, is effectually cut off from all pretensions to the character of a miracle. For the wafer is so far from having been ever turned into a whole *Christ* before any credible witness or witnesses, that every person, before whom it has been attempted or pretended to be done, has had, or might have had, the assurances of both sense and understanding, that it remained still as much wafer as ever.

The witnesses of a miracle must be credible. They must be under no visible temptation to deceive; and they must be persons of such understanding as to be equal to the examination of the pretended miracle. The pretended miracles of the Papists may on very just grounds be suspected; as we know what immense profits that worldly church gets by deluding the people. The workers of the scripture-miracles were under no temptation to bribe witnesses, but quite to the contrary. For they all lost, and none of them gained any thing secular by their works. *Moses* forsook the court of *Pharaoh*, to wander many years in the wilderness and die there. The prophets suffered

persecution and death for their plainness in reproving the fashionable vices of their times. The blessed Saviour of the world, and his apostles, and the first proselytes to christianity, exposed themselves to every kind of affliction and distress, and to violent and infamous deaths. So that they cannot, with any shadow of reason, be suspected of having bribed witnesses to testify to their miracles; nor indeed had they any secular advantage to offer in order to gain proselytes.

The witnesses of a supposed miracle must, in order to its credibility, be supposed persons of such understanding, as to be equal to the examination of the fact. Now the scripture-miracles were performed before such numbers, that, according to the common course of human capacities, they must have been seen and examined by many persons, not only of sufficient understanding for inquiring into a simple fact, but of more shrewdness and sagacity than ordinary. Nor was there any superior capacity necessary to determine whether the Red Sea was really miraculously divided, when the thousands of *Israel* passed through it in full march, and saw the waters as a wall on their right hand, and on their left. Nor was there any occasion for great sagacity to convince those who saw some hundreds of diseased people healed with a word, that real miracles were wrought. Nor was there any subtlety of discernment necessary to convince the disciples of *Christ*, who had conversed with him for several years, who heard him speak as never man spoke, that he who after his death appeared to several hundreds together, and often conversed intimately with the eleven, for six weeks, was the same person, their well known Lord and Master, whom they saw crucified on mount *Calvary*.

It is said in the above definition of a proper miracle, that, in order to credibility, it is necessary, that the effect be such as to be subject to the full examination of the spectators. There are very few of the scripture-miracles that were not of too substantial and permanent a nature, to be in any manner imitated by the *præstigiæ*, or tricks of impostors. A sudden appearance, for a short time, of any strange and unaccountable kind, might be questioned. But a body diseased for many years, cured with a word, a withered limb restored in a moment, a distracted brain

instantly redressed, a dæmon authoritatively dispossessed, a man four days buried, recalled to life ; these are effects of power too substantial to be mistaken ; and too lasting to be suspected of having passed through a superficial examination.

Lastly, it is said in the above definition of a proper and credible miracle, that it must be declared by the worker of it to be wrought expressly in confirmation of some particular doctrine, which doctrine must be such as to commend itself to the unprejudiced reason of mankind, and to bear the marks of a revelation worthy of God, and useful for men. A miracle, or wonderful effect, connected with no particular doctrine, is to be called a natural or artificial phenomenon, or a prodigy ; not a miracle in a theological sense, which last alone is what we are at present concerned with.

No miracle whatever, nor any number of miracles, would be sufficient to prove twice two to be five. Because we are more clearly and undoubtedly certain of the proportions of numbers, than of any thing supernatural. And all miracles are supernatural. And it would be absurd to imagine that the infinitely wise Author of reason should expect us to question the *certain* information of our reason upon evidence *less certain*.

Again, if miracles are pretended to be wrought in proof of a doctrine which leads to any vicious or impious practice, as we may, by a proper examination, and due use of our faculties be more certain, that such a doctrine cannot be from God, than we can be, that a pretended miracle, in support of it, is from him ; it is plain we are to reject both the doctrine and pretended miracle, as insufficient against the clear and unquestionable dictates of reason. But if miracles, answering in every part the above definition, are wrought before credible witnesses, in express attestation of a doctrine, though not discoverable by reason, yet not contradictory to it, and tending to the advancement of virtue and happiness, we ought in any reason to conclude such miracles, when properly attested, to have been performed by the power of God, or of some being authorised by him ; and may judge ourselves safe in receiving them as such ; because we cannot suppose that God would leave his creatures in a state ob-

noxious to remediless delusion ; nay, we cannot but think it criminal to neglect, or oppose, miracles in such a manner attested, or the doctrine intended to be established by them.

It has been objected against the account, we have in scripture, of innumerable miracles performed by *Moses*, and the prophets, *Christ*, and his apostles ; that it is not likely, they should be true, because we have none such in our times. That, as we have no experience of miracles, we have no reason to believe that ever there were any performed.

Supposing it were strictly true, that we have no experience, or ocular conviction, of the possibility of miracles, which is by no means to be taken for granted ; those who urge this objection, would do well to consider, before they embark their unbelief upon it, how far it will carry them. If, because we see no miracles now, we may safely argue that there never were any, it will be as good sense to say, because we now see an earth, a sun, moon, and stars ; there never was a time, when they were not ; there never was a time when the Divine wisdom governed his natural, or moral system otherwise than he does now ; there are no different states of things, nor any different exigencies in consequence of those differences ; it is absurd to conceive of any change in any one particular, or in the general œconomy of the universe.

The account we have in the New Testament, of the *dæmoniacs* miraculously cured by our Saviour, has, particularly, been thought to pinch so hard, that some have, in order to get rid of the difficulty, attempted, (in my humble opinion, altogether unwarrantably) to explain away the whole doctrine of possession by spirits. How comes it, say the objectors, that we read of such numbers of persons in *Christ's* time possessed with *dæmons* ; while we have no instances of any such in our days ? To this, some gentlemen, whose abilities I should be proud to equal, and of whose sincere belief of christianity I have no more doubt than of my own, have given an answer, which I cannot help thinking extremely hurtful to the cause. “The *Dæmoniacs*,” say those gentlemen, “were no more than mad people, who were not then, nor are now, possessed with spirits, any more than other diseased persons. Their being

spoken of as possessed, was no other than a common way of expressing their disease or distress ; and the dispossessing them, was only the cure ; which was still miraculous” But, if any man can reconcile this notion with the accounts we have from the Evangelists, he must have a key, which, I own, I am not master of. That a set of grave historians, sacred historians, should fill up their narration with accounts of what was said by such a number of madmen ; that those madmen should universally speak to better purpose, than the bulk of those who were in their senses ; that they should at once, the first moment they cast their eyes on our Saviour, know him to be the *Christ*, while some even of his own disciples hardly knew what to think of him ; that our Saviour himself should enumerate his casting out evil spirits, besides curing diseases, as a miracle entirely separate, and of its own kind, and mention his conquest over *Satan* and his wicked spirits, as a mark of his being the true *Messiah* ; that he should allow his disciples to continue in a mistake with respect to a point of such consequence ; that he should advise them to rejoice more in the thought of their names being written in heaven, than in their having received power over spirits, without telling them at the same time, that they were altogether in a mistake about their having received any such power ; that we should be gravely told that the madness (not the spirits) which possessed the men in tombs, intreated our Saviour to send it into the herd of swine ; that the madness (not the spirit) should so often intreat and adjure him not to send it to the place of torment before the time, that is, probably, before the last judgment, or perhaps an earlier period spoken of in the *Apocalypse* ; that all these solemn accounts should be given in such a history, and nothing to show them to be figurative, nor, as far as I can see, any possibility of understanding them otherwise than literally ; seems wholly unaccountable. Nor can I help thinking that the solution is incomparably harder to grapple with than the difficulty. I deny not, that there are passages in the gospels, where a disease is in one place spoken of as an infliction of an evil spirit, and in another as a mere disease. But this does not at all affect the point in dispute ; because the question is not, whether the dæmoniacs spoken of in the gospels were not persons labouring under a bod-

ily complaint besides the possession by evil spirits; but, whether the people said to be possessed, were at all possessed, or not. If a person, whose brain was distempered, was likewise possessed with an evil spirit, he might with sufficient propriety be spoke of in one place as a lunatic, and in another as a dæmoniac.

I should humbly judge it a much more easy and natural way of getting over this difficulty, to proceed upon our Saviour's answer to his disciples concerning the man born blind. "Neither did this man sin," says he, (in any extraordinary manner) nor his parents; but that the works of God might be made manifest in him." If the whole human species are offenders, and at all times deserving of punishment, where is the difficulty of conceiving, that it might be suitable to the Divine scheme of government, that at the time of our Saviour's appearance, or any other period, a greater variety of punishments might be suffered to fall upon a guilty race of beings, and afterwards, through the Divine mercy, their sufferings might be abated. Particularly, is there not even a propriety in God's giving to *Satan*, and his angels, the ancient and inveterate opposers of the *Messiah*, and his kingdom, a short triumph over mankind, in order to render the *Messiah's* victory over him more conspicuous and more glorious. This I say on the supposition, that possession by evil spirits was altogether peculiar to those ancient times; and that there is at present absolutely no such thing in any country in the world. But, before any person can positively affirm, that there is no such thing in our times as possession by spirits, he must be sure of his knowing perfectly the natures and powers of spirits, and be able to show the absolute impossibility of a spirit's having communication with embodied minds; and must be capable of showing, that all the symptoms and appearances in diseases, in madness, and in dreams, are utterly inconsistent with the notion of spirits having any concern with our species. Now to establish this negative will be so far from being easy to do, that, on the contrary, universal opinion, as well as probability, and the whole current of revelation, are on the opposite side. Who can say that it is absurd to imagine such a state of the human frame, especially of the brain, as may give spiritual agents an opportunity of making

impressions upon the mind? Who can say, that sleep may not lay the mind open to the impressions of foreign beings; and that waking again may not, by some laws of Nature unknown to us, exclude their communications? Who can say, that part (I do not say all) of the symptoms in phrenetic, epileptic, lunatic, and melancholic cases, especially in the more violent paroxysms, may not be owing to the agency of spirits? Were this to be allowed, it would not at all vacate the use of medicines or dieting. For if the access of spirits to our minds depends upon the state of our bodies, which it is no way absurd to suppose, it is evident, an alteration in the state of the body may prevent their access to our minds, and deprive them of all power over us; and in that light medicines and regimen may be effectual even against spirits, so far as they may be concerned, by being so against the natural disorder of the frame occasioned merely by the disease. So that there may, for any thing we know to the contrary, be dreams, in which foreign agents may be concerned, and there may be others occasioned by mere fumes of indigestion, as the poet speaks. There may be epileptics and maniacs, who are so from mere obstructions and disorders in the brain and nerves; and there may at this day be others attacked by those maladies, whose distress may be heightened by wicked spirits. The amazing strength of even women and youths, in some of their violent fits, seems to countenance a suspicion, that something acts in them, separate from their own natural force, and which is hardly to be accounted for from any extraordinary flow of animal spirits. And why in scripture we should have so many accounts of revelations communicated in dreams: from whence probably the heathens, ever since *Homer*, have had the same notion; seems unaccountable upon any other footing, than that of supposing some natural mechanical connexion between a particular state of the bodily frame, and communication from separate spirits. The behaviour of the prophet in the Old Testament, who calls for an instrument of music, when he waits for an inspiration, does likewise countenance the same notion; as if the natural effect of melody was to open the way to the mind in a mechanical manner, in order to the more full admission of the super-

natural communications. To conclude what I would say on the difficulty of the *dæmoniacs* in the gospel-history, I do not pretend to decide which is the true solution. All I contend for is, That to explain away the reality of the presence of spirits, is, in my opinion, unwarrantable and dangerous, and removing a less difficulty to put a greater in its place.

