A

DISSERTATION,

PRACTICAL AND CONCILIATORY,

IN THREE PARTS,

INTENDED TO DEFINE, ILLUSTRATE, AND RECONCILE WITH EACH OTHER, THE FOLLOWING THREE CLASSES OF OBJECTS;

1. PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.
2. POLITICS AND RELIGION.
3. PRIVATE OPINION AND ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNION.

By DANIEL CHAPMAN.

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DEDICATION.

THOUGH this Dissertation is avowedly intended for universal circulation and permanent use, so far as it is really calculated to be of universal and practical utility; yet the Author is not without a conviction, that it is as precisely and seasonably adapted to the present, critical state of his native country in every point of view, as though it had been prepared solely and expressly for this very purpose and period. To all classes of his countrymen, therefore, and to them as representatives of the great human family, this first fruit of his long and laborious application to subjects of transcendent interest and importance, is, with every sentiment of gratitude and obligation to God, and with every feeling of patriotic love and devotion to the inhabitants of his native clime, dedicated. In performing this act of Dedication, the Author is conscious of being infinitely, eternally indebted to his Creator and Redeemer, and of owing to his species the entire consecration to their service of all that he possesses, and all that he can command: he therefore now solemnly subscribes his name, as the visible pledge of his intention to aim at the full accomplishment of whatever God shall providentially appoint, and man legitimately require.

DANIEL CHAPMAN.

January, 1836.

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PART I.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

DISSERTATION,

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PART FIRST.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

IS all Philosophy erroneous, contemptible, or prejudicial? Is it utterly incapable of being either defined with accuracy, or applied to purposes of real utility? Is there no incorrectness, is there no illiberality in denouncing all philosophers fools and knaves, enemies equally to all institutions of a religious or an ecclesiastical nature? Is there any clear and substantial evidence in support of the position, that Philosophy is more favourable to the spread of a poisonous infidelity, than to the diffusion of orthodox Christianity? And if there could be contrary evidence adduced, sufficient to rebut the heavy charge implied in such an insinuation, is there

no link of common affinity, is there no bond of mutual friendship, by which a sound Philosophy and a correct Theology might be united in a state of most efficient subserviency to the best interests of each other, recommending each other with the greatest cordiality, and propagating each other with the greatest facility and rapidity? Properly to determine these essential points, it may not be useless or uninteresting to enquire:

1. What is Philosophy?—what is Theology?

2. What is the peculiar province, the exclusive and proper function of each?

3. On what principles, and to what extent is their mutually beneficial incorporation with each other practicable and desirable?

1. What is Philosophy, what is that celebrated science which has been so extravagantly eulogised by some, so malignantly anathematised by others,—extolled by its advocates as divine, degraded, detested by its opponents as scarcely entitled to claim any other origin and epithet than infernal? What then are, in reality, its capabilities and its functions, its objects and its characteristics? Is it capable of being precisely ascertained, circumstantially defined? Or is it something so exceedingly airy, vague, and evasive, that any apprehension or definition of it which might be attempted, would only issue in disappointment and chagrin, by involving obscurity in

still greater darkness, and confusion in still greater perplexity? And if there existed any rational hopes of success in attempting this description of so controverted a science, whether ought we to consult the moderns or the ancients as the preferable sources of information, or ought rather to decline the decision of so important an enquiry by any special reference to illustrious periods and favourite authorities, and ought impartially to determine the point by a deliberate survey and a comprehensive, comparative view of the whole? In adopting the latter of these expedients, we discover, that the Philosophy of antiquity, endeavours to render her superiority incontestable by exhibiting a dazzling list of illustrious and venerable names, by constructing a stupendous monument of learned and voluminous treatises, and by alleging in her favour the predominance and extent of that intellectual empire which, previously to the Reformation of Religion by Luther, she had founded in almost all the most civilized, and in all the evangelized nations upon earth. Modern Philosophy, whose arrogance, though quite sufficient, yet by no means exceeds that of ancient Philosophy, justly boasts literary geniuses of still greater celebrity, accumulates volumes on the subject still more numerous and ponderous, and stretches before our vision an intellectual empire whose foundations are deeper and more solid, whose superstructure is more substantial and magnificent,

and whose extent and duration are likely to prove commensurate with all the boundaries and the revolutions of the globe. Philosophy has, indeed, been the subject of perpetual fluctuations. Its constitution and its consistency have been repeatedly altered and impaired by the boldest innovations. The novelty of theory has, in some periods of its progress, invested it with charms of the most powerful, ostentatious character. At other seasons, the stalest insipidity seems to have rendered its cup rather one of nausea than of delight. Popularity has, in some instances, given it an amazing impulse, a most rapid and extensive diffusion. In other instances, it has fallen into a degree of discredit and even contempt, from which it appeared scarcely possible that it could ever be retrieved. All these variations in its aspect and character have unquestionably arisen, in some measure, from those egregious errors, senseless extravagances, perplexing intricacies, and obvious contradictions, with which the science was, in its comparative infancy, and with which it has, during some of even the maturer stages of its existence, been justly chargeable; and arisen also, in some measure, from those terrible alarms, groundless apprehensions, and that inveterate antipathy, which some excellent and pious, though probably, in this respect, superficial and mistaken judges, have consequently entertained. How just soever these views and emotions might

at one period be, the season of extreme danger, I apprehend, is passed; and the time, I think, has arrived, at which genuine Philosophy may be rendered most essentially and extensively serviceable to the cause of divine truth. The reasons for this opinion are simple and obvious. Philosophy is no longer allowed to indulge in those dreams and flights of delirious fancy which formerly gave it such an air of wildness and disorder. The boundless extravagances of whimsical theory, have been exploded by the substitution of judicious observation and patient experiment, as the only sure test of philosophical accuracy. The principles of the science, have been accurately analysed and strictly defined; its processes, judiciously conducted and impartially investigated; its deductions, closely scrutinized and scientifically arranged; its projected theories, coolly considered and dispassionately tried; its actual results, carefully collected and beautifully harmonised; and its whole aspect and character, incalculably improved, and rendered incomparably more deserving of that which we consider the proper definition of Philosophy:—the science of ethics and of physics, the former deduced by enlightened reason, the latter by correct observation and real experiment.

If this is Philosophy, what is Theology? what is that science which comprehends Deity with all

other spiritual agencies, and eternity with all other periods of existence, past, present, and future, within its boundless range, — that science which professes to determine infallibly, and to fix irrevocably, the interests of morality, and the destinies of immortality,—that science in comparison with which all others appear, in point of dignity, extent, and value, trivial and useless? Are, then, the ideas of men on theological subjects perfectly coincident, or are they not rather infinitely diversified? Are their most celebrated oracles of information, distinguished by extraordinary clearness and consistency? Are they not rather obscure and contradictory in the extreme? Are not the histories of all ages and nations unanimous in suggesting and corroborating this fact, that of all subjects Theology is that on which men meditate most deeply, conjecture most boldly, dictate most confidently, glow most intensely, persecute most fiercely, contend most obstinately, and differ most irreconcileably? Consult atheism, infidelity, idolatry, superstition, fanaticism. What discordance of theory, what contrarieties of practice, what blasphemy and absurdity, what inconsistency and irrationality, characterise these opposing systems! Had we no other sources of instruction and encouragement, we might justly abandon ourselves to the most reckless indifference and despair.

Atheism annihilates Deity, exterminates Provi-

dence, extinguishes immortality as the ignis fatuus of a bewildered imagination, stigmatises virtue as a species of contemptible weakness, designates vice the noblest assertion of natural freedom, denounces the hopes and apprehensions of eternal retribution as the reveries of disordered fancy, adopts as faith the belief of what is totally incredible, and eulogises as the highest exercise of reason the admission of what is most egregiously irrational, namely—that effects, the most stupendous as well as the most minute, the most extraordinary as well as the most common, may exist without a cause;—that order, universal as well as particular, intellectual as well as physical, is the result of chance;—that beauty, which indicates the most peculiar and delicate arrangement of dissimilar parts, that harmony, which exhibits the mutual adaptation of innumerable parts to the formation of one magnificent and subservient whole, are mere casualties;—that incipient existence, which the animal and vegetable worlds equally experience as the result of procreative influence, and that mortality or dissolution, which all the subjects of these worlds inevitably undergo as the consequence of exhausted animation, are perfectly consistent with the idea of their unoriginated existence from all eternity, and their interminable succession through a boundless futurity. Atheism, therefore, treats every other species, or, rather, every species of Theology, as the effusions of dri-

velling insanity, originating in the awful fictions of priestly avarice, and exhibiting the extreme folly of attributing supreme importance to purely imaginary existences. And were not the atheist himself, most obviously, a consummate and most impudent fool in pretending to deny his perception of what is most palpably prominent, and in audaciously contradicting the universal, incontestable evidence of all sense and reason, he might be considered as entitled to some degree of attention, even were it merely to express our indignation at his unparalleled impiety, and our refusal to entertain even for a moment the probability of his blasphemous assumptions. But the monument which atheism erects, instantly proves its own sepulchre; the breath which atheism breathes, instantly blasts its own existence.

Idolatry, by plunging into the opposite extreme, completely changes the scene. She multiplies gods so prodigiously, that the whole universe swarms with her multifarious deities, demi-gods, and genii, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, in their origin, residence, and character. Pervading all the departments of nature, and exercising their superintendence over all the objects of creation, her divinities ripple in the stream, and wave in the foliage of the trees, and crawl in the vermin of the earth, and inhabit the forms of brutes, and glitter in the stars of heaven, and preside over the seasons

of the year, and the alternation of day and night, and adapt their names, characters, and functions, to all the infinitely diversified objects and occurrences of the universe. But so vague and senseless are the conjectures which she indulges, so purely ideal are the worlds of mythological existence and adventure which she calls into being, so monstrous are the absurdities of the creed which she requires us to subscribe, so abominable is the filthiness with which she contaminates our persons and imaginations, so disgustingly vicious and revolting are the beings whom she requires us to adore with rites of pollution, and deeds of blood; that virtue, alarmed at the immoral tendency of idolatry, and reason, shocked at the violence done to her plainest and most general principles and precepts, express their common and irreconcileable antipathy to such a system of delusion and impiety. Idolatry renders herself irrational and contemptible by the attributes and honours with which she invests the deified fictions of her prolific imagination, and by the extraordinary debasement of intellect, and magnificence of rites and ceremonies, with which she expresses her veneration for these sacred, — cursed nonentities.

Superstition and idolatry, which are essentially the same, differ chiefly in this respect: idolatry delights most in what is visible, tangible, external; superstition manifests a stronger predilection for

what is invisible, immaterial, internal; the former aiming at the gratification of the senses, the latter studiously endeavouring to interest the feelings and affections. Superstition divests idolatry of those circumstances which may in some instances have given her a peculiar charm, and renders the shapeless creatures of her own gloomy fancy horrific in the extreme, by clothing them with all the attributes of malevolence, secrecy, cruelty, and terror. She trembles exceedingly at the displeasure, she murderously tortures and sacrifices herself to secure the savage favour, of those deified abstractions which she has conceived solely to gratify her unaccountable propensity to venerate the terrible and inscrutable. If, therefore, there exists any difference between idolatry and superstition, it consists chiefly in this,—that the latter is the least entertaining and the most ridiculous; and the chief difference between atheism and both these systems, consists mainly in this distinction:—atheism professes to believe there exists no God, whilst idolatry and superstition either adore gods that actually have no existence, or worship the true God in so corrupt and degraded a manner, that the supreme excellence of Jehovah, and the genuine rites of religion, are completely lost, are virtually annihilated, by their indiscriminate association, their impious amalgamation with other deities and objects of superstitious devotion.

Infidelity, rising a step higher than her predecessors, or at least affecting to treat them with indignation and contempt, spurns the absurdities of atheism, laughs at the buffoonery of idolatry, and exposes to ridicule the errors and horrors of superstition. She has, however, a favourite idol of her own, which she invests with a supremacy and a sovereignty that set all competition and contradiction at defiance. She exalts human reason into a divinity precisely of this character. At the shrine of this internal goddess, she sacrifices the infallibility, the veracity of Deity himself, — whatever she deems incomprehensible, improbable, or false; whilst she respects as infallible, and obeys as supremely authoritative, the oracular decisions of mere reason,—of reason blinded, stupified, confounded, distracted by this species of impious self-adoration. Having, therefore, infinitely degraded the attributes of Deity by preposterously transferring them to his own erring, misguided reason, the infidel can with very little propriety consider himself as essentially different from the sottish atheist, the brutal idolater, or the superstitious devotee.

Fanaticism, kindling into a violent rage at this impious prostitution of every thing sacred and excellent, demolishes, with one stroke of her indignant fury, and scatters in the dust, all those systems of madly perverted ingenuity, of absurdly deified rationality; whilst she declares, as enthusiastically,

that her own internal impulses constitute the only infallible criterion of right and wrong, of what is acceptable or offensive to the Deity; though it is perfectly obvious, that these internal impulses are of so capricious, variable, and contradictory a character, as to appear wholly undefinable, incapable of being reduced to any thing like a rational, consistent, systematic form.

So egregiously erroneous and palpably absurd in sentiment, so harshly discordant and incoherent in principle and profession, so highly derogatory to the dignity of God and his creatures, and prejudicial, yea, fatal to the best interests of the human race in every situation and period of their existence, are all those systems of error in theory and practice, and all those ten thousand modifications and intermixtures of these systems, which uninspired and unenlightened reason has devised to silence the clamorous accusations of a guilty conscience, to lull guilt into a state of temporary insensibility, and to evade the restrictions and sanctions of a pure and perfect morality. Nor can these absurdities and hostilities ever be expected to cease, or universal consistency and harmony be expected to prevail, until that system of religion is universally adopted which divine revelation suggests,—a system incontrovertibly established by prophecy and miracle, by argumentation and experience, and which, therefore,

may be characterised in general terms as being—that system of faith, obedience, and devotion which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments inculcate, and which exhibits all the attributes and resources of Deity in a state of most wonderful and glorious, mediatorially compassionate, and morally regenerative adaptation to all the circumstances and existence of man, of fallen and depraved, guilty and condemned, penitent and believing, obedient and devoted man. And as this definition of Theology is perfectly coincident with that of Christianity, we shall not hesitate, should occasion require, to use these terms as synonymous, or at least sufficiently so to be perfectly interchangeable in the course of this discussion.

2. If these definitions of Philosophy and Theology are correct, what is the peculiar province, the exclusive and proper function of each? Philosophy selects the department of nature; Theology, the department of grace; and in both these departments, moral as well as physical, Philosophy endeavours most strenuously to ascertain the rule, and to discover the nature and extent of its violation; Theology, having precisely ascertained these essential points, manifests her chief anxiety respecting the means of expiating the transgressions committed, and remedying to the full extent all the various disorders observable in the rebellious and deranged

universe of God. Philosophy, therefore, confines her contemplations chiefly to such objects and beings as are obvious, ordinary, natural, human; Theology, in addition to these, comprises within the range of her investigation, all those objects and agencies that are invisible, spiritual, extraordinary, supernatural. Philosophy moves in a more limited and tangible; Theology, in a more widely-extended and diversified sphere of action and research. Philosophy examines the character, attributes, and operations of Deity, and of all the various classes of created agencies, as they are obviously exhibited in the universe at large to the eye of reason and reflection; Theology aims at a more deep, intimate, and extensive acquaintance with the respective natures, laws, and relations of these agencies, particularly as they are exhibited to her view in the government and superintendence of the world by the Providence and Spirit of God, and especially in its transcendently glorious and mysterious redemption and moral renovation by the person of his co-equal, divine, incarnate Son. Philosophy and Theology, therefore, are both equally engaged in the grandest and most sublime of all contemplations, the study of God and creation: Philosophy ranging illimitably wherever her vision, optical or intellectual, can stretch its legitimate researches,—Theology at the same time soaring enraptured through those regions of eternity and infinity, of spirituality and immortality,

which the volume of divine revelation exhibits to his view, as one boundless expanse of wisdom and goodness, of being and of love.