To return to the general objection I was upon before this digression, which was, That we have no reason to believe there ever were any miracles, because we have no experience of any in our times; I have to say farther, that the objection is not founded upon truth; at least not upon an unquestionable truth. For many persons of good judgment have declared it to be their opinion, that among the innumerable fictitious accounts of supernatural appearances and prodigies, some, even in these later ages, are in such a manner authenticated, that to deny them a man must deny every information he can receive by any means whatever, besides his own immediate senses, which does not seem highly rational. Besides, are not the completions of a multitude of prophecies, which we have at this day extant before our eyes, as the predicted lasting ruinous state of *Babylon* and *Tyre*, the total subjection to the latest ages, of the once illustrious kingdom of *Egypt*, the remaining marks of the general deluge; the unequalled and unaccountable condition of the *Jews* for so long a period of time; the establishment and continuance to the end of the world of the christian religion,—are not these standing miracles conspicuous in our time? But of this more elsewhere. Upon the whole, it is evident, that if the objection was founded on truth, it could not be valid, because different periods may require different measures of government; and to say that there could never have been any miracles, because there are none now (were it true that there are no effects of miraculous interposition remaining in our times) would be as absurd as to say, that the axis of the earth must point exactly the same way it did two thousand years ago; whereas the observations of ancient astronomers have put the doctrine of its continual change of direction, and the procession of the equinoxes, out of all possible doubt. But if the objection is not founded upon truth, it must of course fall to the ground.

Prophecy is a miraculous history, or account of events before they happen. This being unquestionably above the reach of human capacity, it is a proper and convincing evidence, that the revelation in which it is given is not a human production. To pretend to determine the foundation, or the *modus*, of the prescience of the actions of free agents, may be wholly out of our reach in the present state. But we can form some conception of its being possible, in some such manner as the following, though it may not perhaps be safe to affirm, that the following is a true account of it.

Do we not commonly see instances of very sound judgments passed by wise men on the future conduct of others? May we not suppose, that angels, or other beings of superior reach, may be capable, from their more exact knowledge of human nature, to pass a much more certain judgment of the future behaviour of our species? And is there any thing less to be expected, than that He who made us, who perfectly knows our frame, who immediately perceives the most secret motions of our mind, and likewise foresees with the utmost exactness, and without a possibility of being deceived, the whole proceeding and concurrent circumstances in which any of his creatures can at any future time be engaged (as it is evident, that all things are the effect of his directing providence, except the actions of free creatures, to whom he has given liberty and power of action within a certain sphere) is any thing less to be expected, I say, than that our infinitely wise Creator should form a judgment, suitable to his wisdom, of the future conduct of his creatures? And to imagine that this judgment should at all effect the future behaviour of the creature, seems as groundless as to conclude that one created being's judging of the future conduct of another should actually influence and over-rule his conduct. The judgment is, by the supposition, formed upon the character of the person judged of, not the character influenced by the judgment. There are some passages of Scripture, which seem to lead us to this manner of conception of this difficult point.

When *David* (1 *Sam.* xxii. 12.) pursued by the inveterate hatred of king *Saul*, consulted the oracle, whether, if he staid in the city of *Keilah*, the people of that city

would give him up to his enemy ; the answer he received was, That they would. It is plain in this case, that the Divine prescience of the conduct of that people, in the event of *David's* trusting himself into their hands, did not arise from God's, having decreed that they should give up *David*: for if it had been decreed, it must have come to pass. Nor was their treachery foreknown because it was future : For it was not future, having been disappointed, and never coming to be executed. Nor could it be eventually pre-determined, that in case of *David's* staying in the city, the people should give him up into the hands of his enemy. For the event shows, that it was not the Divine scheme that he should fall into the snare, but that he should escape it. There seems nothing therefore left to conclude, but that the Divine prescience of the conduct of the people of *Keilah* was founded in a thorough and perfect insight into the treacherous character of that people, and perhaps the knowledge of actual designs formed by them to betray *David* into the hands of the king.

Again, when God foretells (*Gen. xviii. 19.*) that *Abraham* would "command his household after him, and they would keep the way of the Lord;" he plainly shows upon what that prescience was grounded, in saying, "I know him, that he will command," &c. That is, I so fully know his zeal and affection for the true God, that I foresee he will set up and support my worship in his family, and enjoin it to his posterity, in opposition to the idolatry and polytheism which prevails among the heathen around.

In the same manner, in the New Testament, though the apostle *Paul* foretells, that there should not be a life lost of those who sailed with him, notwithstanding the severity of the tempest ; we find afterwards, that the prediction depended upon the sailors staying in the ship. So that probably what was foreseen was, that the ship and crew might be saved by the skill of the sailors ; and that, if they deserted it, it must perish.

These, and other passages, which might be quoted, seem to favour the preceding attempt to solve part of the difficulty of the Divine prescience of the actions of free creatures. But it must still be confessed, that the subject is involved in such intricacies as we shall not in all probability be able to clear up in the present state. How-

ever it be, we are not immediately concerned with any thing but what may affect our doing our duty : And that neither prescience, nor any thing else, does any way abridge our freedom in performing that, and so securing our final happiness, we need not use any reasoning to be convinced. We have no other assurance that we exist, than feeling: And we have the same for our freedom. Every man feels, that in all his actions, whether virtuous, vicious or indifferent, he is naturally free. And what we feel we cannot bring ourselves serious to doubt if we would, though we may cavil at any thing.

That many parts of Scripture prophecy, not yet accomplished, are obscure, and of doubtful signification; so that the most learned interpreters are divided in their sentiments about what may be intended by them, must be acknowledged. And that this is no more than might have been expected, will appear by considering, that had many future events been too clearly predicted, the obstinacy of men might have rendered miracles necessary upon every occasion to bring about the completion of them.

With all the pretended obscurity of prophecy, there are still enough of unquestionable and conspicuous completions to show that the predictions of scripture were given, not by chance, nor by bold conjecture, nor by partial informations from evil spirits, as some have thought was the case of some of the responses of the heathen oracles, but by One who saw through futurity down to the most distant periods, from the time of their being given out; by Him, who holds the reins of government in his own hand. The few following examples may serve as a proof of this.

Moses. in his account of the deluge, (*Gen. viii. 21, 22.*) assures mankind, in the name of God, that there should never be another universal flood; but that the four seasons of the year, and the revolutions of day and night, should go on without interruption to the end of the world. This is one of those predictions which could not have been written since the event, as has been pretended, in derogation of some others: the period taken in by it not being yet concluded. And considering the extraordinary wisdom so conspicuous in the character of *Moses*, it does not seem conceivable, that he, who expected to have the opinion of future ages as an inspired person, should with-

out Divine Authority, have ventured his whole character upon such an affirmation as this, which he could have let alone, lest the event should have detected him for an impostor. For how could he know, without inspiration, what change in nature might happen, which might totally change the course of days, nights, and seasons? How could we know that their might not happen some such revolution in his own times, to the utter ruin of his character as a prophet! How could he know that another deluge might not come according to the order of Nature; and as he had published the account of the preservation of *Noah* and his family in the ark, was it not natural to expect, that upon the least appearance of such another judgment, people would set about making arks for their own safety, which would have proved the total degrading of his character as a prophet and a lawgiver? The event hitherto has answered the prediction, and, in all probability, future ages will fully prove it to have been given from God.

The same wise lawgiver of the *Jews* founded a very important part of that constitution in a manner extremely injudicious and improvident, if we suppose him not to have acted upon Divine authority. What I refer to, is his confining the priesthood, which he declares to be everlasting to the single family of *Aaron*. Had he not done this upon Divine authority, he must have run an obvious hazard of the downfall of the religious polity he was setting up by the possible failure of male issue in *Aaron's* family, who had only two sons, *Eleazar* and *Ithamar*. This part of the Mosaic constitution may therefore be considered as a prediction, that in a course of several thousand years, there should not be wanting male issue proceeding from one single family, at that time consisting only of two persons. Had this prediction failed; had these two persons, or their posterity, been cut off by natural death, or by an enemy, the whole *Jewish* economy must have sunk for want of a priesthood, and all the prophecies had been falsified, or had never been given.

In the book of *Jeremiah*, chap. i. and following, it is foretold, that *Babylon*, the greatest city and seat of the greatest empire at that time in the world, should not only be destroyed, but that it should never again be inhabited. Which last particular no man of prudence or judgment

would have ventured his credit as a prophet upon, when he could have avoided giving any such prediction, unless he had been, by Divine inspiration, assured of what he affirmed. For nothing could well be imagined more improbable, than that the seat of the empire of the world should be destroyed; and still more unlikely was it, that it should never be rebuilt. But the event shows the truth of the prophecy. And this prediction is likewise one of those of which it cannot be pretended that it was written since the event.

In *Ezek.* xxx. 13, it is expressly foretold, that there should be “no more a prince of the land of *Egypt*.” No man of judgment would have ventured, without authority, his credit upon such an assertion, as he could have been wholly silent on the head. For who could know, without inspiration, that there should never more a prince, a native of *Egypt*, sit on the throne of that kingdom? The event however has verified the prediction. For soon after the time when it was given, *Egypt* was made a province of the *Persian* empire, and has been governed ever since by foreigners, having been, since the fall of the *Persian* monarchy, subject successively to the *Macedonians*, the *Saracens*, the *Mamalukes*, and the *Turks*, who possess it at present. This is one of those prophecies against which it cannot be objected, that it is possible it may have been written since the event.

In the xxvith chap. of *Ezekiel* it is foretold, that the great and powerful city of *Tyre*, at that time the general resort of traders, and mart of the world, should be *utterly desolate*, so as to be a place for the *spreading of nets*, and should *never more be rebuilt*. This prediction, at the time it was given so utterly improbable, has been literally fulfilled, as may be seen in *Maundrell's Voyage*. And Dr. *Pococke*, late bishop of *Ossory*, says, in his travels in the east, that as he sailed by the place where it formerly stood, he saw the ruins of it covered with fishing nets.

The scriptures of both Old and New Testament are full of predictions of the dispersion of the *Jews* for a long period of time, as a punishment for their vices, and of their being at last restored to their own land in great triumph and happiness. So early as the days of *Moses*, whose æra prophane history confirms to have been about the time

we place it, *viz.* about three thousand years ago, we have predictions of the ruin which was to come upon that people in case of their disobedience (and which did come accordingly) so clear and explicit, that no writer of our time, with the help of history, and particularly *Josephus'* account of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and with the advantage of knowing the present unhappy condition of that people almost in all the countries of the world but our own, could in an imitation of the prophetic style described their case more exactly. In the xxviiith chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *Moses* threatens their disobedience with judgments and plagues of every kind; particularly that they should "become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word in all countries;" that "an enemy should come upon them as swiftly as eagles," probably alluding to their conquest by the *Romans*; that they should, in the severity of the siege, be reduced "to eat their very children;" that they should be scattered through all countries of the world;" and that they should be forced "to serve other gods," as they accordingly are, in the countries where the inquisition is established, obliged to worship the host, which numbers of them comply with, though a gross violation of the second commandment, to avoid falling into the hands of that merciless court; and that among the nations where they should be scattered they should "have no ease nor rest," but a trembling heart," and "failing of eyes," and "sorrow," and "continual fear for their lives," with many other threatenings to the same purpose.