3. Are these kindred sciences, then, so irreconcileably hostile to each other, as to render their pacific union and amicable intercourse, impossible? Are they so diametrically opposite, or so immeasurably distant and divergent, as to render their approximation to each other, or their concentration in some common point of object or utility, impracticable? Does the possession of the one, absolutely require the renunciation of the other? Are all proficients in Christianity fools in Philosophy? Are all adepts in Philosophy fools in Christianity? Were Galilei, and Gassendi, and Descartes, and Bacon, and Leibnitz, atheists? Were Newton, and Boyle, and Pascal, and Locke, infidels? Are astronomers, and geologists, and botanists, and chemists, and naturalists, are they all unbelievers? And if they were such, could it thence be clearly demonstrated, that Philosophy has a natural and an inevitable tendency to originate infidelity? And if in any instance a tendency so deplorable has been manifested, is it not attributable solely to the depravity of human nature, which uniformly leads to the abuse or mal-appropriation of every thing intrinsically excellent, and which requires, therefore, the union of Theology with Philosophy to coun-

teract this vicious propensity? Would there, in fact, be no infidelity, were there no Philosophy? Would our knowledge of things, spiritual and divine, be increased exactly in the proportion in which our acquaintance with things, natural and human, was diminished?—yea, does not a perfect knowledge of the former, essentially include some degree of philosophical acquaintance with the latter? Was Moses disqualified by his proficiency in Egyptian literature for executing his arduous commission? Was Solomon incapacitated for the study of nature by his extraordinary qualifications? Did he not employ these unparalleled, intellectual advantages in examining with extreme care, and describing with equal accuracy, various portions of the animal and vegetable creation? Was the Apostle of the Gentiles rendered less serviceable to the Church, or less respectable in the eyes of his adherents and of his foes, by the vastness and perfection of his attainments in Grecian, Roman, and Jewish learning? Have the discoveries of Philosophy never contributed to the promotion of human comfort, sustenance, safety, or ease? Have her weapons never been advantageously wielded in defence of human rights and interests, personal, social, civil, and religious? Are there not avenues innumerable by which she devoutly re-conducts the careful observer, and the patient experimentalist, from infinitely diversified effects to their primeval,

uncreated Cause, — from universal harmony and order to the Great, First Principle of all life, and beauty, and motion? Is not ignorance, especially on those ordinary subjects with which men ought to be most familiarly acquainted, one of the most prolific sources of human degradation, oppression, imposition, and crime? Has God so magnificently exhibited to us the cabinet of universal nature, studded with stars, adorned with worlds, and animated with countless myriads of living, immortal intelligences; and has he at the same time prohibited, with the seal of his malediction, every attempt, how judiciously soever conducted, to acquire more comprehensive, correct, and devotional views of his character, by studiously inspecting, systematically classifying, and justly estimating these exhaustless treasures of his wisdom, and goodness, and love? Is there, in the whole volume of revelation, any anathema denounced, either directly or indirectly, against those who properly exercise their noblest faculties, who indefatigably improve their most favourable opportunities, in discovering and elucidating the laws, the connections, the utility, the variety, the glory, and the excellence of the universe? Is it not highly probable at least, if not easily demonstrable, that the perfect attainment of this knowledge, which might with much greater propriety be designated divine than human, is one of those respects in which the intellectual supe-

riority of celestial beings now consists, and one of those in which the superiority of our future to our present state, will ultimately and eternally consist? Is it not, therefore, evident from the whole of this minute scrutiny, that it is false Philosophy, and not the true, or true Philosophy prostituted to the basest of passions and purposes, and not true Philosophy directed to its legitimate objects and designs, that has been so deplorably prejudicial to the interests of society and religion in general, and to those of Christendom, and Christianity in particular, in all ages of the Church and of the world? But if this evil is not an irremediable one, what is that most efficient remedy which this impartial consideration of the subject, naturally suggests? Is it not simply this: That the species of Philosophy which is employed in illustrating theological subjects, ought to be the simplest, the purest, and the most solid imaginable, equally remote from all inextricable intricacy in reasoning, and all abstruse technicality in expression?

Simplicity, purity, and solidity, as opposed respectively to all intricacy and confusion, all foreign and corrupt admixture, and all wild and flimsy theory, are properties which ought ever and equally to characterise Philosophy and Theology. The native beauty and transcendent excellence, the primary design and ultimate object, the essential value and beneficial operation of both sciences, will

be most clearly perceived and most highly appreciated, the more prominent and predominant we render these properties in all our philosophical and theological speculations and discussions.

Since Philosophy extends her intellectual range through the boundless regions of being and of space; since she directs her powers of investigation to the minutest equally with the most stupendous objects and complicated arrangements,—objects and arrangements manifestly infinite in number, variety, and importance: she must inevitably experience the comparative imbecility of her faculties, and acknowledge their total inadequacy to the task of fully comprehending, of perfectly developing the whole; she must frequently find herself involved in considerable doubt and perplexity, and subjected to the necessity of substituting theory and probability for clear, sensible, mathematical demonstration; and she must occasionally, after all her most laborious and painful researches, discover, that on many subjects her knowledge is extremely presumptive, problematical, and imperfect. For omniscience is an attribute to which Philosophy has no kind of pretension. Restrictions and limits innumerable bound her enquiries in every possible direction. That difficulties, therefore, unavoidable and apparently insuperable, exist; that the theories devised for the solution of these difficulties are consequently

in many instances merely conjectural and convenient;—is a concession perfectly proper and admissible in Philosophy. But let not these inextricable difficulties, let not these adventurous theories, have any place whatever assigned them in explaining and illustrating, by the exercise of human reason, those subjects of Theology which come more properly within the range of philosophical disquisition; let those philosophical deductions only be applied to this purpose, which are corroborated by deep and patient, unprejudiced observation, by correct and judicious, repeated experiment, by universal and unanimous, physical and moral evidence. Theology has her own inscrutable mysteries; she has her own inexplicable problems; although, irrespectively of these, she communicates an immense mass of information easy of comprehension by the world universally, because level to the capacity of a child, clear as the light of the meridian sun, and in most instances equally instantaneous and irresistible in the spread of its illumination through the soul. And though I think it is highly probable, that the peace of the Church, her beauty, harmony, and prosperity, would be very greatly facilitated; and that the opposite evils, which are exceedingly deplorable and prejudicial in Christian communities, would be proportionately diminished, were these essential mysteries of our holy religion, received with the simplest assent of the mind, as matters of

pure revelation incapable of human penetration or solution; yet, if any metaphysical genius entertains so peculiarly high an opinion of his own powers, as to imagine himself capable of comprehending what all others have, by intuition or by actual investigation, found to be incomprehensible; let him conduct the discussion solely on theological principles, let him confine himself strictly within the limits of purely theological demonstration, and carefully avoid rendering mystery doubly mysterious, and darkness doubly dense, by attempting to explain the acknowledged inexplicables of Theology by having recourse to the equally, if not even more impenetrable arcana of the abstrusest Philosophy. And though it would imply a dishonourable suspicion, a conscious weakness on the part of Theology, to give her sister-science a cold, distrustful reception; yet for their mutual honour and advantage, let the principles of their intercourse and co-operation be clearly defined, and conscientiously observed.

Purity and simplicity are so closely allied to each other, that it may perhaps appear difficult to separate, or nicely to discriminate these analagous properties. Purity, however, alludes rather to the exclusion of what is extraneous; simplicity, to the avoidance of what is complex or intricate. In this point of view, purity may seem not only easily applicable, but even very essential to Philosophy,

both in its own sphere abstractedly considered, and in all the various applications of which it is capable. Indeed, when we contemplate the vastness of that range which Philosophy properly takes, and the diversity of those objects which this range embraces, we shall perceive, that the former is sufficiently wide, and that the latter are sufficiently numerous, without having this sphere immeasurably extended, and these objects endlessly multiplied, by incorporating with Philosophy what is totally foreign to its nature, and directing its researches to subjects that are obviously and infinitely beyond the limits of its peculiar province. And yet, strange and culpable as such a perversion, or rather, prostitution of the science, may appear to be, there are great numbers of its professed adherents who, from ignorance or extravagance, from vanity or impiety, or from all these combined, are led to substitute their Philosophy for Theology itself, professing to derive from this foreign and scanty source, all those peculiar doctrines and precepts which the awfully altered circumstances of the human race require, and which a direct revelation from God alone could possibly supply. These are the philosophical empirics, whose pompous, infidel quackery has brought themselves, and their science, and even Theology itself into disgrace, by compelling Philosophy to attempt what it never was intended to perform, or was even capable of performing, and by subjecting religion

to a species of ordeal and degradation to which it never can in reality be subject, and to which it never ought for a moment even in appearance to submit. Let not Christianity, therefore, have her character stamped, and her destinies decided, either favourably or otherwise, by this species of philosophical dogmatism, as though it were an infallible criterion of religious truth. Let not reason presume to exercise a dictatorial authority over revelation. Let not human fallibility preside at the tribunal of inspiration. Let not human ignorance be exalted to a supremacy over divine science. Let not the pride of the human heart be gratified, and the dignity of Christianity be degraded, by any attempt to invest the Gospel with the character of an humble suppliant at the bar of human ignorance, presumption, or caprice. Let not Plato and Aristotle, and the disciples of these justly celebrated masters of antiquity, be regarded as judicial censors over Jesus Christ, and the devoted followers of the despised, — incomparable Nazarene. Let not the oracles of Philosophy, either ancient or modern, be consulted with the view of having the sense and extension of Christianity determined by their magisterial, ambiguous dicta: for the jurisdiction which Christianity exercises, is purely spiritual and divine, authorising no appeal whatever to any merely human science for the determination of her infallible verdict. But let Philosophy move in that sphere which

sound reason assigns, as exclusively appropriated to the exercise of her peculiar functions; let her enjoy the full pleasure and advantage of those employments in which the nature of her delightful province requires her to engage: and since Christianity is neither so supercilious as to disclaim an alliance with Philosophy, nor so inflated with a sense of self-sufficiency, as to despise any legitimate, valuable assistance, let Philosophy cheerfully and gratefully render every service in her power, and invariably conduct herself in this auxiliary department with that modesty, fidelity, and humility, which a deep sense of her inferiority and obligations, ought ever to inspire.

Let it not be supposed that we are here confounding with Philosophy that flimsy, superficial, ostentatious, pseudo-science, which has indeed most arrogantly, or rather, impudently assumed the name, though totally destitute of all the genuine characteristics of true Philosophy, — a sort of spurious, babbling, supercilious art, which has indeed the merit of employing a most amazing and senseless volubility of speech in the use of mere technical terms, though at the same time most profoundly and unblushingly ignorant of all substances, properties, and distinctions; and which, in place of enriching the minds of its votaries with a vast store of definite and useful ideas, merely inspires them with an audacious contempt of all valuable information,

and encourages them to pour their filthy torrent of ignorance and blasphemous impiety, with equal virulence and deadly effect, on those subjects which true Philosophy ever approaches with the deepest veneration, and examines and discusses with feelings of humility and reverence proportioned to the sacredness and elevation of the theme. Of all the various kinds of prostitution and abuse to which language is liable, there is none baser or more disgusting than that which consists in designating, by the venerable title of Philosophy, such mere rant and cant of an insidious, contemptuous, despicable, demoralizing infidelity. To prevent so degrading a mal-appropriation of the term, let the nicest and most impartial discrimination be exercised in all enquiries and discussions that profess to be of a philosophical nature. Let all those criteria which the wisdom of past ages, has developed and prescribed for the attainment of an infallible decision, be rigidly and dispassionately applied. Let not idle supposition be substituted for actual investigation, or the presumption of probability for the demonstration of reality. Let not the dogmatical authority of mere names, how extensive and influential soever that celebrity may be which some of them have acquired, be thought sufficient to stamp the deductions of mere reason infallible, and the doctrines of divine revelation inadmissible. Let not the tone of arrogance which an infidel Philosophy,

in the midst of rash conclusions from fanciful discoveries, frequently assumes in the first moments of its exultation, let not this breath of shallow wit and dictatorial pride, be suffered to shake for an instant, even in the minds of such as are least informed, those pillars of eternal truth on which that system of Theology is founded which God has disclosed to us in the Scriptures, and which establishes the divinity of its origin by that universal control over nature which its Author exercised, and which he divinely authorised and strengthened its apostolical propagators to exercise in their miraculous corroboration of his sacred, life-giving message. Were these precautions observed, I should apprehend no danger whatever, but rather anticipate the most signal advantages, from contracting an alliance between a simple, pure, and solid Philosophy, such as we have attempted to delineate, and a simple, pure, and solid Theology, such as the Scriptures clearly reveal, and such as the most ordinary capacity may comprehend sufficiently for all doctrinal, experimental, and practical purposes.

PART II.

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

PART SECOND.

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

The world which we inhabit, sustains countless myriads of animal and vegetable productions; the former consisting of rational and irrational beings, and the latter of objects equally ornamental and useful. That laws and regulations should exist, as various and extensive as the multifarious interests of these innumerable classes of being require, is an inference the correctness of which, the actual state of things universally corroborates,—laws and regulations as binding on the highest as on the lowest in the scale of sentient existence, and as requisite in the merely material as in the intellectual department of creation. That man should be exempt from the operation or the observance of these laws, would be an anomaly strange in the extreme,—unparalleled and inexplicable. To give any degree of propriety to the existence of such an anomaly, it would be requisite, that man should differ essentially, infinitely from all other beings in his circumstances and constitution. For even the Deity

himself invariably regulates his procedure by eternal and immutable, eternally and immutably perfect laws. And from the Deity to the minutest of his creatures, the administration of these laws, is observable in an infinite variety of aspects and adaptations to the purposes of the Great Supreme, and the happiness and security of his dependent universe. But man, so far from being anomalous in this respect, bears so close an analogy to all other orders of being, that in him personally all the laws of their diversified ranks and characters appear to be concentrated, and not merely concentrated in him as the grand, intermediate, compound link in the endless chain of being, but required to exercise their predominant influence over every part of his nature, whether mental or physical, and over every department and relation of his intercourse, whether civil or religious, political or moral. Now, the grand object of our present enquiry is simply this: Whether man governs or obeys man, whether he presides at the helm of power, or executes the orders of such a presidency, how ought he to act in his political capacity, in order that his religious character may not only sustain no injury, but may rise to the highest attainable degree of moral perfection? We have been led to this enquiry by observing, that an almost endless diversity of opinion and practice, prevails on the subject of establishing a union between Religion and Politics in

each individual character, some persons loudly condemning such a connection as exceedingly improper and detrimental, and others as strenuously asserting not only the bare propriety, but the indispensable necessity of such a combination, alleging this as the only remedy for those political evils under which mankind so generally and so deeply groan, and as the most effectual expedient for giving to Religion universal popularity, efficiency, and transcendent supremacy in the affairs of men. Were it necessary, at this early stage of the discussion, to declare which of these theories was in my own judgment the least objectionable, or the most eligible, I should decidedly express my preference in favour of the latter, as not only the most congenial with my own sentiments, but, of course, the most consonant with my own practice on the subject. For an irreligious polity, whether that irreligion consists in the total exclusion of religious principles from any system of national administration, or in the actual violation of such principles, has always appeared to me an anti-religious institution extremely demoralizing in its tendency, and deadly in its effects on the best interests of society. And a non-politic Religion, whether that non-policy consists in a total suspension of judgment, or an indiscriminate adoption of every political measure that is suggested, has always appeared, in my estimation, a state of things much better adapted to the condition of a

savage, or a hermit, or a disembodied spirit, whose respective lawlessness, seclusion, or immateriality, may be considered as exempting such a being from the ordinary necessities, dangers, and requisitions of civilized life, of congregated physical and intellectual intercourse. To me it appears an incontrovertible maxim, that that system of human policy must be the best, which is the most favourable to the diffusion, the prevalence, and the predominance of true Religion; and that that system of Religion must be the best which is the most favourable to the purity, the prosperity, and the stability of human government. Entertaining these views, and acting agreeably to these convictions, the declaration of them contained in the following argument of this Discourse, will not appear either strange or premature; and the subsequent illustration and corroboration of this argument, may not be wholly uninteresting, as certainly so far from being unimportant, the subject is one which ought to engage the profoundest attention, and excite the deepest emotions, of which human beings are capable. Indolence in prosecuting the enquiry, or impatience to arrive at a conclusion, would only betray consummate ignorance of the immense, practical importance of a decision founded on the infallible principles of justice and of truth. Our intention to try the cause by these principles is sincere. Our consideration of errors supposed to exist in the

theory or the practice of others shall be no less candid than impartial. And our discussion of the whole subject, shall be as brief as our ingenuity can devise, or rather, as concise as your gratification and advantage will allow. The argument is this: Christians ought

To approve what is politically right,

To condemn what is politically wrong,

To promote what is politically beneficial,

To counteract what is politically injurious;—

because they are bound by the strongest obligations, natural and moral, to promote their own interests and those of others, temporal as well as spiritual, to the greatest possible extent that human happiness admits or requires; and because their temporal interests, generally considered, are as immediately dependent on the state and government of a nation, as their spiritual prosperity is on the state and government of the Church.

The proper examination of this argument, requires us deliberately to consider these four particulars:

1. The rectitude and ameliorating influence, the turpitude and deteriorating influence, of different systems of national policy, domestic or foreign.

2. The effects which these different systems of human policy, produce on the interests and

characters of human beings, whether near or remote.

3. The consequent propriety and necessity of expressing our approbation, and yielding our concurrence, or of expressing our displeasure, and engaging in the most effectual counteraction of this political agency.

4. The spirit, manner, and measure, in which our assent or dissent, our acquiescence or resistance ought to be expressed.

1. Every national policy is a public institution. The subjects for whose benefit that institution is supposed to exist, are in some instances extremely few in number, in others vastly multitudinous. All the measures, therefore, that are adopted, ought to be of a strictly public nature; they ought to extend to all those human beings collectively by whom that institution is recognised and supported as their own acknowledged system of policy. There may be various classes of society. There may be subordinate interests connected with each of these classes. There may be individual cases sufficiently important to justify a particular claim of attention. Still, however, each of these classes, should be considered as one branch, and only one branch of the whole community; each of these interests should be considered as one portion, and only one portion of the common weal; and each of these individual

cases should be considered as one unit, and only one unit in the whole numerical aggregate. For it would be monstrously absurd, and abominably iniquitous, to prostitute the public interests of a whole community to the promotion of private emolument or advantage. All partial considerations, therefore, ought to be excluded. All sinister designs and clandestine operations, ought to be reprobated and abandoned. All exclusively individual interests and gratifications on the part of those to whom the government of a country is confided, ought to be patriotically sacrificed at the shrine of public utility and aggrandisement, when the attainment or enjoyment of them is incompatible with these higher and more general regards. Or, in other words, every general measure ought to recognise all the special interests of society; and every special measure ought to recognise the general prosperity of the whole community. It is in the observance of this principle, I conceive, that the essence of every national administration consists, every individual considering himself a part of the whole,—the whole itself being nothing more than an aggregation of such individuals. Parties that are deeply interested may be exceedingly violent in asserting their demands. Governments that are exceedingly disordered, or weakened, or perplexed, may perhaps be compelled by circumstances to accede, and thus reluctantly become accessaries to the violation of

national justice. But these are evils and disorders, which, whether they exist by toleration or prevail inevitably, every true patriot must deplore, and every suffering victim wish to see terminated as speedily and effectually as possible. In discussing, however, the question of political rectitude, we shall suppose the government invested with authority and power sufficient to secure the execution of its purposes, whatever the moral character or the civil tendency of those purposes may be. Now, supposing that this government, of whatever nature it may be, whether patriarchal or democratic, whether aristocratic or regal, is disposed to act invariably on all occasions with perfect equity, what line of conduct must the authorities pursue to secure so enviable, so certainly attainable, so transcendently glorious a character? Is it not obvious, that, for the attainment of so illustrious a reputation, their motives for desiring or accepting office, ought to be perfectly pure, patriotic, and generous, rather than vain, ambitious, and interested;—that their diligence in discharging the functions of their respective stations, ought to be prompt, solicitous, indefatigable, rather than constrained, reckless, incidental;—that their conduct in personally observing all their own enactments, ought to be strict, exemplary, and conscientious, rather than loose, infamous, or convenient? Innumerable and almost infinitely diversified will be the claims on their attention, the

objects of their prosecution; and consequently numerous and diversified in an equal degree will be the offices which they discharge, the measures which they adopt. In a multitude of instances so peculiar and complicated will these functions and measures be, that they will scarcely be reducible to any general rule, scarcely comprehensible under any general designation. Others, however, of these functions and measures are of so distinct and definite a character, that though each of them may contain an immense variety of particular cases, requiring extraordinary penetration, prudence, experience, and firmness, to decide their respective merits, yet are they all so prominent, so important, so frequent in their occurrence, that no difficulty whatever can exist in ascertaining their general nature, or adjudging them that degree of attention which they respectively deserve. Of such political duties, few or none perhaps are more obvious or essential than these: that all injuries should be redressed promptly, all complaints heard impartially, all punishments inflicted equitably, all remunerations distributed conscientiously, all improvements accelerated cheerfully, all abuses corrected fearlessly, all enactments devised wisely, all vices checked resolutely, all morality promoted zealously, all supplies copiously provided, all dangers seasonably averted, all disorders judiciously rectified, all knowledge freely communicated, all errors candidly discountenanced, all resources

carefully collected, all expenditure economically regulated, all emergencies instantaneously considered, all degeneracy and oppression vigorously suppressed, all unanimity and co-operation strongly recommended, all foreign invasions resisted manfully, all defenceless and destitute nations protected and assisted generously, all foreign contracts, political or commercial, framed justly and fulfilled righteously, and all colonies, allies, and neighbours, treated with affection, integrity, and esteem. To complete this enumeration were a task of no difficulty, provided the nature of a government were constantly recollected, as a public institution formed not for the elevation, emolument, or aggrandisement of a few, but for the protection, prosperity, and happiness of all. Provided this fundamental principle be acknowledged as the basis of all its institutions and operations, provided it enter as a primary ingredient into the composition of all its measures and designs, I see no reason whatever that should prevent us from conceding to a government so constituted and administered, the high official praise of acting with perfect rectitude. For the actual success of all its measures, no such a government can be supposed responsible. A thousand unexpected incidents and obstacles, a thousand adverse circumstances and occurrences may frustrate schemes formed with consummate wisdom, and involving in the event of their successful adoption and execution, blessings innumerable

and invaluable to the latest age. Omnipotently to control all these events, it would be the height of presumption in any human government to attempt, the height of madness in any national community to expect. In a world exhibiting such a chaos of good and evil, consummate villainy frequently succeeds where honest integrity would most egregiously fail. The success of such villainy, however, is no more a vindication of its principle than the failure of such integrity is a reproach to its character, and a derogation from its excellence. And though villainy may occasionally frustrate the purposes of integrity in the early stages of its progress; yet, ultimately, honest and persevering integrity will irresistibly prevail; and the firmness of its final stability will be strengthened rather than weakened by the violence of the concussions to which it has been exposed. The disappointment, therefore, which the authorities and constituents of such a government may occasionally experience in the execution of their plans, forms not the slightest imaginable objection to the propriety and excellence of that species of rectitude by which their proceedings are characterised.

Such governments, however, are of very rare occurrence. Yea, the bare description of such rectitude may seem to partake more largely of romance than of reality, may seem to be a much fitter subject for ridicule than for serious delibera-

tion,—a purely ideal fiction which never can be realized into actual existence. It is exceedingly deplorable, and a most awful reflection on human nature, that such should even appear to be the case. Such depravity is indeed no proper subject for exultation, or indifference, or condolence. Our condition, however, would have been incalculably worse than it is, had no attempt whatever been made to resist the torrent of degeneracy; and many governments would have been incalculably better and more beneficial, had all those practical measures been adopted which we have briefly particularised. Yea, there have existed, and there are now in existence, governments in which these principles have been carried to an extraordinary extent; whilst there have been and are others in which they have been as contemptuously neglected and grossly violated. Of these last the instances of iniquity, violence, and error, are innumerable and detestable. To speak of their malversation in terms of measured respect, would be to insult reason and virtue by paying homage to folly and vice. They have trampled unceremoniously on all the rights of God and man; and it were strange in the extreme, if such conduct were to be condemned in silence, or mentioned in the strain either of eulogy or toleration. Wrong is wrong, by whomsoever it may be perpetrated; and though the person of the perpetrator may be sacred, yet cursed

by the law of God is the official criminality with which he is chargeable in a station of so vast importance and responsibility, and in which the highest virtue ought to be combined with all the native excellence of the human heart and character. Impossibilities cannot be expected. What is reasonable, however, may not only be expected but demanded. But these governments, so far from answering even ordinary expectation, have fallen infinitely short of common probity and common sense. They have considered their elevation as entitling them to the exercise of supreme contempt for all the inferior grades of society. The energies and the fortunes of these inferior grades, stigmatised —the lower classes in the vocabulary of human pride, they consider as nothing more than an ample provision made for their luxurious ease and wasteful profligacy of expenditure, who are, forsooth, the only beings worthy of the designation—noble and immortal. The necessities, whether physical or intellectual, the disorders, whether moral or civil, the sufferings, whether bodily or mental, the characters, whether virtuous or immoral, the prosperity and adversity, whether permanent or variable, the improvements and enjoyments, whether stationary or retrograde, of this low, contemptible rabble, they consider infinitely beneath their exalted notice, their dignified consideration. Even to glance at such inferiors were an act of infinite condescension :

but for such beings to expect such a glance, were an instance of intolerable presumption; and to claim such a glance were little less than a blasphemous pretension to equality. To support and gratify this supremacy, which scarcely acknowledges even that of the Deity as co-equal, millions of these inferior beings must be recklessly slaughtered on the field of battle, to avenge some imaginary insult, some petty grievance amongst these gods of the human race, or to glut the morbid insatiableness of boundless avarice or ambition. To gratify these despicable propensities to revenge or aggrandisement, defenceless nations and flourishing empires must be invaded, deluged with the gore of their own inhabitants, plundered of all their liberties and possessions, and doomed to slavery, obscurity, or extinction; contracts the most sacred must be violated; and rights and claims, inalienable and divine, trampled under foot. Panegyrists, base enough to eulogise,—poets, mean enough to celebrate,—historians, mercenary enough to misrepresent or vindicate, or at least attempt to vindicate, such abominable dispositions and practices have been found. Cringing flattery, trembling at the menaces of that power, the principles of which it inwardly despises, prostrates itself in servile adulation at the shrine of such violent and sanguinary despotism. The slaves of such a tyranny, seek to emancipate themselves by joining in the oppression

of other slaves, to remedy their own extreme destitution by rendering others infinitely more destitute, and to procure their own exemption from the evils of such a dynasty, by accumulating those evils to an incalculable extent on such as are incapable of making the slightest resistance, or obtaining the least redress. The political turpitude of such administrations, therefore, increases in a most awfully rapid ratio. The boundaries of its progress, coincide with the extremes of all possible iniquity. The authorities of the realm, are then nothing more than a legally constituted gang of banditti. The gems of the monarch's diadem, are then nothing more than the emblems of his precedency in villainy and vice. The laws of such a state, are nothing more than the deeply laid schemes of usurpation and oppression. The subjects of such a government, are nothing more than the mechanical instruments by which cruelty and violence effect their nefarious practices. The wars of such a power, whether civil or foreign, are nothing more than systematised, legalised murder. The annals of such a sovereignty, are nothing more than the records of crime, and cruelty, and death. The crown is the badge of infamy. The tribunal is the bar of violence. The dungeon is the dwelling of innocence. The gibbet is the reward of integrity. Vice loses its character and becomes a virtue: and virtue, sinking into contempt, ceases to exist. Every particle of just

administration is annihilated; and the whole system, though organised and sanctioned by all the formalities of law, becomes in principle, character, and operation, totally different from what the government of every country ought manifestly to be.

2. Man is the creature of sensation and intelligence. He combines in his nature all the properties of matter with all the qualities of mind,—of matter not merely inanimate and shapeless, but animated with a principle of perfect vitality, exhibiting the finest mechanism endowed with the most exquisite sensibility, — and of mind not merely passive or stationary, but incessantly active and eternally progressive. By this peculiarity in his constitution, man is affected equally, by all considerations of a physical, and by all of an intellectual or spiritual nature, arising from an infinite multiplicity of connections and relations existing between himself and those worlds of matter and of mind, of which he and the terrestrial orb which he inhabits, form integral and essential parts. Never will his connection with matter cease, until his material and mortal frame is dissolved into dust; never shall his connection with spirit cease, until that spark is extinct which God has solemnly declared shall burn inextinguishably for ever. For man, therefore, to affect a total independence on terrestrial objects and occurrences so long as he

remains in this sublunary sphere, were a species of affectation equally foolish, contemptible, and criminal. And for man to deny the existence of an influential connection between his moral character and all those innumerable causes of a moral nature which exist in the world, and which are calculated to change or modify, to weaken or strengthen, to perfect or destroy that character, were a violation of truth as flagrant as culpable and deplorable. Every pore of the human frame is an avenue of pleasure or of pain; and as these pores are numberless, so are the pleasures and the pangs to which he is liable from physical causes, numberless. Every faculty, every affection of his soul, is a medium of anguish or delight; and as these faculties and affections are exceedingly various, so are these mental agonies or ecstacies proportionately various. The man who pretends to have stoicised himself so completely as to have arrived at a total insensibility to every thing of a material or an intellectual nature, is as great a fool for making the assertion as he is for making the attempt, if, indeed, any human being could possibly be so infatuated as to deem such a virtual annihilation of his being, either practicable or desirable. Such stoicism is nothing more than idiotism having intelligence just sufficient to render its own folly and hypocrisy visible and contemptible. Extremely squeamish and sickly sensibility is a directly opposite evil and error. This multiplies liabilities

to pain which are not, in any degree, compensated by the higher excitement of the pleasure produced. Reason is required here to exercise her sway. Nature is permitted here to make her own declaration. Experience and justice are allowed to decide and prescribe. For man is neither adamant nor air; he is neither simple matter nor unconnected mind. His happiness or misery, therefore, his advancement or retrogradation, is the result of his moral and his physical condition. And his condition in these respects, is commonly determined in an incalculable degree, by the rectitude or the turpitude of that political system under which he lives, and to the measures of which his temporal fortunes and his spiritual interests, his earthly comforts and his eternal destinies, are to a most extraordinary extent subjected.

For by what possibility can a person evade the influence, direct or indirect, of that political institution within the jurisdiction of which he is comprehended? By what process of self-exclusion shall he retire into some recess, either real or imaginary, that shall afford him a total or even a partial exemption from all the powers of such a jurisdiction? Extreme obscurity or perfect neutrality appears the only alternative capable of affording such a refuge. But any expedient of this nature which a person might adopt for the complete annihilation of his political existence, even were it either just or

tolerable, would expose him in the former instance to innumerable inconveniences which would more than balance all the ordinary evils of political malversation, and would in the latter instance subject him to a great variety of difficulties and perplexities from which he would find his consistent extrication difficult or impossible. Besides, any evasive scheme of this nature, would be practicable only to a very limited extent of locality and numbers. That obscurity must be great indeed which could escape the argus-eyed vigilance of the law. Only an organised seclusion of a monastic nature, could accomplish this object to any considerable extent. But such a system of seclusion has generally been found as detrimental to the polity at large, as it is incompatible with the ordinary duties and enjoyments of separate individuals; and these institutions have generally, in the progress of time, assumed a very large share, yea, in some instances, the chief share of political influence and ascendency. For there exists in the breast of man a natural, and, under proper restrictions and directions, a very laudable inclination to assist in regulating that political system in the measures of which his interests, present and future, are so deeply involved. I acknowledge that I cannot easily reconcile the prosecution of an opposite line of conduct with those ideas of propriety, justice, and necessity, which a question of this kind naturally suggests. An absolute neutral

in the government of his country, or one who pretends at least to absolute neutrality, will generally be found to be either a very weak, or a very cowardly, or a very interested being, who has not sense, or courage, or honest independence sufficient to exercise his inalienable right of forming and expressing an opinion respecting those national transactions in which he and his descendants are, eventually, as deeply concerned as all others and their posterity are. And it frequently happens, that some little deviation, perhaps unintentional, from his im-political policy, covers him with infamy and contempt. Are we then all to be prime ministers? Are we all to be councillors and commanders? Are we all to govern, and none to obey? Are we all to prescribe, and none to execute? Are we to abandon or neglect our ordinary avocations, and consume the whole of our time in political deliberations and discussions? Is every man to erect a monarchy, and plan a constitution of his own, and to require from all similar monarchies and constitutions, that homage and subserviency to which he deems his own fanciful schemes entitled? The well-known proverb of the cobbler and his last is, I think, very appropriate here. But let it be recollected, that when the national foot is exceedingly cramped, or when the national shoe requires to be repaired or renewed, every political cobbler in the realm, from the monarch to the pea-

sant, is, in my opinion at least, entitled to a stitch and a stroke. And, if a slight departure from metaphorical accuracy may be allowed, every man, whatever that part of the national shoe may be which his foot occupies, should know, by reason and experience, how that shoe ought to be made so as best to suit his own particular convenience and advantage. I have not indeed served an apprenticeship to the art of political shoe-making, or indeed to that of making shoes of any other description: the analogy, however, I think will be found not inappropriate on the present occasion. And the real cobblers in this department, if they deem my interference presumptuous, or my remarks irrelevant, will have the goodness to pardon the same. For,—to abandon a playful for a more serious tone, every man has an interest at stake. All men have interests at stake. And to what extent these interests are either promoted by the rectitude, or injured by the turpitude of a government, will be most easily determined by enumerating those influences on human happiness which these different systems respectively exercise.