It is also foretold by the following prophets, as well as by *Moses*, that notwithstanding this unexampled dispersion of the *Jews* into all nations, they should be still preserved a distinct people; that God "will not destroy them utterly," but that "when they shall call to mind among all the nations whither God has driven them, and shall return to the Lord, he will turn their captivity, and gather them from all the nations—from the farthest parts of the earth—even in the LATTER days." That "though he makes a full end of all other nations," (by revolutions and mixtures of one people with another, which renders it impossible to distinguish their genuine descendants) "yet he will not make a full end of them;" but "a remnant of them" shall be kept unmixed with any other people, and

“ shall return out of all countries whither God has driven them ;” that he will “ set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of ISRAEL,” and “ gather together the dispersed of *Judah*,” (the posterity of the ten tribes, at present, according to scripture-prophecy, undistinguished, as well as of the two) “ from the four corners of the earth ;” which shows that the return here spoken of, is not that from the *Babylonish* captivity ; as is also evident from its being fixed to the “ latter days,” and from its being also spoken of by the prophet *Hosea*, who lived after the return from the seventy years captivity of *Babylon* and by *Ezekiel* who lived in the captivity itself.

And in the New Testament it is clearly foretold by *Christ*, that *Jerusalem* should be destroyed with such destruction, “ as had not been since the beginning of the world, nor ever should be.” And it is remarkable that he again expressly mentions the “ eagles ;” in all probability to point out the *Romans*, (who bore eagles on their standards) for the executioners of the Divine vengeance on that perverse people. *Josephus*’ history of that tragical complication of events, corresponds exactly to our Saviour’s prediction of it. He also foretells that the *Jews* should be carried “ captive into all nations, and that *Jerusalem* should be trodden down of the *Gentiles*, till the times of the *Gentiles* should be fulfilled.” In the epistles there are various predictions to the same purpose. And we accordingly see that people to this day preserved distinct from all others in the world, without king, without country, without government to enforce the observance of their ceremonial law, which yet they keep up with great strictness, wherever they can.

That through all the changes, which have happened in all the other kingdoms of the earth, from the date of the first of these predictions to the present time (a period of more than three thousand years) that people should have had exactly the fortune that was foretold them by *Moses* ; and that they should now in so wonderful and unexampled a manner be preserved unmixed with, and easily distinguishable from, the people of all the countries where they are scattered ; and this in spite of the cruel usage they have had in most countries, which might have been expected to have driven them long ago to give up their religion,

and mix with the people among whom they lived; and that there should nothing in this long course of years have happened, to render it impossible, but that on the contrary, it should be probable, that the remaining prediction of their return to their own land, will be accomplished, as well as the rest; this gives, upon the whole, such a view, as is not to be equalled by any thing else in the world; the most amazing of all phænomena! and shows that prophecy is given by authority from the same by whom the government of the world is carried on; since none but he, or whom he authorises, could thus declare the end from the beginning.

No one can imagine the following predictions to be applicable to any other than the *Messiah*, *Gen.* iii. 15, the first prediction is given of him, *viz.* That “the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent.” None but *Christ* could properly be called “the seed of the woman.” For he alone was born of a woman without concurrence of man. Nor did any one but he effectually bruise the head of the serpent, or destroy the power of *Satan*. Again, he is several different times afterwards promised to *Abraham*, as he in whom “all the families of the earth should be blessed.” Now, there never was any single person, besides *Christ*, who was a blessing to the “whole world.” *Gen.* xlix. it is foretold that the sceptre should not depart from *Judah*, till *Shiloh* should come,” and that “to him should be the gathering of the people.” It is known, that the *Jews* became subject to the *Romans* about the time of the appearance of *Christ*. And the gathering of the people to him is very conspicuous in the general diffusion of his religion over most parts of the world. The words of *Moses*, *Deut.* xviii. 15, are applicable to none but *Christ* only. “The Lord shall raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, like unto me.” But no prophet, priest, or king, ever rose among that people like to *Moses*, but *Christ* only. For from *Moses* to *Christ*, no lawgiver arose among the *Jews*; their state being fixed by God himself, to continue unchanged till the appearance of the *Messiah*.

The predictions of *Isaiah* xi. 1, 3, 6, &c. are still clearer, “Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders. His name

shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace," (Which titles are somewhat different in the *Septuagint* translation, but such as are applicable to none but *Christ* only.) "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of *David*, and his kingdom, to order and establish it with judgment, and justice from henceforth even forever." And in the xliii. chap. "Behold my servant—mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him—he shall set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law."

Nor are those of *Jeremiah* less plainly applicable to *Christ*, and to him only. Chap. xxiii and xxxiii. "I will raise unto *David* a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. And this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"

And in *Ezekiel* xxxiv, &c. "I will set up one shepherd over them," (a shepherd of a people always signifies a prince or ruler) "and he shall feed them, even my servant *David*;" plainly not *David* the son of *Jesse*; he having been dead long before *Ezekiel's* time. "And I will make with them a covenant of peace," &c. One king "shall be king over them all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols."

It is predicted by *Haggai*, that "the Desire of all nations should come;" the *Shiloh*, translated by the Seventy, "the accomplishment of promises." How much the coming of the *Messiah* was the desire of all nations is shown above, and how properly *Christ* may be called the accomplishment of promises, is known to all, who know his religion.

Not less express, than magnificent, is the prediction of *Daniel*, chap. vii. "I saw in the night visions, and behold one, like the SON OF MAN, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Of the title, "Son of man," which is found twice or thrice in the Old Testament, it

may be cursorily remarked, that our Saviour seems to have been particularly pleased with it; as that name is given him in the ancient scriptures; as it expresses his sacred office of the deliverer of mankind, and suits the glorious humiliation he voluntarily condescended to, in assuming the human nature, and passing a life on earth for the important purpose of restoring a ruined world.

In the prophecies of *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Malachi*, he is spoken of as he that was to be the “light of the *Gentiles*, their desire, their ruler; and that through him the “name of God should be great among the Heathen.” Nor is there any one to whom these characters can be applied, but *Christ* only.

The important circumstance of his giving his life for the world is clearly held forth by the prophets *Daniel* and *Isaiah*, the former of which speaks of him as to appear “seven weeks,” that is forty-nine years, taking, (according to the prophetic style, a day for a year) “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build *Jerusalem*,” and that he should be “cut off; but not for himself.” And the latter says of him; “Surely he hath borne our griefs—he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. For the transgressions of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.”—Which words are suspected to be transposed, and that his death ought to have been put with the wicked, and his grave with the rich; as he was crucified between two thieves, and buried by *Joseph of Arimathæa*, who was rich. “He was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for sinners.”

It is foretold by *Isaiah*, chap. xxxv, that the *Messiah* should perform many great and beneficial miracles; that “the eyes of the blind should be opened; and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that the lame man should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” Many minute circumstances are foretold of him, such as his being of the tribe of *Judah* and seed of *David*; that he should be born at *Bethlehem*, (*Mic.* v. 2.) that he should ride

in humble triumph into the city of *Jerusalem*, (*Zach. ix. 9.*) that he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver, (*ibid xi. 12.*) that he should be scourged, buffeted, and spit upon, (*Isa. 1. 6.*) that his hands and feet should be pierced, (*Psal. xxiv. 16.*) that he should be numbered among malefactors, (*Isa. liii. 12.*) that he should have gall and vinegar offered him to drink, (*Psal lxix. 21.*) that they who saw him crucified, should mock at his trusting in God, (*Psal. xxii. 8.*) that the soldiers should cast lots for his garments, (*ibid. 18.*) that he should be buried by a rich man, (*Isa. liii. 9.*) and that he should not see corruption, (*Psal. xvi. 10.*) The completion of all which predictions in *Christ* is visible in his history in the New-Testament.

To what character besides that of *Christ*, are all these predictions applicable? And are they not all strictly applicable to *Christ*, and clearly fulfilled in him? Should now a set of satirical, or, enigmatical writings be proposed to be explained; who would hesitate whether the true sense, and proper application of them was discovered, when a sense was found, which tallied exactly in every particular; who would imagine those writings to have been composed by chance, which showed so much regularity and connexion, and which suited so well the proposed explication of them?

The predictions which *Christ* himself delivered concerning events that were to happen after his time, were confirmations no less authentic of the Divine Authority of his doctrine, than the completion in him, of the prophecies given of old. Besides those he gave of his own death, with the particular circumstances of it; of the behaviour of his disciples on that occasion; of the descent of the Holy Ghost; and the miraculous powers to be communicated to his disciples; besides those, he gave some, which cannot be pretended to have been forged after the events, as has been alleged of some of the scripture prophecies. His predictions of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and dispersions for a very long period, of the *Jews* into all nations, but so as they should be preserved distinct from all other people in order to their restoration; of the general prevalency of his religion over the world, and its continuance to all ages; and of the mischiefs, consequent upon the per-

version of it; these are events, which at that time were to the highest degree improbable. It was altogether needless for him to risk his credit upon the completion of these predictions; nor is it to be supposed, a person of his wisdom would have needlessly hazarded the confutation of his whole scheme in such a manner, if he had not been certain that what he foretold would be fully accomplished, and that though heaven and earth were to pass away, his word should stand, as the event hitherto has sufficiently shown.

That a power of so extraordinary a kind, and which should produce such important effects, especially upon the religious state of the world, as Popery has done, should be predicted in scripture, was reasonably to be expected. Accordingly by *Daniel*, who flourished near three thousand years ago, it is foretold, chap. vii. 19, that there should be a tyrannical power, which should "wear out the saints of the Most High," and that they should "be given into his hands until a time, and times, and the dividing of times," that is a year and two years, and half a year, which give one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which in prophetic style signifies so many years. This period is also mentioned in five different predictions in the New Testament. This power is spoken of, verse 23, as a kingdom "different from all before it." And so indeed it is; being a *religious* tyranny, or secular kingdom founded on a pretence of religion. It is represented as a monster with "teeth of iron;" and "claws of brass;" and very properly; for it is the character of that merciless religion to destroy all who oppose it, and to endeavour (by driving those who are so unhappy as to fall under it's tyranny to make shipwreck of conscience) to damn all whom it destroys. It is spoken of as "devouring, stamping in pieces," and laying waste the whole world, as "changing times and laws," and "speaking great words against the Most High." All which suit the blood-thirsty cruelty, the unequalled arrogance, and blasphemous impiety of the bishops and church of *Rome* to the greatest exactness. It is there said, that he should not "regard the desire of women:" which plainly points out the prohibition of marriage; that he should "honour gods-protectors," that is, tutelar saints, and "a god, whom his

fathers knew not," a wafer-god, of which god some thousands are made in one day by the priests, and eaten, and digested by the people. See also 1 *Tim.* iv.

In the Apocalypse, chap. xi, xii, &c. it is copiously described, where it is represented under the appearance of a monster, or "wild beast," whose "seven heads" signify, as afterwards explained, the seven hills upon which *Rome* was built, and "ten horns" the ten kingdoms, into which the *Roman* empire was divided, whose "blasphemous names" are notorious, as of God's vicegerent, Our lord god the pope, Vice-god, and the like, who "wars with the saints, and overcomes them; who "receives power over the nations," and is "worshipped" by them. The same is also afterwards represented under the character of the "great harlot," or idolatress, with whom the "kings of the earth have committed fornication," that is the idolatry of worshipping the images of saints, and kneeling to the Host. She is afterwards represented as "drunk with the blood" of the martyrs of *Jesus*. The kings of the earth are afterwards mentioned as "giving their power to the monster," as it is notorious that most of the kings in *Europe* acknowledged the pope for their lord god, and held their crowns of him, as some of them do still. The same power is likewise held forth under the figure of a great city, the seat of wealth, luxury, pleasure, riches, and commerce, one article of which commerce, peculiar to *Rome* papal, is her trade in the souls of men."