Were justice, pure and impartial, universally administered, no reasonable dissatisfaction, no justifiable retaliation of a private or revengeful character, could possibly exist. Were every legal claim granted, every actual injury compensated, every deserved punishment inflicted, every real

demerit awarded, either all the parties concerned would be perfectly satisfied, or their dissatisfaction would be equally criminal and irremediable. No government upon earth can righteously engage to regulate its procedure by the caprice of solitary individuals, or of insulated classes of society:—the attempt would be as vain as its execution would be impracticable. In the present state of human nature, degenerate and disordered as it is, no form of government whatever can possibly be imagined, no, not even the government of God himself presiding visibly over the affairs of mortals, and audibly deciding their respective differences, that could inspire such a degree of satisfaction as would exclude every possibility of murmur and chagrin. Whatever the measure adopted may be, it is frequently viewed in ten thousand various lights and shades, agreeably to the ten thousand varieties in the passions and interests of those whom that measure concerns. Yea, the more equitable and impartial any government is, and the more obnoxious must it become to those whom equity displeases, and impartiality offends. To gratify these would be a crime, equally dishonourable to the state, and injurious to the commonalty at large. The only expedient which it is necessary to adopt in reference to these dissentients, is, to prescribe such regulations as shall prevent their murmurs and complaints from materially disturbing the peace and harmony

of society, and prevent their resistance and retaliation from seriously interrupting the administration of equity and mercy. But, it is presumed, that these characters do not constitute the great mass of the public,—that their views and feelings are not entertained by the majority of the community. And even if they were, I hold it an incontestable principle, that at all hazards a just and reasonable minority ought to be gratified, though at the expense of the pleasure of a wicked and capricious majority. But I am by no means disposed to allow, already corrupted and corrupting in its influence as human nature is, that these malcontents form the majority of the populace under any system of righteous administration. Yea, I am the rather disposed to think that, under such a system of government, the class of dissentients would be extremely small, confined chiefly, if not exclusively, to the ordinary villains and vagabonds who subsist by preying on the vices, or on the vitals and property of others. These would be most highly chagrined, and exceedingly clamorous for a change. But their censure would be praise, and the most irrefragable proof of the excellence of the constitution under which they lived, or rather under which they found it impossible, with their base principles and practices, to live. All the respectable part of the community, however, would be satisfied. All the justly interested classes of society, would

be pleased. All denominations of the virtuous, would be gratified. All whose good opinion is desirable, would pronounce a favourable judgment. All whose practical concurrence was of any importance, would vigorously and unanimously co-operate. All who had any advantage to derive from the rectitude of the government, and these must invariably compose the major part of the population of every country, would feel their own private interests and responsibilities involved in maintaining such a government inviolable and inviolate. And even the very villains and vagabonds of society, perceiving that there was incomparably more to be gained by integrity than by dishonesty, would from sheer interest, if not at all from principle, be inclined to lend their most strenuous support. For as the real decay terminating in the dissolution or destruction of a state, may generally be dated from that very period at which injustice, in its countless multitudes of forms, whether of public oppression or of private wrong, has begun to prevail, and to enjoy a species of legal countenance or toleration; so, I believe that every government which is righteously administered, contains within itself the basis of its own permanency, the materials of its own stability and grandeur, the ingredients of its own perennial prosperity, beauty, and felicity. And as such a government is infinitely preferable in the sight of God, so is it most obviously and eminently con-

ducive to the best interests and happiness of man.

But the mere administration of justice, though equally important and essential, constitutes only one of those functions which the rectitude of a government, suggests as proper and indispensable. For, as the power of the whole state, is generally supposed to be consolidated and concentred in the executive government of a nation,—as all the pecuniary interests of its inhabitants, are more or less influenced by the public measures, and subjected to the control of that government, — as all the improvements of its people in every species of excellence, are eminently conducive to the promotion of its political glory and perfection; ought not this power, therefore, to be vigorously and vigilantly exercised in the protection of every individual, whatever his situation in life may be, from the unjust aggression of either his domestic or his foreign foes? — ought not these resources to be economised so as to facilitate the accomplishment of every scheme involving the national prosperity and independence, and prevent the adoption of every measure that is calculated needlessly to exhaust the country of its wealth, and, by the imposition of intolerably oppressive burdens, to paralyse its industry and commercial energies?—and ought not these improvements to be encouraged and

patronised with a cordiality, and promptness of liberality, that should excite emulation, and secure to the truly deserving the reward of their superior application or skill? When these objects are all diligently and successfully secured, what inestimable advantages must accrue both to the government and the people! For their obligations to each other are mutual, their interests are common. Though the contrary of this may in some peculiar instances seem to be the case, yet ultimately it will appear, that neither of these parties can injure or benefit the other without either directly or remotely injuring or benefitting itself to a proportionate extent. Any attempt to establish their separate independence, must inevitably issue in their common ruin. Their perfect reciprocity of interest, therefore, dictates the necessity of their perfect unanimity of design, their unanimous coalescence in its execution: for the balance of obligation is even, the weight of dependence is mutually sustained. When, therefore, the people protect their government by extending the radii, and the circumference of their multitudinous throng, in all directions about that legally constituted centre of power and authority, they all equally derive the advantage which flows from having such a central point of delegated authority and power. And when that centre of power, in place of constituting itself an independent part of the great national circle, a sort of

central abyss insatiably absorbing whatever comes within its reach, — re-diffuses all these collective streams of national energy agreeably to the laws of equitable and beneficial distribution;—then, that very centre preserves its own character unchanged, and maintains the dignity and importance of its function unimpaired amidst all the revolutions, delightful or tremendous, controllable or inevitable, that transpire in this world of interruption, vicissitude, and decay. When the people of a nation, cheerfully and liberally contribute for the support of government, whatever the proper maintenance of its dignity, and the effectual execution of its plans, demand; the people themselves reciprocally share the dignity of their rulers, and experience the beneficial operation of those plans. And when the virtue of political economy, is practised to the greatest extent that the real exigencies of a nation will permit, and its unavoidable expenditure will allow; the government which proceeds on this economical scale, will by this means provide itself with the amplest resources that the greatest emergencies, whether sudden or gradual, can require. When the master-spirits, the leading geniuses of a nation, consecrate their superior intellect and advantages to the improvement of the country which gave them birth, the glory and stability of the government under which they live, and the general advancement and emolument of the human race; they will them-

selves shine brighter by the reflection of their own glory, and will derive from their exertions in promoting the welfare of others, the greater security, ease, and repose. And the government which more immediately enjoys the honour and benefit of these exertions, will feel a pleasure in justly appreciating and rewarding such distinguished, individual merit.

From these considerations we pass to others apparently more remote, but infinitely more important in every point of view. For whatever involves consequences that are not merely temporal and temporary, but moral in their nature, and eternal in their duration, must infinitely transcend the comparatively trivial and transient interests of the present life alone. And such are the consequences, we humbly conceive, which arise unavoidably, though incidentally, from the conduct of every government, precisely as that government is favourable to the toleration and ascendency, or to the suppression and extinction of virtue or vice. Are then the terms political and ecclesiastical synonymous? Are all the officers of state, priests *ex officio?* Is their temporal jurisdiction nothing more than a spiritual one in disguise? Are the ensigns of royalty, and the instruments and ornaments of power, nothing more than the emblems and engines of a secret, ethical policy? Is there

any such a transformation of character, is there any such an amalgamation of interests and offices, implied in this assumption of a moral aspect and influence by any human government? Is there any thing foreign, or chimerical, or inconsistent, in such an extension and application of the authority with which they have been invested for purposes of the highest moment? Is there any illegal encroachment on the sacerdotal sphere, any unjustifiable usurpation of the sacred function, involved in giving their powerful agency such a direction? Are they not rather culpable in the extreme, if they neglect the exercise of such an auxiliary, such a morally renovating influence? Are they not the secret or the sworn allies of vice, if they either despise or disallow the claims of virtue on their deepest and most serious attention, and treat the human beings subjected to their control, as though they all were equally irrational and irresponsible with the brutes that perish?. Is immorality beneficial or honourable, is morality injurious or disgraceful to a state? Are wicked rulers an ornament, are conscientious ones a reproach to any country? Is the wickedness of a people, more acceptable to the righteous and Providential Governor of the universe, than the strict observance of his laws would be? If the rulers and judges of a nation, therefore, are not inclined, spontaneously and from principle, yet ought they not to be disposed, officially and from

the transcendent importance of their function, to promote virtue, and discourage vice, so far at least as virtue is politically beneficial, and vice politically injurious? And in this chiefly, we conceive, exists the grand line of distinction between the sacred and the political functions. All virtue is beneficial, all vice injurious. The advantages of the one, the disadvantages of the other, are universally commensurate with the extent to which they are respectively practised. Public virtue, therefore, is a national and political good; public vice, a national and political evil. Whilst the ecclesiastic and the politician, therefore, both advocate virtue, and both condemn vice; the former derives his approbation or censure chiefly from the considerations of moral propriety and eternity, the latter officially regulates his encouragement or discountenance chiefly by motives of temporal expediency and necessity. The former ought, therefore, to be an essentially good man; the latter ought so to act as practically to promote, if not invariably to exemplify, essential goodness. But the more decidedly virtuous any government is, and, *cæteris paribus*, the more eminently advantageous and certainly successful is it likely to prove. And the more purely and intrinsically virtuous the people of any country are, and the more illustrious will be their character, the more weighty their influence, the more prosperous and enviable their condition. It is not every

species of virtue or vice, however, that comes properly within the range of legal jurisdiction. For though all virtue and all vice, without exception, are ultimately beneficial or prejudicial to all society; yet, those virtues and vices only can strictly be made the subjects of political enquiry which directly, obviously, and flagrantly affect the national well-being. To search the hearts of his creatures, to scrutinise their thoughts, motives, desires, and intentions, and to approve or condemn what transpires in the impenetrable privacy of their own breasts or retirement, are the prerogative and province of Deity alone. To his representatives and executioners, the legal authorities of every country, has he deputed the cognizance and punishment of those crimes which come within the limits of human inspection, and admit the restraining influence of human coercion. Divine revelation attests the correctness of these observations. Reason and experience corroborate their propriety and utility. When this part of the civil commission, therefore, whatever that form of government may be with which it is invested, is faithfully, fearlessly, and uniformly executed, what are the consequences to society and to individuals, what is the influence exerted on their general and personal character and welfare? Vice hides her horrid head. She shrinks from the gaze of public scrutiny. She conceals her otherwise frontless brow of brass, her glaring, roll-

ing eyes of shameless impudence, her distorted lips of filthy ribaldry and malicious scorn. She skulks into those infernal haunts within which alone her diabolical agencies, principles, and practices, ought ever to be strictly confined. The tinselled monster, the celestial-looking demon, no longer stalks abroad, attended by her innumerable imps and agents, poisoning, fascinating, blasting, destroying, whatever is exposed to their fatal gaze, their pestilential breath, their deadly touch. In place of reigning, and raging, and revelling, and devastating, without restriction or distinction, she plunges into the obscurity of disappointment and chagrin, or groans in the darkness and chains of a dungeon, or writhes and expires ignominiously on the scaffold, or finds an asylum of horror and death in foreign climes. Her voice of blasphemy is either totally silenced, or suppressed to an inaudible whisper of impious malediction. Her torrent of infidelity is either completely stemmed, or so seasonably diverted in its course, as to become wholly dissipated and innoxious. Her initiatory practices and instructions are either totally prevented, or at least greatly circumscribed in their extent, and weakened in their deadening, damning influence. The law is her enemy. The magistrate is her foe. Infamy is her portion. Destruction is her end. Virtue, on the contrary, acquires confidence, publicity, and esteem. She no longer confines her presence, her beauty,

and her influence to the more remote and obscure retreats of piety, humility, and innocence. She emerges, beautiful as the moon; she ascends, illustrious as the sun. Darkness vanishes as she approaches. Error retires as she advances. By the music of her voice, the groans of oppression, adversity, and affliction, are changed into the loudest ecstacies of triumph and satisfaction. By the benevolence of her disposition, the abodes of horror, and guilt, and death, become the habitations of peace, and penitence, and health. The wisdom of her counsels, defeats the projects of injustice and malice. The omnipotence of her energy, crushes the resistance of impiety and revenge. Brutality shrinks from her inspection. Inhumanity trembles at her frown. Cruelty perishes in her grasp. Of all the gems in the monarch's diadem, she is the brightest. Of all the plumes of nobility, she is the noblest. Her robe is the only garb of true distinction. Her smile is the highest reward of genuine ambition. When she props the throne, its stability is certain. When she presides in the cabinet, its integrity is indubitable. When she dictates at the bar, the verdict is infallible. The loveliness which she exhibits, inspires love. The respectability which she maintains, commands respect. Her assistance is courted, her power dreaded, her example imitated, her character applauded, her indignation deprecated, her arbitration solicited, her rights respected, her mis-

fortunes alleviated, her prosperity promoted, her permanency secured. In the eyes of natives she is as amiable, as in those of foreigners admirable and enviable. She finally conquers, though resisted; and though defeated, she ultimately triumphs. For victory sits on her brow. Thunder nerves her arm. Majesty moves in her gait. Nobility is depicted in her mien. Benignity smiles in her countenance. Love drops from her lips. Of all the treasures of a nation, she is the most estimable; of all its characteristics, she is the most desirable. In her absence, all is anarchy and desolation; in her presence, all is order and delight. To represent and treat her as inferior and foreign, were consummate folly, originating in the deepest ignorance and wickedness; to invest her with supremacy in all national as well as individual counsels and transactions, were an act of the highest wisdom, consonant equally with the strictest and the most obvious justice, and with the soundest and most liberal policy.

If these are the benefits resulting from political rectitude, what are the evils consequent on political turpitude? If this is the bright side of the picture, what is the dark one? Alas! were our pencil fully equal to the task of correctly delineating all the horrors of misrule, their contemplation would afford the beholder very little pleasure, but rather excite pain the most exquisite mingled with

the deepest and justest abhorrence of errors so prolific of human inconvenience and misery, and tending so rapidly and inevitably to involve states and individuals in complete and irretrievable ruin. Were we, however, from weakness or false delicacy, to suppress all description of these evils, should we not be justly chargeable with cowardice and culpable deficiency in the discharge of our duty? Yea, if either of these opposite systems of politics, is to be exhibited with its whole train of present and future consequences, is not that the most proper for selection which is the most generally prevalent, and by the more general prevalence of which the character and destinies of the human race, are chiefly determined? And is it not an awful, a most deplorable and degrading fact, attested by almost every page of universal history, and by the direful fate of those innumerable governments which have existed, but of which countless multitudes exist no more, having been brought to desolation, and plunged into oblivion, accompanied with inconceivable suffering and infamy, by those very causes of a political nature which we deprecate,—is it not a fact, that the weaker classes and interests of society, have generally been sacrificed to the pleasure and convenience, the caprice and aggrandisement of the strong,—that the feebler nations of the earth, as though mere prey intended to excite avarice and ambition, have generally been merci-

lessly crushed in the contests of the more powerful for their possession, and by the rigour of their treatment when possessed, — that the rich produce of human labour, though raised by the immense toil and inconvenience of the vast mass of the population, has generally been profligately expended by the degenerate few in the perpetration of every detestable vice, in the gratification of every infamous passion and pleasure,—that the truly deserving amongst men, though their claims to attention and remuneration are paramount, have frequently been undervalued or despised, suspected or persecuted,—that the interests of virtue, though involving all other interests, temporal and eternal, have been flagrantly neglected and violated, that the enormities of vice, though equally disgraceful and detrimental, have been palliated, tolerated, legalised, rewarded, — that anarchy and usurpation, tyranny and oppression, cruelty, blasphemy, and impiety have been practised and applauded to an almost incredible extent? That these evils have all originated in the depravity of human nature, and that this depravity has frequently been as conspicuous in the populace themselves as in their rulers, are facts equally certain, and equally deplorable. That the corruption of nations, has in some instances been extreme, and that their extreme corruption has frequently rendered nugatory the very wisest and best attempts at reformation, are also undeni-

able. But is not the very existence of these facts an incontestable proof, how indispensably requisite is the rectitude of a government, and how dreadfully pernicious and criminal its turpitude must be? For the stream of human depravity is sufficiently impetuous without having its current accelerated, and deepened, and widened, by those very means by which its progress ought to be impeded and checked. The natural propensities of the human heart to every thing that is vile and improper are sufficiently strong, without having their tendency strengthened and sanctioned by legal enactments or license. That government, therefore, must be a curse rather than a blessing, an evil which requires to be extirpated as soon as possible, rather than a benefit which deserves to be recommended and continued, which increases rather than restrains the torrent of vice, which infuriates and treats with licentious impunity, rather than assuages and punishes the guilty passions and principles of men, and which accumulates beyond all calculation rather than diminishes to the greatest possible extent, the enormous mass of human evil. Culpable even in the sight of man, but abominable in the judgment of God, must every system of national policy be, which prostitutes its authority and agency to purposes so vile, practices so execrable, and calamities so oppressive: the gleaming splendour of its temporal prosperity, is nothing more than the ominous,

protracted flash of that divine indignation which shall eventually burst in peals and torrents of resistless vengeance. To enumerate the consequences of political turpitude, were little more than historically to detail the calamities and revolutions of almost all past ages and nations, and correctly to suggest the causes of most of those evils which at present afflict the larger portion of the civilized world. If, in a great measure, we have been personally free from some of these evils, our exemption is attributable partly to the superlative excellence of our incomparable constitution, which contains within itself the elements and principles of its own rectification and conservation,—partly to the purity, variety, and multiplicity of those religious institutions, the boundless toleration of which exerts a most powerful and beneficial reaction on the state, —and partly, or rather chiefly, if not in some instances even solely, to the superintendence and care of that gracious Providence whose interposition and protection have been, for so long a series of ages, so conspicuously manifested in our preservation from a multitude of those evils with which immediately surrounding nations have been visited. That our condition might have been still better, and that this improvement would have been promoted, partially at least, by a greater degree of political rectitude, there will exist no doubt in the minds of those who recollect, that many of the pages in our national

history are stained, deeply stained with deeds of violence and blood; that many of the passages in the annals of royalty defunct, are fraught with descriptions of vice and cruelty which, for the honour of human nature, it might be wished were totally incredible; and that the manners and the intellectual character of the people have, in some periods, exhibited an aspect of ignorance, barbarity, and superstition, scarcely to be paralleled, and certainly not to be exceeded, by any nation possessed of similar advantages. True patriotism is not blind or insensible to the faults and failings, any more than it is to the excellencies and glories of its country, but is anxious to detect in order that it may remedy whatever requires detection, and admits of amelioration, as well as to discover and applaud whatever merits attention, and justly deserves applause. The lynx-eye of such patriotism, however, is not required for the perception of those evils which political turpitude most obviously produces. For these evils are of daily occurrence, forming some of the most prominent features in the experience and character of nations. Partiality creates enmity, and that enmity generates revenge, and that revenge issues in vindictive reprisal. Injustice occasions dissatisfaction, and dissatisfaction originates complaint, and complaint frequently utters its murmurs in tones of terror and thunder, and enforces its demands in strains of resistless

violence. Extreme danger inspires fear; that fear, despair; and that despair, a reckless resolution and effort to extricate itself from the impending destruction, or to crush the apparently overwhelming opposition. Profligate expenditure exhausts its resources; that exhaustion, if the profligacy is continued, necessitates oppression; and that oppression, when it becomes extreme, recoils in desperation and madness on the authors of its existence. Vice and irreligion in the rulers, occasion infidelity and immorality in the people; infidelity and immorality weaken the foundations of all society, prosperity, and happiness; and when the foundations are thus weakened and destroyed, the whole superstructure must inevitably fall into irretrievable ruin, and either sink into merited oblivion, or its memory survive in the recollection of the historian, only that its baseness may be desecrated, and stigmatised to the latest age of time.

3. Are these momentous consequences of political systems to be viewed by us with apathy or indifference, or even totally excluded from our consideration? Are these mighty and tremendous movements to transpire before our eyes without arresting our attention, or exciting our emotion, or eliciting our expression of approval or condemnation? Are we wholly unconnected with human society, wholly uninfluenced by human affairs? Are

we merely curious and uninterested, insulated spectators of terrestrial beings and transactions? Does not the blood of the human race circulate through our veins? Is not the countenance of human beings stamped on our visage? Is not the shape of mortals impressed on our bodies? Is not the nature of man transfused through our constitution? Are we not identified with man, and distinguished from all other beings by every consideration that enters into the idea of humanity? Is not our happiness dependent on the same sources? Are not our miseries derived from the same origin? Is not the relation universal, the connection indissoluble, the intimacy complete? Ought we not, therefore, to congratulate each other in prosperity, to sympathise with each other in adversity, to assist each other in every laudable exertion, to relieve each other in distress, to promote the universal good as involving the happiness of individuals, and advance the happiness of every individual as contributing to the completion of the universal good? Is there any thing unjustifiable, any thing inconsistent with the laws of nature, reason, or revelation, in the exercise of such a sympathy and co-operation? Is there not something extremely unnatural, exceedingly cruel, detestably criminal, something repugnant to all justice and mercy, in declining or condemning such a sympathetic interference? If the irrational orders of creation, are entitled to our

sympathies and assistance, shall the rational be excluded? If God exercises his compassion towards all men, shall all men be destitute of compassion towards each other? Is there not an inviolable obligation imposed on every man to promote the happiness, and diminish the misery of his species, to the greatest extent of his ability? And is not this obligation universally reciprocal between nations and individuals? Is not that man virtually guilty of murder who suffers a murderous stroke to descend which it is in his power to avert? Is not that a cruel monster who permits those unmerited miseries to be inflicted, or augmented which it is in his power to prevent or alleviate? Is not that state of seclusion an abominably selfish abstraction, which insulates an individual so that he can neither see the sufferings, nor hear the groans, nor relieve the pangs of his fellow mortals? Is not that man the favourite of God and man who, possessing all the other qualifications that are essential to the perfection of the human character, superadds this as the crowning ornament, that he considers himself as born, not merely to promote his own selfish and sensual gratification, but to advance the best interests of the whole human race, and of that portion of society in particular which comes more immediately within the range of his inspection and influence? And is not that individual a fool who contracts his whole sphere of action

and enjoyment to a single point, and considers his whole duty and gratification as centred in that point —his own exclusive pleasure and convenience, and who, by ignorantly and wickedly neglecting others, contributes all in his power to plunge both them and himself into misery and guilt? Is it not, therefore, evident from every view that can be taken of this subject, that we are bound by every obligation, divine and human, to form, express, and enforce a correct opinion concerning whatever involves the best interests of all nations, and of every individual in every nation; that to do this is a virtue equally amiable and beneficial; that to neglect or discountenance this is a crime equally detestable and injurious?

That these interests are most deeply affected by the rectitude or turpitude of every national government, has already been clearly shown, and in my humble opinion incontrovertibly proved. If there were any thing that could possibly be supposed objectionable in our discussion, it would probably seem to consist in the use of the superlative epithet in designating these interests best interests, as though, perhaps, we imagined there existed none of a higher order, or of a more permanent nature. I acknowledge, that the term is exceedingly strong, startlingly so, perhaps, to those whose view of the subject, is prejudiced or superficial. I acknowledge, that if the propriety of this term can be established,

the subject will appear to certain persons incomparably more important than they ever considered it to be. I acknowledge, that if the correctness of this designation could be shown, the intensest anxiety would frequently be felt, and the most vigilant activity exercised, where now the coldest apathy and most listless neutrality reign. I acknowledge, that if the object were universally contemplated in this point of view, the judgments and the passions of great numbers, would be much more vigorously directed to an examination of this subject,—its nature, connections, and consequences, than they have ever been. But, exclaims the representative of all these, are not the concerns of eternity infinitely more important than those of time? Are not the interests of the soul infinitely superior to those of the body? Is not intercourse with God infinitely more essential than intercourse with man? In comparison with these transcendent and eternal realities, does not every thing of a merely earthly and perishable nature sink into absolute insignificance or contempt? Is it not possible to realise all terrestrial enjoyments and ultimately perish,—to experience the pressure of all sublunary evils, and finally attain everlasting life? All this I admit. And I sincerely wish that each of these considerations, were indelibly engraven on the mind of every human being, and were invested with a predominant influence over all his motives and exertions.

Were this the case, political systems would regulate themselves agreeably to laws of the highest order, and principles of universally acknowledged excellence. Innumerable evils of a political nature would be prevented, of which we now have just reason to complain, and innumerable benefits of a civil description conferred, which are exceedingly desirable to consummate the happiness of individuals, and the amelioration of the world. But when we actually retrace all these considerations to their origin, do we not perceive that, in reality, the concerns of time are the concerns of eternity, since eternity is nothing more than a boundless period of retribution, inconceivably painful or delightful, agreeably to the manner in which these concerns have been transacted? Do we not perceive, that the interests of the body, and those of the soul, are, during its present state of incarnation, inseparably connected, and that their mutual participation in each other's good or evil, is natural and inevitable? Do we not perceive, that intercourse with God is, in this embodied and social state of being, wholly inseparable from our intercourse with man, and that either of these continually existing alone would be in the one case useless, and in the other criminal? Do we not perceive from the very constitution of our nature, which is a constitution given by God himself, that freedom from all pain is as greatly to be desired, as the experience of

misery of any description, is to be deprecated? Whilst, therefore, we are careful to avoid extremes, and anxious to place every object, whether near or remote, in its true position and prominence, is it not evident, that to separate things so intimately and essentially connected as these are, or to represent any of them as unimportant and insignificant, is equally a folly and a crime? That the rectitude or the turpitude of every government, exerts a most powerful and decisive influence over all its temporal interests, and indirectly through these over all its spiritual interests and destinies, is an indisputable fact. I assert, therefore, with all deference and submission, that to the full extent of this influence, the best interests of society are affected by this rectitude or turpitude, beneficially in the one case, injuriously in the other. To contend obstinately for the mathematical precision of mere terms, were a species of logomachy in which it would not answer the end of this discussion to engage. Things, not words, is our motto.

This rectitude or turpitude, is, therefore, very properly, a subject on which we ought to form, express, and enforce a correct opinion. Advantages innumerable will result to the community from the adoption of such a measure. The oppressive weight of the administration, in place of being exclusively confined to a solitary few, incapable, perhaps, of sustaining the pressure alone, will be properly and

justly equalised amongst the whole mass of that population for whose benefit, solely or chiefly, this national burden is imposed and sustained. The awfully great responsibility connected with all political movements, in place of devolving most oppressively on the constituted authorities of the realm, will be equitably transferred in a great measure to those whose interests and judgments are consulted and respected. The extreme perplexities, embarrassments, and dilemmas, which must unavoidably arise in the counsels of even the wisest and the best of men, when those counsels do not comprise all the information requisite for the guidance of their deliberations, will be in a great measure obviated by this appeal to the collective wisdom of the nation. The national prosperity, in place of being interrupted or destroyed by crowned ignorance or caprice, by sceptred avarice or ambition, by legalised insult and extortion, will be constantly exhibited in the most luminous and favourable point of view. The deliberative assemblies of the land, will constitute so many foci concentrating within themselves all the scattered rays of the national intelligence. The active measures of the government will mark the direction of the resistless torrent of combined, national energy. Every individual judgment will be felt. Every separate voice will be heard. Every distinct interest and relation will be considered. Every particle of national wisdom and

feeling will be incorporated. Universal sympathy will pervade society. Simultaneous exertion will render success absolutely certain. The whole will be resolved into its parts, and each part comprehended in the stability, and perfection, and grandeur of the whole. The pillars of the monarch's throne, will be commensurate with the number of his subjects, and the extent of its base coincident with the magnitude of his dominions. The wealth of the empire will be the treasure of royalty; and the inalienable allegiance of its millions, will be the source of their homage and applause. The officers and ministers of power and justice, will be honourably obeyed as constituting, with the laws and the supreme ruler or rulers of the land, so many parts of an essential administration recognising, advocating, securing the rights and interests of all. Wisdom and strength will be the elements, unity and prosperity the accompaniments, of such an administration. Temporary inconvenience may in some instances result; but, generally, permanent utility will be ultimately promoted. I am not apprehensive that any powerful or formidable argument can be adduced against the correctness of these sentiments. Different forms of government will of course require different modifications of these principles. The principles themselves, are, however, I humbly conceive, equally general, fundamental, and indisputable. Minor differences of judgment are of course

perfectly allowable. The great facts of the case rest I presume on an immoveable basis.

It is very easy to perceive what is implied in the formation of a correct opinion on political subjects. The requisites essential for this purpose, are very obvious and very common. Extraordinary attention and abilities will seldom be required except on very extraordinary occasions. And those subjects of this nature on which the majority of men are incompetent to judge correctly, are extremely few in number, and rare in their occurrence, though it must be acknowledged, that there exists an almost endless diversity in their capabilities and opportunities of arriving at such a decision, and in the means and facilities afforded them for the regulation of their judgment. No government, however, can be perfectly invisible in its consultations and movements. Such inviolable secrecy and impenetrable seclusion of thought and action, are totally impracticable, and inconsistent with the nature of its public functions. Intercourse of some nature or other with the great mass of society, is therefore unavoidable. Publicity, greater or less, early or late, attends all its movements. Opportunities consequently arise inevitably for subjecting their measures to the test of general and individual scrutiny. And, in general, this scrutiny ought to be exercised the more deeply and intensely, the more close and reserved any government usually

and needlessly is in its communications with the public. But where there exists no greater degree of secrecy or concealment, than what the strictest and most politic necessity requires, it were evidently illiberal and unfair, to entertain any dishonourable suspicion, or to deem any extraordinary depth of penetration or inquisition requisite. For that government must be infamously impudent indeed, and desperately reckless of reputation and consequences, that not merely acts a guilty part, but takes no precautions whatever to conceal or palliate its guilt, or to secure any portion of the popular acquiescence and approval. Such a part is rarely, if ever acted. Some deference at least is generally shown to public opinion, and some desire generally manifested to secure public acquiescence. For on these two hinges, the whole system of government ultimately turns. But if it is necessary to guard against all imposition and undue reserve on the one part, it is equally necessary to guard against all superficial, partial, and sinister views on the other. Every individual, whatever his rank or station may be, is only a part of the whole community; and of such parts, the whole community may consist of a multitude indefinitely large. His interests are not to be promoted at the expense of theirs; nor are theirs to be promoted at the expense of his. Such a perfectly equitable adjustment as shall embrace the minutest and most circumstantial of all imaginable

claims, it is probably beyond the reach of human wisdom or ability to effect in the present state of things, so numerous are the causes that intervene and derange the best of plans. To expect this sort of unattainable perfection in any system of human policy, were therefore vain and irrational. Every man, of course, who has his own reasonable, proper share assigned, ought to rest perfectly satisfied, and cheerfully to contribute all his energies to the support of that system of things from which he, in common with others, derives such inestimable advantages. Dissatisfaction and disaffection in such a case were a species of ingratitude and disloyalty criminal and punishable equally by the laws of God and man. Justice, therefore, adapted in all the multifarious forms of its administration to the circumstances of social and mutually dependent, human beings, and regulated by the laws of that Supreme Being on whom all are dependent, and to whom all are finally and irrevocably responsible, is the foundation of all political rectitude, whether between the monarch and his subjects, or between those subjects and each other. Every political opinion that harmonises with the principles of this justice, is certainly right; and every political opinion that is irreconcileable with these principles, is as manifestly wrong.

When a correct opinion is formed, the propriety of its expression follows as a matter of course.