And by the apostle *Paul* this fatal delusion is called *The man of sin*, or the very abstract and quintessence of iniquity, a character fit only for the popish religion, as it alone of all religions contains an assemblage of all that is most exquisitely wicked, beyond what could have been thought within the reach of human invention unassisted by dæmons. Of which the infernal court of inquisition is a pregnant proof; where cruelty, the disposition the most opposite to all good, is carried to that diabolical excess, that few hearts are hard enough to bear the mere description of it in a book. The propriety of giving the appellation of *The man of sin*, to the Romish imposture, appears from considering, that it has had the peculiar cursed art not only to turn the mildest of all religions into a scene of the most horrible barbarity: but to make the most pure and heavenly

system of doctrines and laws, which ever were, or will be, given to men, an authority for establishing for points of faith the most hideous absurdities, and contradictions to common sense; and for licensing every abominable wickedness that has ever been thought of or practised. Insomuch, that the fixed rates of absolution, for the most horrid and unnatural vices, stand appointed by their popes, and published in different editions. By which means, the great design of christianity, which was *to teach men, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly*, is defeated among the deluded proselytes to that infamous religion. For instead of this, popery teaches, that any man, who pays handsomely, may have an indulgence for any number of years to live in all manner of abominable impiety, profaneness, and impurity. Is not this *The man of sin*?

Whoever would see how exactly the scripture predictions are suited to represent this diabolical delusion, has only to read the histories of popery, and accounts of the inquisition. There he will find what hideous ravages has been made by it in different countries. Witness their infamous croisades; the massacres of the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, of whom almost a million were reckoned to be slain. In thirty years from the founding of the order of the *Jesuits*, above eight hundred thousand protestants were put to death by the hand of the executioner only. The bloody butchering duke of *Atva* used to make it his boast of having cut off in a few years thirty thousand protestants in the *Netherlands*. The destruction of helpless victims sacrificed to that infernal fury, the inquisition, in one period of thirty years, is reckoned at one hundred and fifty thousand. Is not this dreadful and wide-wasting mischief, this terror of human nature, this hell on earth, properly represented as a monster, or wild beast, with iron teeth to devour and destroy, as drunk with blood, and aspiring to an authority above all that is called God, or is worshipped, that is, above all other power and government, challenging the privilege of the grand tyrant and destroyer?

These are only a few among many instances of the unequalled horrors of this fatal delusion, and of the exactness of the scripture predictions, which can be applied to nothing else, that ever was heard of upon earth. And if in the

day's of the authors of the above predictions, there was nothing known among mankind, which might give the hint of such a power as that of antichrist, or popery ; and if no account of this power in our times, when it is so well known can in prophetic style more clearly describe it, than we find it represented in the predictions of scripture, let the opposers of prophecy account for this wonderful agreement between the prediction and the completion, as they best can.

These are a few, among almost innumerable predictions of future events, of which holy scripture is full. And, as these show themselves clearly to be genuine revelations from God ; the others contained in the same writings may in reason be supposed to be of the same original, though the times when they were given, and the exactness of their respective completions, should be more subject to cavil, than these here quoted. And the opposers of the revelation, in which these predictions are contained, are in reason obliged to give some plausible account, how they came there, if not by Divine inspiration.

Let christianity have been introduced into the world when it would, it is impossible to give any rational or satisfying account of its prevalence and establishment, but its being a Divine institution. For supposing it forged in any age before or since the received date of about seventeen hundred years ago, it will be equally impossible to conceive how it should come to pass upon mankind, if it was a fiction. The christian religion has been established upon the ruins of the national religion of every country, in which it has been received. It had therefore the united forces of regal power, sacerdotal craft, and the popular superstition to bear down, before it could get footing in the world. Its character is directly opposite to the sordid views and secular interests of mankind, and acceptable to none but virtuous and elevated minds, which in all ages and nations have ever been comparatively a very small number of the species, and not fit, nor disposed to struggle with, much less likely to get the better of, the majority, so as to cram a set of falsehoods down their throats.

All the false schemes of religion, which ever prevailed in the world, have come to be established either by the multitude's being led to embrace them by craft, or driven

to it by force. That christianity was established by craft, is on all accounts incredible, and particularly from considering its character, which is altogether separate from worldly views, or any kind of motives, which might incline men to deceive; and especially from its setting up upon the foot of the most strict integrity, of commanding all its votaries to avoid even the least appearance of evil, and by no means to think of doing evil for the sake of any possible good consequence. Such precepts as these would by no means have suited a scheme calculated for deceiving mankind. On the contrary, we always find the great doctrine preached up by impostors is, zeal for the cause, rather than for the truth. This appears dreadfully conspicuous in the bloody catalogue of sufferers, who have fallen a sacrifice to the *Mahometan* and popish delusions. The opposers of christianity are obliged, if they will show themselves reasoners, to give some rational account of the establishment of it, upon the supposition of its being false. They are in reason obliged to show how a religion requiring the most strict purity of heart and severity of manners, the mortifying of inordinate lusts and inclinations, the avoiding every appearance of evil, and encountering all manner of difficulties, and even death itself, if required, in testimony for truth; they ought to show how such a religion could have been established in the world by such seemingly unpromising and inadequate means, as those by which christianity actually was propagated; and that all this might, in a way unaccountable by human reason, and suitable to the usual course of things, have come about in spite of universal opposition from all those in whose hands the secular power was then lodged; and in spite of that most unconquerable of all prejudices, which mankind have for the religion they were brought up in. The opposers of christianity ought to show that there have been instances similar to this; and that a few artless, illiterate fishermen might reasonably be supposed equal to a design of outwitting all mankind, imposing a set of gross falsehoods upon them, and confounding their understandings with fictitious miracles, which they voluntarily, no one knows why, swallowed down without examination; and the consequence of which was the overturning all the national religions of a great part of the world, in spite of the

power of princes, the zeal of the priests, and the bigotry of the people. If they cannot find some rational and probable way for accounting for this strange and unexampled phenomenon, upon the supposition of christianity's being a fiction; if they cannot show, that fraud was used (for no one ever alleged force) they must yield the point, and acquiesce in the account given in the New Testament, to wit, That it made its way in the world by the power of its own irresistible evidence.

The author of our religion must either have been, truly and indeed, what he declares himself; the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and his religion a Divine appointment; or he must have been an impostor, or an enthusiast, or madman, and his religion either a secular scheme, an involuntary delusion, or a pious fraud.

That *Jesus Christ* was no impostor will plainly appear, if we consider first what a monstrous pitch of desperate and abandoned wickedness was necessary to carry a person the lengths he went, if he was not really what he pretended. The whole body of history cannot produce such another instance of daring impiety. For no impostor ever arrogated such high honours and characters as he does; which to think of as mere fiction and groundless pretence, is startling to human nature. To suppose a man in his senses to go on, constantly and invariably for several years, giving out, that he was the beloved Son of God; that he came down from heaven, whither he was again to return; that he had enjoyed glory with God before the world was; that he had power to forgive sin; that he was to judge the world; to hear him address the Deity as he does, *John* xviiiith, appealing to him for the truth of his pretensions, and keeping in the same strain to the last moment of his life; to suppose any man in his senses capable of all this frightful impiety, is imagining somewhat altogether unexampled, especially if we take along with it, that we have from this most impious of all impostors the best system of laws that ever was given to the sons of men, the peculiar excellence of which is their excluding all impiety, fraud, and secular views, teaching to avoid even the least appearance of evil, and to give up all for truth and conscience.

Again, what shadow or surmise, of indirect dealing, what suspicion of any thing immoral, or unjustifiable,

appears against his character? What fault were his enemies able to lay to his charge, when challenged by him, except that he had exposed their wickedness and hypocrisy? Even when *Judas*, who knew his whole conduct, desired to betray him, was he able to find any thing against him? Had his behaviour been at all suspicious or obnoxious is there any reason to question whether *Judas* had it not in his power to have detected and informed against him? And is it to be supposed, that his inveterate wickedness would suffer any pretence for accusing his master, and justifying his own malice against him, to pass unimproved to the utmost?

Besides, if the author of our religion was an impostor, what was his scheme in deceiving mankind? Not any secular advantage. For it is notorious, that poverty, contempt, persecution, and death, were his portion, according to his own prediction; that his followers had no better treatment for the first three centuries; that the emperor *Constantine's* giving secular advantages to the Christians was the first blow struck to the original disinterested purity of that religion; and that from the time the world was thrust into the church, religion began to decline; which shows, that secular views were inconsistent with its true design and genius.

If it was set up with a view to worldly grandeur, how comes it every where to inculcate the contempt of riches, honours, and pleasures, and the pursuit of things, spiritual and heavenly? What steps were taken by *Christ*, or his followers, to aggrandize themselves? Was not, on the contrary, their practise suitable to their doctrine? Is not the whole of their character a perfect pattern of self-denial and abstinence? Who has ever convicted them of any one instance of worldly craft or design? It is certain from all accounts, sacred and profane, that at the time of *Christ's* appearance in the world, there was a general expectation of the *Messiah*; and that the idea formed by the gross apprehensions of the people, of the character he was to appear in, was that of a great prince. What could therefore be more natural for an impostor, than to take the advantage of this prejudice, so favourable to a worldly scheme? Instead of which we find him, (and his apostles after they came once to understand the scheme he was up-

on) setting up on a quite different footing, the most unpopular plan, that could have been thought of; disclaiming all worldly views, and declaring that their profession led directly to poverty and suffering. It is indeed evident, that considering the universal prejudice of the *Jews* with respect to the character in which the Saviour of the world was to appear, it must have been impossible for a person of that nation to frame an idea of a suffering *Messiah* but by inspiration, or from understanding the ancient predictions concerning him in a manner quite different from what was useful among them.

Farther; what probability is there, that he who had sagacity enough to contrive a scheme, which did in effect prevail against all opposition, should yet be so imprudent, as to hazard the disappointment of his whole design by overloading it with so many incumbrances? Why should he pretend to be the Son of God, if it had not been true? How, indeed, could a mere human brain invent such a thought? How work out of itself the imaginations of his having enjoyed pre-existent glory with God, of his coming into the world to give his life for the life of the world; and of his being the appointed future Judge of the human race; There is something in this, which lies wholly out of the way of mere humanity. And accordingly, those who heard him, at least the unprejudiced, owned, that "he spoke as never man spoke." But farther; Why should he forewarn his followers of the discouraging consequences of their adherence to his religion, if he had been capable of deceiving? Why should he disappoint the inclinations and prejudices of the people, who wanted a worldly *Messiah*, if he himself aimed at worldly grandeur? Why should he prevent many from following him, who were disposed to do it, by undeceiving them, and informing them that his kingdom was not of this world? Why should he exert a supernatural power to withdraw himself from among them, when they were going to raise him to regal authority; if secular power was what he aspired after?

And, supposing Christianity an invention of later date, why should the Saviour of the world be represented in the supposed fictitious history, as suffering a shameful death? Would it not have been more likely to take with mankind, for the inventors of the scheme to have represented the

author of the religion they wanted to persuade mankind to the belief of, as a victorious prince, who had got the better of all opposition, than as one who appeared on earth in the most lowly station; despised and abused, while he lived, and at last put to an infamous death between two thieves.

Let it now be considered (if indeed it be worth while to consider what is so grossly absurd) what possibility there is of *Christ's* having been an enthusiast, or phrenetic. In order to judge properly of this, let it be computed, what degree of enthusiasm was necessary to bring a person to persuade himself, that he was the Saviour of the world, the *Messiah*, the Anointed of God, the Son of God, who had existed before the creation of this world, and was again to ascend to his former glory with God, after furnishing the great work, for which he came into the world; what degree of enthusiasm or madness must that man have been worked up to, who could believe all this of himself, while he was really no more than another mortal? How miserable must his phrenzy have been? How confounded and broke all his faculties?

Next, let it be attended to, what suitableness there is between such a degree of distraction as this, and the whole character and conduct of the author of our religion. What single instance does he give of even common frailty, or of such imprudence as is observed at times in the conduct of the wisest men; in the conduct even of inspired men? While prophets, and apostles are in scripture represented as falling into the common weaknesses of human nature, (an argument of the truth of sacred history) his behaviour stands wholly clear of every instance of infirmity or frailty. Where are the ragings and bellowings of enthusiasm? What signs did he give of a distempered, or overheated imagination? Is not his whole conduct a perfect pattern of calmness, prudence and caution? Does he not baffle the malicious and ensnaring questions of his crafty enemies by a wisdom, which puts them all to silence? Are not his answers so guarded as to defeat their studied questions? Are the artful, the malicious, and the learned, more than children, or fools, before him? Is this the character of an enthusiast? Does madness thus weigh its answers? Has the brain-sick visionary any such guard over himself, as

to avoid the snare that is laid for him? Not only to avoid the snare himself, but likewise to put to confusion and silence his adversaries?

Let it also be considered, whether it is possible that such a system of doctrines and laws should be the production of an enthusiastic or distempered brain. A system, which has afforded the wisest of our species matter for study, examination, and admiration, ever since it has been published to the world. A set of doctrines more sublime than all that ever were taught mankind before. Discoveries, which neither sacred, nor profane antiquity had before exhibited to mankind. Solutions of the very difficulties, which had put the wisdom of the ancients to a stand. Doctrines, beyond the natural reach of human reason, and yet, when discovered, commending themselves to reason, and bearing the internal marks of their Divine original. Precepts, whose purity puts the ancient legislators to shame. Laws, tending to improve human nature to its utmost perfection. A rule of life superior to all others, in its being absolutely perfect and complete, wanting nothing proper for the regulation of every passion and appetite, for the directing to the complete performance of every social and relative duty, and fixing the only acceptable way of worshipping the One Supreme. A scheme, of which it is with reason said in scripture, that the angels desire to look into it. Are these the productions of a visionary? these the reveries of a hot-brain'd enthusiast? It is plain that his enemies neither thought him such, nor thought it possible to persuade the generality of the people, who conversed with him, to think so of him. For, if they could have made him pass for an enthusiastic or phrenetic person, they certainly would have chose that as the easiest way of ridding themselves of him, and putting a stop to his scheme.

If it can be proved, that the religion of *Jesus* is by no means a fraud of any kind, it will unquestionably follow, that it is not a *pious* fraud. But that Christianity is no fraud of any kind is plain, not only from the excellency of its doctrines and precepts, the character of its author and first propagators, and its express prohibition of every appearance of deceit on whatever pretence, but from the concurrence and coincidence of innumerable collateral

evidences, which by their very nature were not within the reach of human contrivance. The whole body of revelation is to be considered as one uniform scheme, reaching from the beginning to the end of the world; in which the salvation of mankind by the *Messiah* is the principal part, or point of view, to which all the others lead, and with which they are connected, in such a manner, that the whole must stand or fall together. So that if the Christian religion be a delusion, it is evidently too great and extensive to be a delusion of human invention. That it is no contrivance of evil spirits, is plain from its direct tendency to promote virtue and goodness, and to banish all kinds of impiety and vice out of the world. It must therefore be a scheme of some being, or beings, superior to humanity. Which is owning it to be a Divine appointment: For we have no conception of a *fraud* contrived by any good being of the angelic rank.

That it should be prophesied at the beginning of the world, and recorded by *Moses* a thousand years before the appearance of *Christ*, "that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," and that *Christ* should be the seed of a woman, miraculously conceived without the concurrence of a male; could this have come about by human contrivance? When it is repeatedly foretold by the prophets, that *Christ* should come of the posterity of *Abraham*, of *Isaac*, of *Jacob*, of *David*; that he should be born at *Bethlehem*; that he should appear about the time of the "departure of the sceptre from *Judah*," that he should be "cut off, but not for himself; be pierced, be put to death with the wicked, and buried by the rich; that he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver;" and all the circumstances of his death particularly pointed out; that all these, and many other predictions fulfilled in *Christ*, and answering to none else but him, should be found in the scriptures preserved by the *Jews*, the violent opposers of *Christ* and his religion; let the inventors of Christianity (supposing it an invention) have been ever so cunning they never could have modelled the whole scheme from the very beginning, so as it should answer their purpose; they could never have brought things about in such a manner as to make them suit in such a number of particulars, as

will appear by running over the various evidences for our religion.

And it is notorious, that not only the weak and illiterate, but some of the wise and learned, embraced christianity at the time when it might with ease and certainty have been discovered to be an imposture, if it really was so; that those who at first were prejudiced against it were afterwards converted to the belief of it: that numbers of those who certainly knew whether *Jesus Christ* was really risen from the dead or not, gave up their lives in attestation, not of an opinion, but of a simple fact, concerning the truth or falsehood of which they could not have the least doubt: that the first propagators of christianity were not to be put to silence by all the opposition they met with from all the powers of the world: that though they expected nothing but persecution, imprisonment, scourging and all kinds of abuse, in every place they went to, without any one earthly comfort to make up for their sufferings, without the least shadow of any temporal advantage; they went on still indefatigable and unconquerable in publishing the resurrection of *Jesus*. Is it conceivable, that Human Nature must not have been tired out with going on day after day, and year after year, for a whole life-time, propagating a known falsehood, by which they were to get nothing but misery in this world, and damnation hereafter?

Deplorable is the objection started here by the opposers of christianity; That our Saviour's disciples did not see him rise; As if it were of any consequence to the certainty of his being really alive again, that no one saw him come out of his tomb. That he was certainly dead is unquestionable; he having been publickly crucified, and stabbed in the side with a spear as he hung on the cross. And that he was certainly alive again, was as unquestionable to those who conversed with him for six weeks together, after his passion, as if they had been witnesses of his rising. And that he did not show himself to the people (who deserved no such favour) but only to chosen witnesses, is an objection as wretched as the former; the only question, being, Whether the witnesses who declare that *Christ* was alive after his crucifixion, are credible or not. But to proceed:

That a person of the conspicuous and extraordinary

abilities of *St. Paul*, should be drawn into such a course of extravagance as to travel thousands of miles, propagating every where, an idle fiction of his having had a vision of *Christ*, and being commissioned by him to preach his religion over the world: That a man of his learning and judgment should publicly declare to the world his full persuasion of the truth of a doctrine decried by almost all the worldly-wise of those times: That he should own himself to have been formerly in the wrong in opposing Christianity: That he should take public shame to himself before all mankind, and commit his recantation to writing, to stand on record as long as the world lasted. What a degree of madness or fascination, must that have been, which would have been equal to all these effects? But what sort of madness or fascination must that have been, which could come to such a height, and not have wholly incapacitated the apostle for every thing consistent with common sense and discretion? Yet we find the works of this illustrious propagator of christianity, considered only in a critical light, are, to say the least, equal to those of the greatest geniuses, and best reasoners of antiquity; and himself by heathen writers celebrated as a person of superior abilities. And that neither our Saviour nor his apostles were in their own times taken for enthusiasts or phrenetics, is plain from the treatment they met with: For persecution was never, that I know of, thought a proper way of proceeding against such unhappy persons as had lost the use of their reason. That either the great apostle of the Gentiles, the other propagators of christianity, or its glorious Author himself, were persons deficient in the use of their faculties, will appear too ludicrous to require a grave answer, if it be only remembered, that it is the very character of madness to start from one reverie to another, and to be incapable of all regularity or steadiness of design. For a number of persons to be possessed with the same species of madness, that they should act in concert, and carry on a complicated and stupendous scheme for a long course of years; that they should do what all the learned and wise never could do; that they should out-wit the whole world, or rather, that they should reform and improve the world; to allege the probability of all this, would be insulting the common sense of mankind.

Nor has the supposition of the apostles' being wilful im-

postors any more hold of reason or probability, than that of their being enthusiasts or lunatics. For it is evident, as already observed, that the religion they have established in the world is no scheme for imposing upon mankind, nor at all calculated to deceive. Christianity, as it stands in the apostolic writings, is manifestly a scheme for opening the eyes of mankind, not for blinding their understandings; for improving, not confounding human reason; for removing, not riveting prejudice. And it is given with all that unadorned and artless simplicity which distinguishes truth from imposture. Nor can the least surmise or suspicion of any indirect design be fastened upon them. No scheme for aggrandizing themselves. Their ambitious views vanished at the death of their Master. And from the time of his ascension, we see their whole conduct and behaviour wholly disengaged from, and superior to all worldly designs. We see them disclaiming riches, honours and pleasure, and teaching their followers to aspire only after *future* glory, honour and immortality, and to trample under their feet the vain amusements of the *present* short and perishing life. The accounts they have left of their own errors and weaknesses, suit very ill with a scheme to impose on mankind. The dispute, which we know arose between them, must have discovered the plot, if there had been one. For it is evident, that they did not spare one another, and that they have not at all softened things in the accounts they have left on record of the differences which arose between them. Their accusation of their countrymen, and their defying, in the most public manner, their most inveterate enemies to lay any thing justly to their charge, what are the genuine marks of integrity and simplicity of intention, if these are not?

There is indeed no argument for the truth of christianity more irresistible than the character and conduct of its first propagators, and especially of its glorious author. No human sagacity could, from mere invention, have put together a fictitious account of the behaviour of a person, in so many strange and uncommon particulars, as the evangelists have told us of our Saviour, without either swelling up the imaginary character into that of the hero of a romance, or drawing it defaced with faults and blemishes. That human invention is by no means equal to any such task,

is evident from the success of the attempts which have been made by the greatest masters of description to draw perfect characters, especially where any thing supernatural was to have a place. And that such a character, as that of our Saviour, should be drawn so uniform and consistent, at the same time that it is so wholly new and peculiar, that in all the histories, and all the epic poems in the world, there is no pattern from whence the least hint could be taken to form it by; that this character, in which the greatness is of so extraordinary and stupendous a kind, that whatever is great in those of warriors, or heroes, or kings, is despised and neglected by him, and infinitely beneath him; that such a character should be the invention of a few illiterate men, and that it should by them be exhibited, not by studied encomiums, but by a bare unadorned narration of facts, but such facts as are no where else to be equalled; he who can believe that all this could be the effect of mere human invention, without superior interposition, must be capable of believing any thing. So that I may defy all the opposers of revelation to answer this question. How we came to have such a character as that of *Christ*, drawn as it is, and drawn by such authors, if it was not taken from a real original, and if that original was not something above human?

I do not think it would be a hard matter to write a volume upon this subject, without treading much in the footsteps of those who have writ upon the life of *Christ*. But without considering at present what has, or has not, been said by others, I shall only desire the reader to peruse carefully the evangelical history; (with what helps may be necessary) attending, as he goes through the account of the words and actions of our Saviour, to the disposition, and genius of spirit, which shines throughout the whole. Let him consider the tender compassion and love for a race of perverse, self-destroyed creatures, which must have prompted this glorious Being to condescend thus low to instruct and save them from vice and its dreadful consequences. At the same time, let the wisdom he showed in doing so be considered; since nothing conceivable is of greater importance, or more worthy of a Being of the highest dignity, than the recovery of a species, otherwise lost and undone, to virtue and endless happiness. Let the prudence and

judgment of the Divine instructor be attentively considered. How easy had it been for him, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, to have given forth his instructions in such a manner as to have overpowered all human understanding? How hard do we see it is for men of superior learning to adapt their lessons to the capacities of the young and ignorant? How irksome to most men, the employment of teaching? How few teachers are there who can avoid showing some affectation of their superiority in knowledge? Who could have expected, that ever he, who was the instrument of God in making this world, whose Divine penetration saw by intuition through all the depths of science, which a *Newton* could only collect by laborious inquiry, by accurate calculation, and distant analogy, that one capable of instructing the most enlightened archangel, should condescend to initiate in first principles a multitude of ignorant, illiterate mortals. "Blessed are the humble, the meek, the merciful." Here is no affectation of mystic learning; no pompous ostentation of profound science, no nice distinction of speculative points. And yet, when all is duly considered, it was no more derogation from the dignity of a teacher, capable of instructing angels, to condescend to give to those, who may hereafter come to be companions of angels, the first principles of virtue, which is the only true wisdom, than for a philosopher to teach his son the first rudiments of learning. Then how wisely does he suit his instructions both to the capacities and dispositions of his hearers! Parable and allegory have ever been thought the most entertaining manner of communicating instruction. The severity of the precept is lost in the entertainment of the fable. The sensible image reflects a light upon the moral thought, and the abstract thought gives an importance to the sensible representation. By apt similitude, therefore, and allegories drawn from the surrounding objects, did this great teacher recommend to his hearers the most solemn truths and important precepts. The honest and teachable mind was thus allured to search after Divine knowledge; while the proud and obstinate scorned the trouble of inquiring into the easy meaning of the figures used by him. Thus did his instructions become what all addresses to free and reasoning beings ought, a part of trial and discipline. So that they who were well disposed

might receive improvement and advantage, and the hard-hearted might hear and not understand.