Incorrect opinions are those only which it is proper to check and deprecate, as fraught with error and injury, and calculated to deceive and destroy. The test has already been suggested. By this test, therefore, let the propagation or suppression of political sentiments, be determined. For the freedom of his thoughts, every man is directly responsible to God alone. But freedom of expression, like freedom of action, requires to be regulated by all those restrictions which are requisite to prevent it from becoming injurious. But when a correct opinion has been formed, whether that opinion is favourable or unfavourable to the established system of policy, I cannot conceive any assignable reason whatever for the suppression of that opinion. Were it favourable, silence would imply coldness and ingratitude as base and mysterious, as if unfavourable, it would indicate a degree of selfishness or timidity contemptible and fatal. Numberless errors, theoretical and practical, on the part of government, and numberless sufferings, national and personal, on the part of the people, unquestionably arise frequently from that ignorance under which the former, in some cases, lie in reference to the real sentiments and opinions of the latter. For flagrant and overwhelming as the contempt that is sometimes poured on public opinion, may occasionally be, eventually the torrent of its influence is irresistible. Though there may be some minds so

peculiarly constructed, as to be capable of moulding the opinions of the generality into almost any shape adapted to their peculiar designs; yet, even these superior geniuses ultimately depend for their popular ascendency on the numerical strength, physical and intellectual, of those over whom they have acquired so amazingly great a control. Happy indeed were it for themselves, for their admirers, and for society at large, did these superlative geniuses, these princes of the intellectual world, invariably employ their transcendent abilities in the detection and exposure of error and wrong, and in the propagation and confirmation of truth and equity. Unfortunately, however, their wonderful talents have frequently been prostituted to the perversion of all justice, the annihilation of all distinctions, the sophistication of all sound argument, and the prosecution of measures totally unworthy of their character as men, and indelibly disgraceful to their reputation as persons endowed with unrivalled, intellectual advantages. Against the influence of such perverted intellect, every nation ought most carefully to guard, whilst it justly appreciates and rewards the application of such mental endowments to their legitimate and most important end. And by what means can this caution or toleration be more effectually exercised, than by throwing into the same or into the opposite scale the current sentiments of those other judges

who, though mentally inferior, are in the majority of subjects equally competent to decide? And such judges are all those of every nation whose opinions are regulated by the test which we have described. The golden maxim of Christian morality, is of universal extent in its application to matters of a political nature. In it is recognised that principle of mutually beneficial adaptation by which the whole universe of God, in all its infinity of parts and relations, is regulated and established: every part, however stupendous or minute, having some relation to every other part, however minute or stupendous, of the immense and complicated, but equally beautiful and harmonious whole.

The dissemination of truth in connection with the best interests of the human race, is the noblest exercise of the faculties of speech. But of what service is the expression of a correct opinion on practical subjects, unless that opinion is properly enforced? Politics are not mere metaphysics. Action is the soul of the former; abstraction, the fundamental principle of the latter. The mere theory of politics may be abstractedly considered. Its principles may be analytically examined. To this process partly we have subjected them in the course of this Dissertation. But every political theory, when brought into operation, is one of real, impressive, and universal action. Activity is its element. When it ceases to operate, it ceases to have any

other than a merely ideal existence. Theories on political subjects, therefore, may exist to an indefinite extent without being actually either beneficial or injurious, unless they are permitted to exert some practical influence on the real, established order of things. All tyrants are perfectly aware of this: and consequently they vigilantly suppress every indication of a disposition to theorise, conscious that those theoretical views which are of a just nature, have only to be realised, and their revolting system of despotism and corruption is overturned, just as the darkness and horrors of night are dispelled, not by some beautiful theory on the science of optics, and the nature of the solar beams, but by the actual appearance, the meridian effulgence of the sun. All righteous dynasties are conscious of the same truth: and consequently they strenuously endeavour practically to introduce, and permanently to establish, the most eligible form of government, though a long succession of ages and efforts may be required to consummate their whole scheme of administration. Political theories that are impracticable, therefore, are foolish, because they exhibit a mere play of imagination on a subject of pure reality and of practical importance;—if essentially and inevitably injurious, they are improper, because they produce effects totally different from those which every system of national policy ought to produce:—but if naturally and perma-

nently beneficial, they deserve every degree of attention and support, because their practical operation involves the best interests of the human race. Ordinary exertions will generally secure ordinary success. Extremities are justifiable only when extreme necessity demands.

4. The universal prevalence of Christianity, would introduce the best system of politics that could possibly exist. It is not, however, by assuming a decidedly political aspect, or prescribing any particular form of civil administration, that Christianity would effect this object. For Christianity professedly disclaims all political pretensions and specifications of this nature, and declares that her jurisdiction is purely spiritual, and that the objects of her pursuit are chiefly moral and eternal. Christianity, however, would obviously have been egregiously defective, as a complete rule of life, had it contained no system of instruction deducible from its doctrines and precepts, for the regulation of our political conduct. Caprice would have exercised a most licentious sway in the modification of political systems, and the most momentous affairs of human life, would have been denied those signal advantages which they are capable of deriving from the salutary influence of true religion. But Christianity is not liable to the imputation of this vital defect. It is essentially, though not pro-

fessedly, a system of consummate human, as well as divine policy. It is, when properly investigated, found to be fraught with instructions adapted to the minutest and most circumstantial, no less than to the greatest and most extraordinary, transactions and relations of life. Its examples and its precepts are in all these respects of inestimable service. For the various personages whose history it describes, existed in almost every possible relation and position of human society; and the character which their conduct receives in the various parts of the entire, sacred volume, is such as conveys no very indefinite idea of what our conduct in the same or similar circumstances, ought to be. The most positive injunctions are in some instances given, and connected with some of the most sublime and essential duties of devotion and morality,—a circumstance which proves that political considerations are by no means incompatible with those of a more sacred nature, but that their connection with each other is one of the most intimate and essential character. It is not, however, so much by direct instructions that Christianity inculcates political rectitude, as by a tacit or an avowed reprobation of those principles, dispositions, and measures, which are at variance with this rectitude, and consequently irreconcileable with her own acknowledged advocacy of perfect and universal equity. In descanting, therefore, briefly on the proper spirit,

manner, and measure, of our political interference, we shall adapt the discussion to the genius of pure Christianity, by enumerating those improprieties which Christianity condemns in this department of life, rather than those political virtues and duties which, for the wisest of reasons, Christianity does not in all instances minutely particularise. Faith is universally reducible to one uniform standard. Christianity, therefore, erects that standard, wherever she plants her foot, or sounds her name. The erection of any other standard, is a direct intimation of hostility against the religion of Jesus Christ. Human policy, however, admits of innumerable modifications adapted to the endless diversity of human circumstances, local and personal, immediate or remote. But there are certain evils of a political nature which Christianity decidedly condemns, irrespectively of all differences in the circumstances of human beings. These evils we shall endeavour to enumerate and expose.

To be actuated by considerations of a merely worldly nature, by motives of temporal expediency alone, is a spirit of which Christianity rightly disapproves. She requires us to be influenced on all occasions by the most comprehensive views, and actuated by the most exalted motives. As there is nothing too great or sublime for her contemplation, so is there nothing too minute or insignificant for her inspection. She considers no object

or being as completely insulated, but views all as intimately combined. Though, therefore, the present life has its peculiar interests, though the transactions of this world, have an immediate and a primary reference to things of an earthly nature; yet, so intimately is the probationary state of man, so closely is his state of trial and responsibility, connected with all these interests and transactions, that they become in every instance occasions of good or evil, according to the light in which they are viewed, and the motives with which they are prosecuted. Let us, therefore, in all our political transactions recollect,—that our eternity of existence has already begun;—that those objects which lie beyond the extremely narrow boundaries of this life, are as vast in their importance as they are endless in their duration;—that things of a temporal nature, though they sink into contemptible insignificance, when their evanescence is contrasted with the interminable existence of these eternal realities, yet rise to a degree of infinite importance, when it is considered, that the whole of eternity depends on time, an immortality of bliss or pain on a few transient moments of mortal being;—that spiritual things are in this world inseparable from things temporal, and that the duties which we owe to ourselves and to each other, are essential parts and qualifications of the duties which we owe to the Supreme Being.

To cherish a disaffected spirit in our political negociations, is equally repugnant to the genius of Christianity. Loyalty, perfect and permanent, is inculcated by the religion of Jesus Christ in terms the most express and absolute. The authority of our earthly rulers, is represented by the Scriptures as identical with the authority of God himself, as originating in his divine appointment, as constituting a subordinate agency in his own immediate and universal government of the world, as productive of signal advantages to the obedient, but fraught with the most tremendous consequences to the lawless and rebellious. This official authority, therefore, whether regal or magistratical, or both, ought not to be coldly recognised, or reluctantly obeyed, but cheerfully acknowledged, and loyally observed. If kings are not gods, they are the highest representatives of Deity in this world. If their magistracy is not supreme, it is the highest and the most sacred authority of the kind known to exist amongst men. To despise it is as criminal as it is perilous. To resist it is as impious as it is dangerous. The vilest motives and principles are implied in such contempt or resistance. Anarchy and impunity would be the result of tolerating such a contemptuous opposition. But the character of this authority is as clearly defined in Scripture, as the duties consequent on its exercise are strongly enforced. When that authority is prostituted to

the violation of all divine laws and human rights, when it is transformed into an engine of deterioration or destruction; it counteracts what it was designed to promote, it incurs the displeasure by frustrating the benign purposes of Deity. Obedience to such authority is rebellion against God. Acquiescence with such government involves a participation in its guilt and ruin. The office is sacred; but its mal-administration is cursed by God, and obnoxious to man. Of all human elevations, monarchy is the highest, the most sacred, inviolable, and awfully responsible. Of all relative duties, allegiance to royalty, is one of the most important and indispensable. But the laws of God, as stated in the volume of inspiration, are incontestably higher than the laws of man, and equally obligatory on all men; and no infraction whatever of these laws, can be justified by motives of allegiance to human authority, or by motives of temporal expediency. "Fear God," is a command antecedent to the injunction "Honour the king." And whilst we recollect to pray "for kings," we ought not to forget "all men," no, nor even any man, however mean his condition, or debased his intellect, or low and contracted his sphere of life. For whatever monarchs, prompted by their parasites, may think to the contrary, they are own brothers to the meanest of their subjects. And they ought to treat all with a just and an impartial,

fraternal affection. The mightiest of monarchs have arisen from the common mass of human society: with this great mass their descendants will ultimately be undistinguishably intermixed. And death, as they successively bow to his iron sceptre, even now consigns them to the level of the countless, nameless dead.

A spirit of rapacity in our political pursuits, is most highly objectionable in the estimation of Christianity. Moderation in all our views and desires, and grateful satisfaction with a competent share of influence and enjoyment, are strongly inculcated in the religion of Jesus; and they were beautifully exemplified in his own conduct, and in the spirit and lives of those of his apostolical disciples who most resembled their Divine Master. The pinnacle of power is the summit of extreme danger, both temporal and spiritual. The slightest concussion at the base of such a pinnacle, occasions a dreadful oscillation at its vertex. Proportionate insecurity and instability are inscribed on all the intermediate degrees of wealth and power. The common level is the safest, if not the happiest of all. What it wants in elevation and homage, is most amply compensated by its superior comfort and more easy repose. Responsibility and toil increase in the largest ratio with every increase of authority and dignity. He who supposes that the contrary is the case, and who, under the force

of that delusion, strenuously aims at the highest stations of rank and influence, proves how profoundly ignorant he is of the laborious occupation, and the perilous dignity to which he aspires, and how sad his disappointment will be, when, having attained his object, he finds that what he supposed was tangible substance is mere shadow; that what he supposed was a bed of roses is a couch of thorns; that the robes of office are very little more than the disguise of restless anxiety; and that the diadem which appears to sit so lightly on the brows of monarchy, is nothing more than the gilded apex of an inverted mountain of danger and care. How deep soever the sympathies of some may be with the circumstances of those fallen monarchs whom this king-making, and king-unmaking age has hurled from their lofty stations, and degraded almost to the original level of their remotest ancestry, it is highly probable, that if these uncrowned heads could only suppress their chagrin at this painful reverse of fortune, they would experience more solid happiness in one single day of their tranquil retirement, than what they had ever realised during the brightest moments of their dazzling but uncertain splendour. Few, however, have the ambition to aspire to the regal elevation. The chief contest is for the inferior stations. These exist in the greater number, and lie more within the attainable limits of ordinary ambition. If any of these sta-

tions lie within our reach, and appear, in the order of Providence, to be destined for our occupation; let us not selfishly decline the opportunity of sacrificing our own private ease and comfort, that we may become more extensive almoners of the divine bounty, and exert a more powerful and proportionately a more beneficial influence over the destinies of mankind. But if, on the contrary, these higher stations appear unattainable, or attainable only with extreme difficulty, and if there appears to be no providential direction of our steps to these loftier and wider spheres of action, let us not be guilty of a criminal dissatisfaction with ordinary duties and enjoyments, but let us peacefully, and loyally, and cheerfully discharge the proper functions of our proper rank in the scale of society. And if we have not the imaginary advantages, we shall not have the real inconveniences of a weightier responsibility in matters of this nature. Numerous temptations will be avoided, to which we should otherwise be exposed; and numerous pleasures, natural, substantial, and permanent, will be realised, to which, probably, we should otherwise be utter strangers. For all those pleasures which do not administer directly to the real comfort and improvement of man, are chiefly of a fictitious and fallacious character, depending for their existence more on the perversion of sound intellect, and the corruption of a chaste imagination, than on the dictates of

rational propriety, and the demands of strict necessity.

Very nearly allied to a rapacious or an ambitious, is a secretly designing spirit,—a spirit of dishonourable contravention. I am not apprehensive that such a spirit is literally condemned by Christianity in express terms. There is, however, no disposition more directly at variance with the whole character and temper of this divine religion. Conduct the most strictly honourable, originating in motives the most scrupulously just, is invariably inculcated in the religion of Jesus, and elucidated by examples the most luminous and apposite. To be prejudicially influenced by the dread of human displeasure in the discharge of known duty, is one of those criminal weaknesses against which Christianity levels her loudest thunder. The tribunal of God is that bar to which conscience is perpetually cited. The judgment of God, is that sentence which alone conscience is taught to regard as infallible. The dread of his indignation, the hope of his favour, are the motives by which as alone supreme, conscience is directed to regulate her decision and operations. All other motives incompatible with these, are condemned and reprobated as ultimately pernicious and fatal, whatever the immediate and temporary advantages may be, by which they are attempted to be justified. The path in which Christianity requires us to move, whether our pur-

suits are temporal or spiritual, is one of undeviating rectitude. Such rectitude needs no concealment. The very profession of its object, involves its own justification and success. It is injustice that requires secrecy. It is infamy that delights in privacy. Truth is light, and prefers the light. Justice is courageous, and defies opposition. None but cowards and villains plot in secret, and strike in the dark. The man of integrity may, without rendering himself liable to a moral impeachment, prosecute with prudential caution, when an unseasonable development or a premature attempt might endanger the execution of his equitable purposes. For every action has its proper time, as well as its proper motive and design. And a wise man will be careful not to aggravate, by an injudicious interference, those evils which he deems it totally impracticable to alleviate. In all cases of practicable alleviation or improvement, his wisdom will be conspicuous in the selection of the most proper seasons and circumstances for his suggestions and alterations. But in pursuing such a course of conduct, he will take no undue or dishonourable advantage of the ignorance or confidence of others. He will lay no traps. He will adopt no subterfuges. He will not, by the nature of his opposition, incur the moral condemnation of those whose principles he condemns, and whose measures he deems it expedient to modify or oppose. He will not attempt

to promote the good of society or his own by any kind of political manœuvre. He will not, by any species of chicanery, degrade himself morally, whilst he attempts to raise himself or others politically. If he fails, therefore, there is no disgrace attached to his failure. If he falls a sacrifice to the cause which he has espoused, he dies a martyr to the noblest of principles advocated in the noblest manner. And whilst his memory shall be enshrined in amber, that of his executioners shall be consigned to everlasting infamy or oblivion. In all our political relations, therefore, whatever our rank or part may be, let us manifest the most open, undisguised, and honourable spirit, relying for success, not on the contemptible arts of a base and cowardly duplicity, but on the native strength and excellence of a just and noble cause.

But if dishonourable secrecy of design, is so objectionable, actual hypocrisy must be much more highly criminal. There is, in fact, no vice of the heart, which the whole system of divine revelation, denounces as more abominable than hypocrisy. That the depravity of heart which it indicates is extreme, is evident from this infamous peculiarity,—hypocrisy takes refuge in the dreadful consciousness, that God alone has any cognizance of its falsified intentions, and that the displeasure of God alone is that which its duplicity incurs. Greater impiety, more reckless presumption, cannot be conceived.