With what graceful ease, and yet solemn composure, does he accommodate himself to the conversation of all sorts of persons! Among the wise and learned, how does he shine in communicating clear and important truth, confuting their artificial sophisms, and silencing their malicious cavils! among the illiterate, how does he condescend to the meanness of their understandings, and adapt his instructions to their apprehension, and usual train of thinking, raising his reflections from the present objects, and improving upon the most common occasions! even women and children are taken notice of by this wisest of teachers: and with reason. For no well disposed human mind is of little consequence: whatever it is at present, it is in the way to be hereafter great and glorious. The character, in short, which the Saviour of the world assumed, seems to have been equally sublime and amiable.

How does his wisdom, and the dignity of his character, appear in his discouraging all idle curiosity, which engages the mind unprofitably, and takes off its attention from the awful business for which we were sent into the world; at the same time that he fails not to answer any useful question that is put to him; and ever turns the attention to something great, and worthy of a Divine instructor to dwell upon!

How different his manner of communicating instruction from the dictates of the artful impostor or wild enthusiast! Instead of threatening with fire and sword the opposers of Divine truth, he kindly forewarns them of the natural and judicial effects of their impious obstinacy and malice. Instead of thundering out spiritual anathemas or excommunications against those who would not take his religion on trust; instead of depriving them of the temporal advantages, to which every peaceable subject has an unquestionable right; instead of employing the secular arm to decide in matters of conscience, where civil power has no right to interpose; instead of setting the world in a flame about mere speculative opinions, and doubtful doctrines, this Divine Teacher applies himself to mankind, as one who understood mankind. He addresses himself to their reason. He calls upon them to exert their understanding.

He does not insist upon their believing him on his own assertion, though he might have done so, on a much better pretence, than the purest church, the most numerous council, or the infallible Bishop of *Rome* himself. He claims no implicit authority over their faith; but appeals to the works which they saw him perform, and to the prophecies of their own scriptures, which they saw fulfilled in him. The doctrines, he dwells upon, and labours to inculcate, are the great and important points of morality, the duties of love to God, and benevolence to man; the heavenly virtues of sincerity, self-denial, contempt of a vain world, humility, meekness, and the other excellent graces, which make the only true ornament of the human mind, which have a natural tendency to qualify it for the society of all well-disposed beings in the universe. Is not this the very doctrine, are not these the very precepts, which one would expect the messenger of God to mankind to teach and inculcate? The perverse, or vicious opposer of religion may cavil as long as he will; but I think myself safe in venturing the cause I defend upon the sense of every well-disposed mind; to which I dare appeal, Whether it does not *feel* the Divine authority of this heavenly Teacher, in the excellence of his doctrines and precepts? But to proceed:

How patiently does he bear with the mean and groveling ideas his disciples had at first of the character in which the *Messiah* ought to appear! How kindly does he overlook their weakness, in fixing all their desires on worldly grandeur! What pity does he show for the unhappy uninstructed part of the people, the publicans and sinners! How does he show himself ready to pardon, though by no means to justify, the offences, which proceed from the unthinking indulgence of passion and appetite, while he denounces woes upon the hardened and hypocritical sinner! Wonderful! that he, who himself knew no fault, should thus bear with the faults of wretched mortals; while they, though all guilty before God, find it so hard to bear with one another.

With what open generosity does he bestow the highest encomium that can be deserved by mortal man, on one who had just before treated him and his pretensions in a very slighting manner. I mean *Nathaniel*, who, upon *Philip's* informing him, that the miracles performed by

Jesus of Nazareth, gave ground to conclude, that he was the *Christ*, of whose appearance there was then a general expectation. "What," says that weak and narrow-minded man, "do you expect the *Messiah* to come from so contemptible a place as "*Nazareth*?" Yet when, at the desire of *Philip*, he is prevailed upon to go and see him; as soon as he appears, with what unreserved openness does He, who knew all that was in man, overlook his prejudice, and celebrate him as a pattern of truth and sincerity of heart! How different from this is the conduct of peevish mortals! Does one hear the least surmise of a reflection supposed to have been cast upon him by another! How hard does he find it to forgive the mortal injury; how few can ever bring themselves heartily to love those who have taken the smallest liberty of this kind!

Excepting two of *Christ's* miracles, one of which it is needless to mention at present, its effect being of no material consequence at all, but as an emblem of the future destruction of the *Jews*, and the other was a just punishment on the sufferers; the direct tendency of all of them was kind and beneficial, and suitable to the character of the Saviour of the World, who came to deliver mankind from vice and misery. What blessings might not be expected from one, whose appearance in the world was signalized not by vain triumphs, and honorary gifts; but who expressed his goodness to mankind in giving food to the hungry, sight to the blind, health to the diseased, the use of reason to the distracted and possessed, pardon to the wounded conscience, heavenly knowledge to the unenlightened mind, and the prospect of endless happiness to the anxious and doubtful?

When his perverse enemies, with a degree of impiety never equalled before or since, accused the best of characters of the worst of crimes; alleging that he, who came, to destroy the kingdom of *Satan*, was guilty of a collusion with *Satan*; thus effectually defeating the highest and most powerful means of conviction and reformation, that could be offered to free and rational agents; how does he receive their impious accusations? Not with a deadly stroke from that hand, which could wield all the thunder of heaven; but with a calm remonstrance on the absurdity

of their accusation, the greatness of their crime, and the fearful vengeance they were drawing upon themselves.

What superior sagacity does he show in defeating the artful and ensnaring questions put to him by the crafty and the learned! How does he answer not only to men's words; but to their thoughts, and designs! Let the conversation between him and *Nicodemus* be an example among many. Of which the following short account will serve to illustrate this observation, which is highly necessary to be attended to, in order to enter into the beauty and propriety of many of our Saviour's discourses and answers.

This Teacher and Ruler of the *Jews* having secretly some opinion of our Saviour as a Prophet, and desiring to have some particular conversation with him, goes to him in the night, to avoid giving umbrage to his fellow-doctors; being unwilling to be suspected of any inclination to dissent from the established and fashionable opinions. He begins with acknowledging the reality and the greatness of the miraculous works performed by him. To which compliment our Saviour returns an answer, which seems very abrupt; but is exactly suited to the character and design of *Nicodemus*. The sense of it is as follows:

“I understand what you mean by coming to me thus privately. But that you may at once be able to judge of the doctrine, which I teach, to see how unsuitable it is to all manner of worldly views, and may not be deceived into an opinion of your being of a character and temper fit to be a disciple of mine; I tell you at once, That, as the bulk of mankind are, it is necessary for one who would enter upon the profession of the pure and spiritual religion, which I am come into the world to teach mankind, to be as much changed in his disposition and practice, as if he was to be new born.”

Nicodemus, not expecting our Saviour to answer to his thoughts, puts a very absurd construction upon his words. Our Saviour condescends to explain the metaphor he had used, and to inform *Nicodemus*, that he meant it in a spiritual and emblematical, not a literal sense. He then goes on to the following purpose:

“If you mean to enter upon the spiritual religion, which I teach, you must not be surprised, that I lay the founda-

tion of my doctrine, not in a set of new ceremonies and outward observances, but in a total change of heart and life. For you must resolve upon giving up your present secular schemes, and becoming indifferent to all worldly pursuits, when they come in competition with real internal goodness."

He afterwards gives *Nicodemus* some account of his mission, and design in coming into the world: and concludes with condemning the obstinacy and carnality of the people and of *Nicodemus* himself among the rest, and shows, that his and their prejudices in favour of their errors, and attachment to their vices, were the cause of their opposition to his pure and spiritual doctrine. *Nicodemus* being only a *little more* inquisitive, and having a *little more* candour in his disposition, than the rest of the *Jewish* doctors; but not enough to carry through all difficulties and trials, is treated thus plainly and roughly by him, who exactly knew what was in every man, and not finding the religion of *Jesus* to his mind, leaves him and returns to his former profession, without having any good effect wrought upon him by the conversation, that we know of, except that he seems, by one instance in the sequel of the history, to be more inclinable to favour him than the rest of his fraternity. A character, this of *Nicodemus*, fatally common among Christians. To be in the way toward the kingdom of God, and yet, through a defect of some one necessary virtue, or a fatal attachment to some one favourite vice, to come short of it at last.

To return, How ready is he to find an excuse for the unpardonable stupidity of his disciples, in suffering themselves the last time they were to enjoy his company before his death, to be overcome with sleep, while they saw the anguish their Master was in, which, in a Being of his power and intrepidity, might justly have alarmed them with the expectation of somewhat to the highest degree terrible and shocking! And good reason there is to conclude, that the approach of death was not all that produced in him those dreadful emotions of horror and amazement. Does he not suffer the traitor himself to follow him for several years to partake of his counsels, to hear his Divine doctrine? Does he not forewarn him of the wickedness he had in his heart, and give him all advantage for relenting?

Even when he advances to betray his Lord with a treacherous embrace, does he strike him dead with a word? Though they all make their escape, and leave him in his extremity, does he punish or even reproach them, after his resurrection, for their unfaithfulness to him, for whom they ought to have laid down their lives, who came to lay down his life for them?

Let the noble and heroic behaviour of the Prince of Peace, toward his wicked and implacable enemies, be considered. How does he show himself above their utmost malice! Does he not go on still in his calm dignity, and equal goodness, in spite of their utmost fury, till he has finished his ministry, and the time comes for him to return to the state of happiness and glory he had left? When their hour and the power of darkness prevails, with what meekness does he give himself up into their cruel hands! When they come to apprehend him, and struck with the majesty which surrounded him, fly back and fall before him to the ground, he exerts no vindictive power against them, though he could with a word have struck them so as they should have risen no more, and could have called legions of angels, who would have thought it their honour to have been commanded to interpose for his deliverance. But though he wrought a miracle to avoid regal power, he works none to escape an infamous death.