The hypocrite, if successful, is damned by God; and, if unsuccessful, is cursed both by God and man. The development of his character, whether early or late, stigmatizes him for ever as a villain of the deepest die, and excludes him irrevocably from all possible co-operation with men of true and honest minds. Nothing but the most audacious impudence can embolden such a wretch to show his face, or to sound his voice. And nothing but the most stupid ignorance and servility can condescend to employ or trust such a branded miscreant in any of the affairs of human life. He is a sanctimonious devil,—a demon of hell attired as an angel of light. His crime is one which, if universally practised, would subvert the whole universe, and involve all intelligences in the darkness, confusion, and horror of a moral chaos. In all our political views and proceedings, therefore, let us avoid whatever bears the remotest affinity to this abominable vice. Of what is right, we have no reason to be afraid. Of what is just, we have no reason to be ashamed. Remorse is the companion of guilt. Shame is the attendant of crime. Apprehensions arise in the breasts of the wicked only. As the good man has only one heart, so has he only one face and one voice. And as that face is a front of adamant in a good cause, so is that voice more terrible than thunder to the tyrants of the earth. The progress of light, moral as well

as physical, is inconceivably rapid and resistless. The honest sincerity of upright motives, possesses an incomparably greater influence, than the dissimulation of base intentions. Integrity is respected even by those whose passions or interests prompt them to oppose its influence. And the tranquil aspect of persecuted innocence, has frequently troubled oppressors more than the loudest menaces of their ferocious, guilty companions. Let us not, therefore, conceal disloyalty under the mask of allegiance. Let us not strain feelings of disaffection into sounds of loyal acclamation. Let us not bend the knee of discontent into the homage of grateful satisfaction. But if we have reason to complain, let us legally utter that complaint. If we are desirous of any improvement, let us lawfully exert every legitimate influence to procure that amelioration. And in all our expressions of respect, submission, and support, let us speak the language of a truly loyal heart, the dictates of a truly patriotic spirit. Our sincerity will inspire the administration with confidence; and mutual confidence between the government and the people, will be productive of the happiest effects.

The spirit opposed to rapacity, is that of listless indifference,—an apathetic unconcern respecting the progress and termination of political agency. The indulgence of such apathy, may be largely fraught with selfish ease to persons of indolent,

reckless minds, who deem the least inquietude, annoyance, or inconvenience, a sufficient reason for declining all interference in matters of a public nature. Whilst the state is sinking amidst the storms of faction, and perishing for the want of prompt and vigorous assistance, their only solicitude is to keep themselves remotely floating on some smooth sea, or rather on some stagnant lake the surface of which is never troubled for a moment by any stirring of the joyless, breezeless atmosphere. If the vessel of the state rides in safety, and careers in glory, their only anxiety is to insulate themselves in those parts of her capacious hold in which the occasional rockings of her mighty bulk, during the ordinary gales of a prosperous voyage, shall least interfere with the downy slumbers of their Sybaritical repose. The desolations of famine are to them the exuberance of plenty, provided they have sufficient for their own consumption. The devastations of war, are to them the reign of peace, provided they can only elude its march of horror. The miseries of oppression are to them the blessings of an equitable administration, provided they can only elude, or without much inconvenience endure, the pressure of its iron grasp. The evils of political malversation, are to them objects of no importance whatever, provided they can only create in themselves a morbid insensibility to the existence or operation of those evils. Bene-

volence, patriotism, and all the other relative virtues of a similar class, they despise as the phantoms of restless, ignorant souls. They are merely animated statues, breathing sculptures, of the most ignoble cast. To say that they had a political existence, would be grossly to violate the truth. To consider them as parts of the national community, would be to do them and others a monstrous injustice. They are mere excrescences of the body politic, having neither beauty, nor vitality, nor propriety, nor indeed any other excellence to recommend them to our notice. Their annihilation would be no public injury; for their existence is no benefit. To suppose the necessity of appealing to divine revelation for the condemnation of these political blood-suckers, would involve an insult on the first principles of common sense. The veriest idiot that ever drivelled, if he had a single spark of intelligence, could not fail to perceive the absurdity of supposing such conduct justifiable. For were it universal, or even general, nothing less than a miracle could prevent ruin from being the inevitable consequence. To cherish a proper degree of anxiety for the welfare of the government under which he lives, is, therefore, the indispensable duty of every individual who enjoys the blessings of civil society. Extreme anxiety is improper except in those cases which involve the mightiest interests of the nation immediately, and perhaps ultimately

those of the world at large. There can be little or no difficulty in making and observing the distinction, provided the proper ends of government be constantly kept in view, and promoted with a diligence proportioned to their diversified application and momentous importance.

Capriciousness in our political views and transactions, is another property which receives no countenance or encouragement from Christianity. Inflexibility in opinion, and immutability in practice, are properly attributes of infallibility alone. Human liability to error, therefore, ought ever to be accompanied with equal docility of temper in receiving instructions, and pliability of character in determining our conduct agreeably to the instructions received. But it is evidently a point of supreme importance, to ascertain whether those instructions, and the principles from which they profess to be derived, are certainly right. For if this point be left undetermined, or only imperfectly ascertained, our course will be marked with incessant versatility. And of all evils, this is one of the most pernicious and disgraceful. It degrades a man into a mere political weathercock, restlessly veering in any direction, and in all directions, just as the political breezes may chance to blow. The ceaseless variations of such a piece of mechanism, will never be consulted as the true indication of invariable rectitude. For to be incapable of per-

manency, is as objectionable as to be incapable of change. No confidence can ever be felt where no consistency prevails. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of a truly good man, is the general uniformity of his profession and practice. Frequent and sudden changes in these respects, even when they are accompanied with sincerity and virtue, are generally supposed to imply the existence of some defect or disorder, if not in the heart, at least in the understanding. And in proportion to the frequency and suddenness of these changes, are the disqualifications of the individual for some of the most important offices of religion and of life, and the danger to which he is exposed of becoming a mere tool, used for the convenience of opposite factions and contentious parties. Consistency of practice atones for some defects of judgment, and compensates some of the disadvantages arising from these defects. A proper degree of firmness, is essential to the ultimate attainment of truth and excellence in every department of human life. Let us, therefore, exemplify it in all our political proceedings. Let us carefully guard against all sudden and capricious revolutions of popular and of private opinion. Let us therefore beware, lest by a premature and an incautious innovation, we either counteract the beneficial tendency of some excellent measure, or substitute for great evils others of still greater magnitude. To

be prejudicially influenced by the consideration of consequences, when the principles of action are perfectly clear and obvious, is in all instances improper, and in some highly criminal and injurious. But when these principles are not so clear or obvious, when the probable good or evil of a measure, is almost the only criterion by which to decide respecting its fitness for choice or rejection,—the desire of promoting this benefit, or of preventing this evil, resolves itself into a principle by which we ought to be actuated according to the circumstances and evidences of the case. The doctrine of expediency, however, is a very dangerous one, capable of awful misapplications and abuses. Principle is an infinitely safer and surer guide; and there are very few cases indeed in which it is not possible to detect some decisive principle or other: that transaction which professes to recognise no principle of justice or propriety, will frequently be found to be an unprincipled transaction. But principles are not variable, though expediencies may be. Let us, therefore, constantly endeavour to ascertain and observe the proper principles of political conduct. Any deviations which we may deem it proper to make in our course, will then be attributable, not to the indulgence of fantastical caprice, but to the desire of regulating our conduct agreeably to the dictates of equity and propriety; and we shall perceive, when this is the case, that our

changes, if any, will neither be very numerous nor very extraordinary. Time will mature our plans: perseverance will terminate in ultimate success.

Rashness and capriciousness, though they resemble each other very closely, are yet distinguished from each other by some shades of difference which it is proper, in a discussion of this nature, to specify. Rashness betrays intemperate haste; capriciousness, extreme versatility. Rashness implies the want of deliberate foresight; capriciousness, the want of sound and settled principles of judgment. Rashness is frequently the result of immoderate zeal; capriciousness is frequently an indication of suspicious coldness. Rashness leaves scarcely any doubt respecting the sincerity of the individual by whom it is exhibited; capriciousness frequently excites very strong apprehensions of insincerity or hypocrisy existing in the person who is the subject of its influence. A rash man is generally a very incautious one; his design and its execution generally accompany each other at nearly one and the same moment; a capricious man frequently acquires, by habit, an extraordinary degree of caution in making his transitions, lest the diversity or opposition of his sentiments and practices at successive periods, should produce that shock which their sudden development would naturally occasion. It is, therefore, possible to conceive, I apprehend, that a rash man may be directly the reverse of a capricious one,

or, in other words, that the most culpable degree of rashness may be perfectly associated with undoubted soundness of principles, and integrity of character. But surely it is very deplorable, that such a conjunction should ever exist, or rather that it should be permitted to exercise its influence. There may be some instances in which a degree of promptness bordering on rashness, may be capable of effecting that which a system of slower operation would fail to accomplish. But what is gained by thus anticipating the proper period of its execution, is generally lost by exciting a proportionately cautious vigilance in the parties who have been taken by surprise, and whom, therefore, it will in future be extremely difficult to persuade to co-operate even in ordinary schemes of usefulness. In addition to this, there is something inexpressibly mean, in attempting to accomplish any thing by such a species of sudden intervention. A victory gained in open day and by honourable means, is incomparably more glorious than one obtained by wily stratagem in the darkness of the night. Conquest is the object of the former; extermination, the object of the latter:—between these two there is no parallel. But irrespectively of those particular cases in which some persons would attempt to justify the temerity of the action, rather by the expediency than by the justness of its sudden execution, there is generally very little

occasion for such apparently unseasonable violence. Where a sudden effect is the proper effect to be produced, suddenness of execution may be justifiable. But those administrations are the best, and those states are the happiest, in which there are the fewest occasions of this nature. The ordinary affairs of state require greater deliberation: and the greater their importance is, the more momentous their consequences are, and proportionately greater is that measure of deliberation which they require. The ancient heathens, in their poetical productions, frequently represent the gods as sitting in council to decide the fates of empires and of individuals. The moral of the fable is a good one. And though it may seem very incongruous, to adduce the evidence of divine revelation in contact with that of heathen mythology, yet no phraseology is more common in Scripture, than that which represents the Deity as deliberating with himself what course he should adopt, and deliberately executing the purposes of his will. It is from some of the passages in which this strain of diction is adopted, that several powerful arguments are adduced in favour of the existence of an adorable Trinity in the Unity of the Divine Nature. It is, therefore, easy to perceive the impropriety and the danger of acting with precipitancy in our political transactions, and the necessity and advantages of habitually cherishing that cool and sober

spirit of enquiry, decision, and procedure, which is so essential to the avoidance of error and injury, and the promotion of all that is equitable, honourable, and desirable in human affairs. Dignity and utility are equally connected with the adoption of such a line of procedure.

A spirit of partiality is also a very objectionable one in our political transactions. The demands of all on the attention of the state, are I believe equal; at least, there is no difference or distinction in this respect which I am able to perceive. And if my principles of reasoning are correct, there actually exists no distinction or difference in their degrees of claim. All those exterior distinctions which a difference in rank or wealth creates, are merely adventitious, mutable and transferrable in ten thousand various ways. But all the essential relations of human life, remain unchanged and unchangeable amidst all the different aspects and combinations of which external circumstances are capable. And if it were proper to exercise any partiality whatever, it ought certainly to be exercised towards such as enjoy the fewest advantages. For those who are elevated in rank, are supposed to have power sufficient for their own protection; and those whose pecuniary resources are ample, are supposed to have an abundance of all things essential to their ease and comfort. Whereas the powerless are constantly exposed to insult and

oppression from such as are designated their superiors; and the indigent are often dependent on the affluent for the description and the measure of their ordinary supplies. But this protection of the defenceless, this contribution to the necessities of the dependent, ought not to be sought or granted as a matter of favour but of absolute right; they ought not to be exercised from a spirit of partiality, but from a conscientious regard for justice. To invert this order of things by endeavouring to strengthen the powerful and crush the feeble, to augment the possessions of the wealthy, and exhaust the scanty resources of the poor, is a species of moral and political abomination inexpressibly detestable. That the higher orders of society, and especially the highest, are entitled to that degree of respect in the one case, and of homage in the other, to which their exalted stations give them a lawful claim, there can be no doubt entertained except in the minds of sheer, democratic levellers, whose first object is—to confound, and whose second is—to annihilate, all distinctions of this nature. That such degrees of reverence are due, is a doctrine clearly inculcated in the sacred volume. Divine revelation gives no countenance to any thing like a levelling system. The just rights of all men, are advocated by the religion of Jesus, and advocated with such a degree of strenuous authority as it would be impious in the

extreme to disregard. No Christian, therefore, can be a leveller. Neither can he justly exercise any degree of partiality; because the Scriptures claim for all men the same origin, the same common dependence on their Creator, the same obligations to respect his sacred laws, the same responsibility for their moral conduct in all the departments of life, the same intellectual capacity and immortal nature, the same capabilities for eternal bliss or eternal woe, equal interests in the atonement of Christ, the influences of the Spirit, and the benefits of revelation, and mutual reasons for the exercise of universal, reciprocal, fraternal affection:—considerations that infinitely outweigh all exterior and perishable distinctions, dependent on the caprice of man, and on the incessant fluctuation of human affairs. Let us, therefore, make these fundamental and imperishable, common properties of human nature, the basis of all our political operations, subject of course to those peculiar modifications which the different circumstances of men, suggest as proper or requisite,—living fraternally as one great family whose interests and happiness individually are the interests and happiness of all.

It is also highly improper to cherish a spirit of illiberality in our political proceedings. Every man whose veracity, sincerity, and probity, we have no reason to suspect, is entitled to a common share at least of our credence, confidence, and trust. For

in all circumstances of this nature, we ourselves justly expect and claim from others the same honourable interpretation of our own motives, intentions, and declarations. This mutual confidence, I presume, is the basis of all human negociations. For where it has no existence, where either one or both of the parties are supposed to be wholly uninfluenced by divine and human sanctions of what is right and just, all intercourse ceases except that which the force of mere power or necessity compels. The balance of justice is, in this instance, determined by the exertions of physical strength, or the weight of mere personal influence. Equity of course is reduced to a mere shadow or an empty name. All that is sacred in judicature, either human or divine, becomes a matter of mere convenience, subservient to the designs of injustice and artifice, or is openly violated and contemned as undeserving of the slightest regard from those whose decision is power, whose pleasure is law. It is from such a view of the subject, that in all ranks and nations, men of absolute power generally claim a degree of irresponsibility in their transactions with persons confessedly their inferiors in pecuniary and physical resources. They erect their own will into a standard of justice, and their caprice into an infallible criterion of right and wrong. To this standard they require all others to conform their judgments, and by this criterion to decide the

course which they shall adopt. Of all governments, therefore, despotic ones are the least likely to be equitable. The claims of absolute irresponsibility, and those of perfect equity, are, in all human intercourse, incompatible with each other. Of all administrations, on the contrary, those are the most likely to give perfect satisfaction, in which law takes the place of caprice, and in which impartial justice, not personal influence, is the foundation of that law. The obligations which such a law imposes on the observance of common honesty, the bonds and securities which it requires to be mutually exchanged, are perfectly compatible with the exercise of that mutual confidence which we have described as the foundation of all human transactions of an honourable nature. These bonds and securities involve the supposition of that confidence being mutually exercised. But they do more: they imply that in such a state of things as that which this world exhibits, this confidence may be abused, or perverted to unwarrantable purposes. And, therefore, in addition to securing the objects which all honest men have in view, they make provision for compelling such as may be dishonestly inclined, to acquiesce with the demands of common honesty, the equitable claims of that confidence which was unsuspectingly reposed in characters so unworthy of the honour and advantage. It is not, therefore, to the requisition of such securities, or to an

acquiescence with such a requisition, that we refer in condemning a spirit of illiberal suspicion. Our reference is to that unjustifiable jealousy of each other which the various classes of individuals who constitute a state, frequently entertain without the slightest reason of justice or propriety, and derive from no motive whatever except that which the mere difference of their circumstances suggests. Such groundless jealousies are peculiarly dishonourable and injurious. Such a spirit is truly contemptible, and, therefore, it is needless to say, unchristian. For that spirit of universal love which Christianity inspires, that principle of strict and inviolable honour which Christianity enjoins, are the remotest imaginable from any attempt or predilection capriciously to misconstrue or suspect the motives and designs of men. Christianity, it is true, neither encourages nor authorises any one to become a voluntary dupe to his own stupidity, or to his dulness of apprehension, or to his overweening, false, and foolish confidence in the proper objects of suspicion. There is, in fact, no system of truth, human or divine, which sharpens the intellect, and strengthens the judgment, and renders the faculties and affections acute and correct, more than Christianity does. Christianity itself neither deceives, nor encourages either the practice or the toleration of deception. The heart is the object of its scrutiny; the motive is the subject of its examination.