Behold the innocent arraigned before the guilty! The most amiable of characters treated worse than the most odious deservers at any human hands. The future Judge of Mankind brought before a human tribunal. He who did no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile, sentenced to die, and a robber and murderer pardoned. They, for whom the Saviour of the World came from heaven to give his precious life, long to imbrue their hands in the very blood, which was to be shed for them. O the diabolical fury of hypocrisy detected! Crucify him; crucify him! cry the bloody Priests, and the blinded people echo back the maddening voice. But will the Lord of life suffer himself to be spoiled of life by a set of miserable worms, whom he can crush to nothing in a moment? No. He lays it down of himself; no man takes, or can take it from him. He came to lay down his life for the life of the world. And if daring mortals will be so impious as to stretch

forth unhallowed hands against him, the decree of heaven will nevertheless be fulfilled, and they, who will heap damnation upon themselves, shall be left to the destruction they have sought. Yet hold your butchering hands, unthinking wretches. Or if his sacred blood must stream to wash a sinful world from guilt; let the High Priest with reverence offer him on the altar, the true, the last, the only effectual sacrifice for sin. So shall you, and your nation, escape the destruction which hangs over you.—They harden their rocky hearts against all sense of pity. They urge their own destruction. Let not then the eye of day behold so black a deed. Let heaven hide its face from such a sight. They pierce those hands whose salutary touch gave health and strength, and those feet which went about doing good. They stretch him on the cross. They stop their ears against the groans of suffering innocence. But the inanimate earth feels, and shakes with horror at the impiety of her inhabitants. The rocks burst in pieces, and nature is in agonies. The sleep of death is broken by the convulsion. The graves open their throats, and cast up the ghastly dead. An unseen hand rends the veil of the temple, and exposes the holy place, into which it was forbidden to enter. His agonies now grow stronger. His pangs redouble. The choirs of angels mourn the sufferings of their Prince. Hell is moved, and the dæmons enjoy a short triumph. Darkness covers the face of nature, and chaos seems ready to swallow all. He calls on his God and Father, the witness of his innocence, and approver of his obedience. He prays for those by whose murdering hands he dies. He raises his voice aloud. His strength is yet entire. But having finished the work, and the prophecies being accomplished, by his own original power over his own life, he resigns his soul into the hands of the Supreme Father of All, and, bowing his head, expires. He dies; and yet his murderers live. His death raises a guilty world to life. Tremendous mystery! Not to be explained, till the veil of time be rent asunder, and eternity exposes to view the amazing scene of Divine Government, too vast for mortal comprehension. Glory to God in the highest! On earth peace, and good-will towards men!

CONCLUSION.

AT last I have in great weakness, brought this long labour to a period. On reviewing the whole, I find it very necessary to beg the candid Reader's indulgence in favour of many deficiencies; though I hope he has not found in the work, any one sentiment, by which he may have run the hazard of his being deceived or misled to his hurt. Whoever duly considers the disadvantage a writer labours under, who lives a life of constant care and labour, without ever knowing what it is to have a vacant mind, and whose hours of study are only those few, which remain after eight or ten of almost every day in the week indispensably engaged in the laborious employment of teaching, and the other cares attending the charge of youth; whoever considers this, and is, at the same time, at all a judge of the difficulty of composition; will, it is hoped, be inclinable to make allowances for any deficiencies, which may at all be pardonable. It may indeed be answered to this, That a person, whose way of life (exclusive of other disadvantage :) necessarily deprives him of that leisure and vacancy of mind which are of such consequence to a writer, had better quit that province to those, whose stations allow them more leisure and freedom from care. Perhaps this assertion may be in some measure just. And yet the gentlemen, who undertake the education of youth, do not in general scruple to bestow some time in labouring for the public. The pious and learned Dr. *Doddridge*, lately deceased, is a remarkable instance; who so husbanded the hours he chiefly borrowed from the refreshments of nature as to be able to publish six or eight times the bulk of this book. For my own part, had my circumstances in life been equal to the expence of printing this work, which never had been undertaken, if it had not been with a direct view to the advantage of the youth educated by me, who, I hope, will find it useful as an introduction to life, to study, and to moral and religious knowledge; had my circumstances, I say, been equal to the expence of printing this

book, and giving it them *gratis*; I should not have troubled the public with it; nor do I intend ever more to undertake any work of such a size.

And now, before I lay aside my pen, I beg leave earnestly to request the reader, and especially, above all others, those for whose sake this work was undertaken, to attend carefully to the few following serious remonstrances. If the Reader has persued the whole work, without receiving any benefit or improvement from it he may profit by what *still remains*, by seriously examining himself in the following manner.

“Hast thou considered, O my soul, what thou art, and for what created? Dost thou habitually think of thyself as an intelligence capable of immortality, and brought into being on purpose for endless and inconceivable happiness? Does the thought of an hereafter engage thy supreme attention? Is eternity for ever in thy view? Dost thou faithfully labour, wish, and pray, for the necessary abilities and dispositions for acting up to the dignity of thy nature, and the end of thy creation? Or dost thou trifle with what is to thee of infinite importance? Thou wouldest not surely suffer thyself to be deceived out of thy happiness! Thou wouldest not put out the eye of thy reason, and rush headlong upon destruction? Try thy prudence and sincerity, then, by comparing the diligence thou usest, and the care thou bestowest, upon the things thou knowest thyself to be sincerely attached to, with what thou thinkest sufficient for securing an eternity of happiness. Dost thou rise early and sit up late, to get a wretched pittance of the perishing wealth of this world? And dost thou wholly forget that thou hast an eternity to provide for? Is money thy first thought in the morning, and thy last at night, and the subject of every hour between? And canst thou find no vacant moment for a thought about thy great interest? Art thou ever ready, and upon the catch, to seize the empty bubbles of life, as they float along the stream of time? And dost thou let slip the only opportunity for making provision for futurity; the opportunity, which if it once escapes thee, thou knowest, a whole eternity will never more bring back? Dost thou suspect every person, and watch over every circumstance, that may any way affect thy worldly affairs? And dost thou

take up with any security, or with absolute uncertainty, to found thy prospect of future happiness upon? Thou dost not count it prudence to say to thyself, riches will flow in of themselves; I shall of course rise to a station of honour.—And dost thou think it wise to say, God is merciful; he will not punish my neglect of him, or my rebellion against him: though both scripture and reason show it to be impossible, that vice should in the end be happy? Or dost thou pretend to have found out a new way to happiness! Dost thou propose to outwit Infinite wisdom? Thou canst not surely think of being happy, without being virtuous? Thou canst not dream of a rational creature's coming to happiness under the government of a Being of infinite purity, while his whole nature is depraved and polluted by vice? Does any wise prince pardon a rebellious subject, while he continues in a state of rebellion? Dost thou expect that the infinitely wise Governor of the Universe should, for love of thee, new-model his august œconomy, reverse his unchangeable laws, and take an enemy to all good into his bosom? Dost thou even imagine it possible, that He, whose nature is unchangeably good, should ever change so, as to become the friend of vice? Hast thou any conception of the possibility of happiness being the consequence of vice? Canst thou conceive, that heaven would be heaven to a being whose faculties were overturned, whose moral sense was perverted; to whose mind goodness had no beauty; to whose understanding truth and virtue were no adequate objects; who could receive no joy from the contemplation of moral excellence? Who would prefer a sensual gratification to the beatific vision of God? And dost thou found thy hopes of future happiness upon a direct impossibility? Dost thou assure thyself of obtaining what it is clearly impossible thou ever shouldst obtain, and what if thou dost not obtain, thou art utterly undone? But thou sayest, that this is not thy dreadful case. That thou proceedest upon a more prudent scheme, in a matter, upon which thy all depends.

“Dost thou, then make it thy supreme care to perform thy whole duty, without neglecting the least article of it, however disagreeable to thy temper, or turn of mind; and to avoid every vice, every temptation to every vice, every

appearance of every vice, however grateful to thy depraved disposition? Dost thou constantly watch over thyself; dost thou suspect every other person, lest his example or influence, mislead thee? Do thou often, and regularly, meditate on thy ways, and examine thy heart and thy life? Dost thou perfectly know thy own weakness? Hast thou all thy infirmities engraven on thy remembrance? Are thy sins ever before thee? Dost thou dread vice more than poverty, pain, or death? Dost thou carefully restrain every passion and appetite within due bounds? Art thou afraid of the fatal allurements of riches, honours, and pleasures? Dost thou indulge them sparingly? Dost thou enjoy the gratifications of sense with fear and trembling? Art thou ever suspicious of thy frail nature, on this dangerous side? Dost thou carefully steer clear of the rocks, on which multitudes have struck, and made shipwreck of their souls? Or dost thou, in insolent confidence of thy own fancied strength of mind, dally with temptation, and play upon the brink of vice and destruction? Dost thou habitually labour to make sure of keeping within bounds? Dost thou often deny thyself, rather than run the smallest hazard of offending? Dost thou live such a life of temperance, that thou couldest at any time enjoy the satisfaction of a peaceful mind, and a good conscience, though at once deprived of all the gaieties and amusements of affluence? Or dost thou give thyself up wholly to ease and indolence; to luxury and intemperance; to pleasure and folly? Dost thou take thy swing, without restraint or measure, of every lawless enjoyment; as if the present state were never to come to an end; as if thou hadst been created only for pleasure and idleness; as if thou thoughtest of a future state, not of a spiritual existence; of perpetual improvement in wisdom and goodness; and of sublime employment and action; but of a *Mahometan* paradise, as an endless scene of luxury and sensuality? If thou art in good earnest resolved to conquer thy unruly passions, to restrain thy sensual appetites, and to regulate the motions of thy mind according to the dictates of reason and conscience, and the more sure directions of Divine revelation, thou wilt study *thyself*, more than all the sciences; thou wilt often retire within thyself; thou wilt be ever finding in thy own mind something to regulate and redress; thou wilt not fly from thyself; thou

wilt not be continually racking thy invention to find out somewhat to drown thought and reflection; thou wilt beg of thy friends to hold up to thee the mirror of faithful remonstrance; thou wilt not court the slavish flatterer to pour through thy ears the luscious poison, which stupifies the mind, and renders it insensible of its own faults, and blind to its own follies. Thou wilt labour to work into the very essence of thy soul, the virtues, which are indispensably necessary for bringing and keeping it under due regulation. Consideration, humility, self-knowledge, self-reverence! These will be the great lessons, which it will employ thy life to learn. And thou wilt wish for the life of a patriarch to study them fully and to reduce them to practice.

“Again, dost thou, O my soul, harbour any thought of malice, envy or revenge against thy fellow-creature? Dost thou stand so little in awe of Him who made thy fellow-creature and thee, who will at last judge both him and thee, and to whom alone vengeance belongs; dost thou fear him so little, as to think of breaking loose upon his creature in his presence? Hast thou considered, that, if thy Maker do not show mercy upon thee, thou hadst better never have been born? And dost thou hope for mercy from infinite Purity, who (thyself an offender) canst think of refusing mercy to thy brother? Dost thou imagine, that in a future state of perfect benevolence, there will be any place found for the sordid mind, whose affections are shrunk and contracted to the narrow circle of self and family? Dost thou think there will be any happiness for thee in a state of perfect harmony and love, unless thou work into thy very soul the god-like virtue of unbounded benevolence? Thou canst not think a disposition to cruelty, to deceit, to anger, hatred, or revenge; thou canst not think a mind given to lowcraft, to narrow ill-will, or to sordid selfishness, can be found fit for a state of happiness founded on universal love and kindness? Thou canst not imagine that He, whose very nature is love, will give happiness to one, whose mind is deformed with angry and malevolent passions. Thou canst not expect, that he will by giving admittance to one ill-disposed mind, render the happiness of innumerable glorified beings precarious. Nor canst thou even conceive the possibility of a mind’s being *capable* of

happiness which has not in itself so much as the foundation, or first principle, on which happiness depends; a temper qualified for enjoying happiness. If therefore thou hast any thought of being hereafter a member of that universal blessed society of chosen spirits, of the excellent ones of the earth, of souls formed to love, and peace, and harmony; thou wilt set thyself in earnest to enrich thy mind with the heavenly graces of meekness, patience, forbearance, and benevolence; and in the exercise of these virtues thou wilt find joys inconceivable to the sordid sons of earth; thou wilt endeavour to be to thy fellow-creatures, even in this world, a guardian angel, and a god.

“ Dost thou, O my soul, consider thyself as the creature of Omnipotence, formed to fill a place, and contribute thy share toward carrying on a scheme for the happiness of multitudes? Dost thou think, there is no duty owing by thee in consequence of the honour, and the favour, done thee, in calling thee forth from thy original nothing, and giving thee an opportunity to act an illustrious part, and rise in the creation? Canst thou think of thyself as capable of knowing, fearing, loving, and adoring the Supreme excellence, and yet as no way obliged to any of these duties? Does not, on the contrary, the very capacity infer the necessity of performing them? Canst thou go on from day to day, and from year to year, without ever raising a thought to thy Creator? Hast thou no ambition to enoble thy mind with the contemplation of infinite excellence? Hast thou no desire to imitate in thy low sphere the All-perfect pattern? Dost thou think ever to go to God, if thou dost not love God? The very Heathen will tell thee, such a hope is absurd! Dost thou think thy Creator will raise thee to the enjoyment of himself against thy own inclination, and in spite of thy impiety? Should he now transport thee to the third heavens, dost thou imagine thou wouldst find any enjoyment there, with a mind sunk in sordid sensuality, deformed by vicious passions, and wholly insensible of the sublime enjoyments of a state altogether spiritual. As ever thou wouldst come to bliss hereafter, and avoid utter destruction, do not deceive thyself in a matter of infinite consequence, and where a mistake will be irrecoverable. Thou knowest, that as the tree falls, so it will lie; that as death leaves thee, so judgment will find thee; that there,

will be no miracle wrought in thy favour, to *make* thee fit for future happiness ; but that thou wilt of course be disposed of according to what thou shalt be *found* fit for ; that thy future state will be what thou thyself hast made it. That therefore to think of passing thy life in vice and folly, and to hope to be waisted to future happiness upon the wings of a few lazy and ineffectual wishes and prayers in old age, or on a death-bed, is to expect to be rewarded, not according to thy works, but to thy presumptuous hopes. Which is inconsistent both with reason and scripture. It is to think to attain the greatest of all prizes, without any trouble. Yet thou knowest that even the trifles of this world are not attained by wishing ; but by industry. It is to imagine, that the infinitely wise Governor of the world will be put off in a manner which no earthly superior would regard otherwise than as the highest insolence. Set thyself therefore, if thou hast any thought, in good earnest to disengage thy attention from the visionary delusions, and sordid gratifications, of the present state ; and to fix thy affections on the only object that is worthy of them, or will prove adequate to them. Acquaint thyself with his perfections. Solace thyself with his love. Prostrate every power and every faculty before him, in humble adoration, and self-annihilation. Trust to him (in well-doing) for the supply of every want, for the life that now is, and for eternity. Sacrifice every favourite passion, and every craving appetite, every prospect in life, with family, and friends, and life itself, to his obedience. Never think thou hast done enough, or canst do too much, to gain his approbation. For if thou dost not secure that, it will be of no consequence to thee, if all the princes and potentates on earth frown upon thee.

“Hast thou considered, O my soul, the stupendous scene which Revelation opens before thee ? Hast thou attended, to the view there given of the dignity of thy nature ? It is to restore thee, and thy unhappy offending fellow-creatures, to pardon, to virtue, and to happiness, that Heaven came down to tabernacle with men ; that the Lord of angels and archangels humbled himself to die by the hands, which himself, by the power of the Father, created. It was to raise thee, and such as thee, mean and wretched as thou art at present, to greatness and glory, inconceivable not

only to thyself, but to the brightest seraph in heaven; it was for this, that he, whom the celestial hosts obey, humbled himself to a station, and underwent sufferings, which thou wouldest think thyself (guilty as thou art) hardly treated in being exposed to. And canst thou, O my soul, allow thyself to think of vice as slight, or venial, which to prevent, and whose fatal effects to cure, thou knowest what an apparatus has by Infinite Wisdom been thought necessary? Canst thou think of any thing as desirable, besides virtue; which alone will, through the Divine mercy, secure universal happiness? Canst thou think of any thing as terrible but vice, which, if suffered to prevail, would unhinge the creation? Wilt thou not attend to the only lesson, thou art placed in this state of discipline to learn,—Obedience? Wilt thou shut thine eyes, and stop thine ears, against every object around thee? For every object teaches that important lesson: Wilt thou pervert thy own understanding, and blind thy own conscience? For the excellency of virtue, and the ruinous tendency of vice, are written upon every faculty of the mind in characters indelible: Wilt thou, to crown all, to seal thy own destruction, and heap on thyself damnation, wilt thou neglect or oppose the immediate call of Heaven itself, warning thee to flee from the wrath to come, and to work out with fear and trembling thy own salvation? Thou canst not think thyself sure of happiness, without taking the least thought about it; Thou canst not imagine it absolutely impossible that thou shouldest come to destruction: If that were the case, to what purpose was conscience placed in the human breast? To what end were the awful warnings of sickness and pain, of judgments from heaven on guilty nations, and death, the bitter draught to be drunk by every individual of the species; for what end were those warnings sent, if future happiness were the unavoidable and appointed fate of all mankind promiscuously, the vicious as well as the virtuous, the impious as well as the devout? As to revelation, it is the awful voice of God himself. Hear how kind, and yet how solemn its remonstrances!

“Hear, O Heavens! give ear, O Earth! To thee, O Man, I call! My voice is to the Sons of men. The Judge of all the earth will do right. He will by no means clear

the (impertinently) wicked. He is a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, or look upon evil. The wicked shall not stand in his sight. All that forget God shall be turned into hell. The soul that sins, it shall die. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. For every idle word men shall be brought into judgment. If any man bridles not his tongue, that man's religion is vain. Let every one who names the name of *Christ* depart from iniquity. Let him cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God. Let him keep himself unspotted from the world; for if any man love the world, and the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Let him avoid every appearance of evil. Let him lay aside every weight, and the sin that does most easily beset him, and run the race set before him. Let him pluck out right eyes, and cut off right hands; that is, root out vicious inclinations, though as dear to him, and as hard to part with. Let him resolve faithfully to practise whatsoever things are true, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report. Let him study the virtues of humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, resignation, fortitude. Let him deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and resolve to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Let him have respect to all the Divine commandments; for whoever (habitually) offends in *one* point, is guilty against the *whole* law; as he thereby insults the authority which framed the whole. If any man will be a disciple of *Christ*, let him deny himself, and take up his cross (if he be called to it) and follow him. For he who does not hate (that is, overlook) father and mother, and wife and children, and houses and lands, for his sake, is not worthy of him. And whoever, in the worst of times, denies *Christ*, and his religion, before men, him will *Christ* deny before his Father and his holy angels. For the disciples of *Christ* must not fear them who can only kill the body, but after that can do no more. He has forewarned them whom they shall fear; even Him, who, after he has killed the body, can likewise destroy the soul in hell. Let the Christian strive to enter in at the strait gate; For strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it; and wide is the gate, and broad the way which

leads to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat. Let him give diligence to make his calling and election sure. Let him keep his loins girded, and his lamp burning, like those who wait for the coming of their lord. Let him stand fast in the faith without wavering. Let him take the whole armour of God, since he must wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. Let him add to his faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and godliness, and benevolence. Let him be careful that all those virtues be in him ; and that they abound and increase. Let him resolve to go on to perfection, forgetting past attainments, and reaching forward to the things which are before, or those degrees of virtue which he has not yet attained ; let him endeavour to walk as *Christ* walked ; (not form his character according to the example of men of the world) let him be a follower of God ; (not a fashion) let him endeavour to be perfect, even as his heavenly Father is perfect. Let him not be contented with ordinary degrees of goodness ; but take care that his righteousness exceed that of scribes and pharisees, and formal professors. And let him resolve, in spite of all opposition, to persevere to the end, fighting the good fight of faith, and working out his own salvation. For the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him ; and he shall sit on the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations. And he shall separate the good from the wicked. And he shall say to the good on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And on the wicked on his left, he shall pass the dreadful and irreversible sentence, depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

“ Here is what ought to the highest degree to alarm thee, O my soul, if thou hast not given thyself up to a spirit of stupidity and insensibility. Consider, in time, ere it be too late, what thou hast to do. Here is life and death, the blessing and the curse, fairly set before thee for thy choice. If thou deceivest thyself, thou alone will be the loser ; and thy loss will be irretrievable. For it is the loss, not of fading wealth, or momentary pleasure, but of endless happiness and inconceivable glory. It is the loss

of thyself. And what wilt thou find to make thee up for the loss of thyself? Put then the case the most that can be to the advantage of the choice of virtue; still thou wilt find virtue to be thy true wisdom, and thy only interest; and the choice of vice to be the very madness of folly. Suppose, on one hand, thou wert sure thou couldest, by various wicked arts, attain the full enjoyment of every earthly delight; that thou wert certain of gaining the empire of the world, and of revelling in wealth and wantonness, like the leviathan in the deep, for a whole century of years: If for this thou wert to sell thy everlasting happiness; if for this thou wert to expose thyself to utter destruction, where would be the gain? Rather, would not the loss be infinite, and the folly of choosing it infinite? Suppose, on the other hand, that virtue and religion absolutely required thy submitting to poverty, affliction, and persecution for life, and to the fiery trial of martyrdom at last; to consider, whether thou oughtest in prudence to choose the light afflictions of the present state, which are but for a moment, and are to be followed with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory; or to throw thyself into the hideous ruin and perdition, which awaits the wicked hereafter; to consider or hesitate which of these ought to be chosen, would it not be a folly infinitely greater than his, who should hesitate whether he ought to throw himself out of a window when the house is on fire, or to take to the boat when the ship was sinking? Suppose, that the future issue of virtue and vice respectively were in some measure doubtful, instead of being certain: Suppose it were possible, that vice might, by some inconceivable means, come to escape, and that there were any appearance of common sense in imagining that it might so happen, that virtue might miss of its reward hereafter; who would hesitate a moment, whether he ought to choose what he knows he cannot long enjoy at any rate, and to reject what, if he attains it, will hold to eternity; whether he ought to avoid afflictions, which he is certain must, in a very few years at most, be over; or to make sure of avoiding a punishment, which, if it come upon him, will be lasting, and severe beyond all imagination. Upon any principle, the choice of a vicious course is apparently to the highest degree foolish and desperate. But taking things according

to their true state, that is, choosing vice, which is the disease of the mind, the bane of peace and happiness even in this life, and rejecting virtue. which, except in the rare and unusual case of persecution, is its own reward, even in the present state; acting in direct opposition to the conviction of conscience, to the remonstrances of the wise and good of all ages, and to the voice of nature, and of Divine revelation itself!—All for the sake of what is vanity and vexation when attained, and uncertain beforehand whether at all attainable; but certainly not to be enjoyed long, if attained! To give up a happiness, certain, lasting, and immense—not for the actual enjoyment, but for the bare expectation of a perishing advantage!—to sell one's soul—not for the possession of a vanity, but for the uncertain prospect of a vanity!—to give up heaven and brave damnation—not for a reality, but for a dream!—for the hopes of a dream. What words, what tongue of men or angels can express the desperation of this madness! Yet this is the wisdom of reasoning men. This is the prudence of the children of this world.”

Let the reader make it his constant practice in this manner to examine himself, with a care proportioned to the importance of the worth of an immortal soul. And would to God that the whole human species could have been brought to the wisdom of valuing themselves according to their worth. And that it were possible, in a consistency with the freedom of moral agents, that no one individual of the human, or any other rank of intelligences, should utterly perish; but that every rational mind that has been blest with existence, might at last attain the end of its existence, the beatific enjoyment of its Creator.

THE END.

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