All its decisions are founded on the real natures of things. All its distinctions are determined by the existence of actual differences. Christianity, however, acknowledges God as the only infallible Judge of what is inscrutable to man. She confides to the Deity alone the province of sitting in judgment on the secret motives and intentions of the human breast. At the same time she requires man, not merely to pass the most favourable constructions on all the expressions and actions of his fellows, but to refrain from all unwarrantable interference with the province of Deity, and to regulate his judgment and conduct by such a supposition of common honesty and veracity as there is no just or valid reason to refuse to entertain. The exercise of candour will be productive of numerous and signal advantages. It will encourage the utmost freedom of communication, and propriety of discussion and action. It will banish all needless coldness, and caution, and reserve. It will conduce to a harmony of sentiment, and a concentration of effort, highly favourable to the interests and the happiness of the state. Illiberality, on the contrary, will be productive of opposite evils, equal if not greater in number and magnitude. Let us, therefore, carefully cherish a spirit of candour, and endeavour to render ourselves and others worthy of the confidence reposed. The advantages consequent on cherishing such a

temper of mind, will afford ample compensation for the inconveniences resulting from any slight mistake to which human fallibility, in judging of the motives of others, is constantly and inevitably exposed.

A spirit of needless provocation in our political transactions, is also very carefully to be avoided. Whatever excites the angry passions of men, disqualifies them for judging with sobriety and correctness. Feelings and intentions totally foreign to truth and justice, are produced. The real nature of the business then transacted is wholly forgotten, or only very partially recognised, and the whole affair is converted into a struggle equally disgraceful and injurious. Confusion reigns in the head, and madness in the heart. Rage distorts the countenance, and anger swells the breast. Fury breathes in the language, and defiance arms herself for the combat. Justice is trampled under foot. Affinity is treated with contempt. The laws are violated in derision. Authority and dignity are insulted, and laughed to scorn. Patriotism expires. Anarchy extends her horrid sway. Ruin follows in the train. Desolation and extinction close the scene. And is such a spirit as this inculcated, or tolerated, or only slightly reprobated by the religion of Jesus Christ? Are such demoniacal passions, expressions, and actions, overlooked, or applauded, or excused, by the Prince of Peace, and his religion of love?

Is the fire of hell, is the volcanic eruption of a burning, raging soul, a proper element or favourable soil for the vegetation and nutrition, the exuberant and mature growth of the seeds of truth and virtue? Can the spirit of a demon reign conjointly in the breast of a Christian with the Spirit of God, the spirit of pure and perfect, universal love? Can justice and reckless violence be reconciled? Can truth and madness be combined? Is not a spirit of provocation usually conjoined with abusive and contemptuous language; and is not the language of abuse and contempt threatened with eternal perdition by the Divine Author of the Christian religion? Yea, is not the mere feeling of causeless indignation, condemned by him in terms expressive of his most awful and judicial displeasure? And are not the declarations of Christianity on this subject, perfectly consonant with the dictates of right reason, and the principles of sound, human policy? Would not innumerable and dreadful evils have been avoided, would not numberless, and incalculably beneficial advantages have been enjoyed, had the dispositions of men, in all their various temporal and political transactions, been conciliatory rather than provocative, amicable rather than hostile? Torrents of blood would have been prevented. Awful desolations would have been averted. Invaluable institutions would have been preserved. Excellent

regulations would have been promoted. Fraternal and patriotic affections would have been cherished. And the state of nations and of the world, would have been incomparably better than it is. Past misconduct, however, is no plea for continuance in error, and folly, and vice. The painful experience of former calamities, should be no incentive to the re-production of their occurrence. What is remediable, ought to be remedied; and those evils which are not inevitable, ought to be avoided. The promotion of our own peace and safety, so far as they lie within our reach, is a duty incumbent upon us all. He who deliberately plunges himself into needless conflict and danger, is the subject of extreme guilt and folly; and certainly such are all those who, in their political capacity, either unconsciously or intentionally indulge a spirit of provocation. They thwart their own schemes; they frustrate their own purposes; they defeat their own object. They excite those very passions which it should be their grand object to lull or appease. They create those very obstacles which they have to encounter, and which they frequently find insurmountable. Their conduct indicates equally their want of integrity, of knowledge, and of sense. For what is very easy, they frequently render very difficult; and what is in its own nature difficult, they frequently render totally impracticable. Their conduct, therefore,

has no foundation either in propriety or utility. It is in all instances the object of unqualified reprobation. For even when the most conciliatory spirit imaginable is uniformly cherished, there are frequently extraordinary difficulties and obstacles created by the depraved and sinful passions of the human heart. How much greater, therefore, must these ordinary obstructions become, when these passions are kindled into a raging flame, and driven to impetuous madness, by any species or degree of capricious or provocative coercion? The spirit of pacification, however, which we so highly recommend, is not intended to involve any compromise of what is right or just. Even peace itself, most precious as it is, is a sacrifice that must be made, when the rights of inviolable justice cannot otherwise be secured. For no state of tranquillity that has injustice for its foundation, can be either of long or beneficial continuance. A permanent and an advantageous peace can be established only on the principles of strict and mutual probity. Let us, therefore, be constantly and conscientiously just ourselves. Let us promote the same conscientious regard for justice in all others. Let us exhibit and promote this temper with every feeling and expression of perfect amity. The results will be such as fully to compensate us for suppressing every vindictive emotion, or feeling of causeless, indignant excitement. And if we fail in securing

our object, we shall succeed in procuring the good opinion of those whose friendship may ultimately be of inestimable service, not only to ourselves individually, but to the community at large. We shall at least be comprehended in the number of those on whom that divine benediction is pronounced: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Last and least of all should a spirit of inhumanity or of cruel severity be indulged in our political proceedings. There may be instances in which clemency to the guilty would be cruelty to the innocent, and other instances in which great severity, seasonably exercised at the commencement, would ultimately prove to have been mercy to the guilty themselves, by obviating the necessity of its recurrence or continuance, or the exercise of still greater severity in future. But under the excitement of passion, produced perhaps by some provocation very recent in its occurrence, and very aggravated in its nature, it is not very easy to judge correctly respecting the propriety of visiting the offence with so immediate and tremendous an infliction. Rage and revenge, in the paroxysms of their fury, distort and discolour the features of those objects which they contemplate through the distorted and discoloured medium of their unnatural vision. Justice is frequently sacrificed to the gratification of these guilty emotions: irreparable

injuries are committed, and fatal steps taken, which subsequently greater coolness and moderation find it impossible to remedy or retrace. The innocent are involved with the guilty, and greater crimes are perpetrated in the infliction of punishment, than those which the unusual violence professes to avenge. Besides, the exhibition is an exceedingly unseemly one, when the grave goddess of justice, becomes a raging, roaring, foaming fury; when she violently tears the bandage of impartiality from her eyes, and converts the beam of her even balance into a thunder-bolt, or a sceptre of despotic rage; when she discards her sister-goddess mercy, who ought ever to be permitted to occupy half her throne, to share half her power, and pronounce half her verdict; and when she deafens her ears to the cries and intercessions of national affinity, of human pity and compassion. The exercise of such terrible severity has, in some instances, maddened to desperation those whom a milder treatment might have brought to a sense of their duty and their guilt. Extreme danger has sometimes roused men to efforts of irresistible resistance; and the evils intended to be remedied, have been dreadfully augmented by the indiscreet use of judicial and military power. The guilty insurgents have discovered the awful secret of their strength, and have made such a use of the discovery as has completely paralysed, if not annihilated for a

season, all salutary, legal authority. The standard of revolt and rebellion has been raised; and the multitudes of its adherents, have proceeded to commit irremediable excesses. The truth of these observations, has been frequently verified on a much smaller, as well as on a larger scale. Let us, therefore, carefully avoid exercising such a degree of severity as borders on cruelty, inhumanity, or revenge. Let us value the lives and liberties of men at the very highest rate that the interests and demands of justice will allow. Let us prefer the potent energy of kindness to the very precarious and dangerous agency of wrath. Let us exemplify in our own conduct that spirit of moderation and love by which we desire others to regulate their temper and proceedings. The whole strain of divine revelation, is in perfect unison with such a system of administration. The Deity himself proposes his own patience, and forbearance, and clemency, as so many infallible patterns for the imitation of his creatures. Yea, he has rendered the success of our own personal and individual application to himself for mercy, absolutely dependent for success on our extension of forgiveness to all those by whom we conceive we have been injured or offended. Though it may be thought, that this absolute, unqualified injunction to forgive, was intended more for private than for public use, more for the regulation of our individual intercourse

than for that of our official, judicial procedure; yet, so close in this respect are the analogy and connection that exist between the public and the private functions of men, that the principle of the rule, is capable of very general adoption in our national character, and exemplification in our political transactions. Justice without mercy would be as objectionable and injurious, as mercy without justice would be iniquitous and subversive. If errors in these respects are unavoidable, it has always been deemed advisable, to err the rather on the side of clemency. Human ignorance and imperfection seem to claim some indulgence of this nature, not merely to render the weight of judicial responsibility and awe more tolerable, but to afford the guilty suitable opportunities of amendment, and possibilities of atoning by the future propriety of their behaviour for the mischievous consequences of their past misconduct. It will generally be very easy for justice to discover the boundary of this merciful prerogative, — a boundary which, when once correctly ascertained, no consideration of expediency or favour should ever induce justice to transgress. If she is ever to fall a victim, she ought rather to die in the maintenance of her inalienable rights, than to perish in the unwarrantable violation of her own inviolable precepts. And when justice herself is crushed or sacrificed, Providence and time never fail to avenge the

insult or the violence by a course of most dreadful retribution.

We have now considered the several properties of that political spirit which Christianity either tacitly or avowedly condemns, and the opposites of which, therefore, she as strictly enjoins. That the impropriety of such a politically objectionable spirit, is not weakened by our discussion of the subject negatively, will be evident to all who recollect, that the negations and the affirmations of Scripture, that its prohibitions and its injunctions, are of equal strength. Yea, if there is any difference in degree of strictness, it is rather in favour of the prohibitory than of the mandatory precepts: as the omission of what is merely commanded, seems to imply a less degree of impiety than the actual, determined commission of what is expressly condemned. Exceedingly sorry should I be to institute any distinctions which have no foundation in the Word of God, or to lessen in the least the weight of any of those awful sanctions by which the authority of divine revelation is enforced. For in what light soever it is viewed, in what point soever of comparison or analogy its various parts are contemplated, all its instructions are infallible, all its injunctions imperative, all its prohibitions indispensable, all its remunerations of obedience incalculably valuable, all its visitations of guilt

indescribably dreadful. It is not for man, therefore, to confine the application or the interpretation of the sacred volume within the limits of his own ignorance, imagination, convenience, system, or caprice. The minutest of its references, as they have all evidently been thought worthy to occupy the attention of God, are unequivocally proved by that very circumstance to be worthy to engage the attention of man. For unenlightened man, if we might use a mathematical expression, is not an infallible judge of what constitutes different things either *maxima* or *minima* in the scale of moral importance. The field of his unassisted vision is very circumscribed; and his vision itself is extremely feeble. His conjectures, however, are very bold; and, as might be expected, his conclusions frequently are very erroneous. But when the light of divine revelation, illumines and illimitably expands the sphere of his moral contemplation, when the express declaration of God, renders all subsequent human decision as unnecessary as previously it might have been useless or presumptuous; — then, all the doubts and conjectures of man ought to be instantly banished, all his hesitation and procrastination ought instantly and for ever to cease, and the dictates of the Divine Spirit, whatever the objects or the duties are to which they refer, ought to be obeyed with equal exactness and cheerfulness. Now, it cannot be denied, that

both in negative and in positive strains respectively, the political spirit which we have represented as objectionable, is strongly condemned in the Word of God, and that the opposite one is as urgently inculcated. Whatever the slight shades of difference in opinion may be respecting the comparative strength of prohibitory and mandatory precepts, it is evident, since expressions of both kinds are promiscuously used in condemning the one spirit, and enjoining the other, that this subject receives from divine revelation all the weight of which it is capable, all the combined influences of prohibition and command, all the united sanctions of direct and indirect, of express and implied injunction. With the propriety and utility of this divine prescription, all the deductions of sound human reason and policy coincide. A less degree of decisive authority, might by some have been deemed sufficient: — a greater could not possibly have been conceived.

When a correct opinion has been formed on any subject, and a proper spirit adopted, the mode of expression used ought to be as correct and proper, as the sentiment and the disposition are excellent. This mutual correspondence, however, is not always and unavoidably maintained; for there are numerous instances in which the correctest ideas are so incorrectly conveyed, and the best intentions

so injudiciously expressed, that the acknowledged excellences of the sentiment and motive, are partially or totally nullified by these egregious improprieties. Such a discrepancy is no less deplorable than frequent; it is one of those inconsistencies which detract so largely and lamentably from the sum and value of human excellence. But the evil is not an irremediable one; for it is more difficult, perhaps, to think and feel correctly, especially when our interests and passions are deeply involved, than correctly to express right thoughts and feelings. The union of both excellences, however, is invariably practicable, and, generally, most easy and agreeable. But in no instance whatever is it more essential than in the expression of our political sentiments and feelings, and the assertion of our political rights and privileges. It is in fact uniformly indispensable: invaluable benefits result from its adoption; incalculable evils originate in its omission or violation. This consistency of expression is, indeed, perhaps more than any other assignable circumstance, that on which the success of all human policy more immediately depends. For men are not purely abstract intelligences. They are not influenced solely by their views of the mere thoughts and motives of others: they are capable of something more; they expect something more. Social communication by speech and gesture, intelligent and intelligible expression by

language and manner, is as real a part of human intercourse, as is the purely mental conception or apprehension of those ideas which are rationally formed and conveyed. Every communication by words or gestures, therefore, admits of being distinctly considered as right or wrong, as suitable or inappropriate, as agreeable or offensive; and since the connection that exists between the nature of the sentiments delivered, and the mode of communication adopted, is so intimate and inviolable, it obviously becomes a matter of vast importance, to determine, what mode of expression ought to be selected, in order that the sentiments may not be weakened or neutralised by any impropriety in the manner of their declaration, but that the latter may give all possible grace and efficiency to the former. It were the extreme of ignorance and folly, to affect a contempt of this mutual consistency and subserviency, or an independence on the advantages which their uniform prevalence is calculated to confer. The very subjects of such an affectation, are probably as greatly influenced by what they affect to despise, as all others are; for man cannot by any possibility divest himself of the essential constitution of his nature. And the superiority of true wisdom, is conspicuous not in some parts only, but in the whole of each of her arrangements. Her inspection is as minute as her view is comprehensive; her attention is as particular as

her observation is general. If, therefore, we are anxious to prove ourselves her accredited offspring, we shall deem it as essential to describe the manner, as to define the spirit of our political procedure. But this may be done with extreme brevity; for the previous definition of the one, has already suggested numerous observations and directions which it would, otherwise, have been requisite to advance respecting this other essential ingredient of propriety and success in our political conduct. We shall therefore select a very small number only of those qualities of manner, the great importance of which gives them a peculiar prominence, and entitles them to a distinct examination. And as we selected those qualities of a political spirit which are objectionable, in order chiefly that, by contrast, we might exhibit the laudable qualities in a more striking light, in the proportion in which these are either directly or indirectly exhibited and inculcated in the sacred volume; so shall we continue the same mode of illustration, by exposing and reprobating those properties of manner which have a tendency to weaken the energy, or destroy the effect, of our political wisdom and exertion. The testimony of divine revelation, though it may be adduced in favour of every thing that is good, is yet perhaps not indispensably requisite in the discussion of the present article: as the manner is more an object of rational propriety; and the spirit

is an object of investigation more immediately subjected to the scrutiny and verdict of revealed religion. We shall not, however, decline any opportunity of rendering indubitable by Scripture that which the verdict of human reason pronounces perfectly just and right:—the radiance of the sun is of universal and inestimable service, though his meridian effulgence may not be requisite for those minor purposes which the light of a taper, kindled from his beams, will serve equally well.

Precipitancy of manner is frequently very offensive. It is generally supposed to imply a culpable degree of rashness, a contempt for the opinion of sober judges, and the desire of accomplishing an object more by force than by reason. Every attempt of this brutal nature, is most highly objectionable. Occasional success at the commencement, will be more than counterbalanced by the subsequent failures of an administration characterised by precipitancy of measures and movements. Jealousy and revenge will arm themselves to repel every sudden and violent invasion of just and universal rights, of acknowledged and peculiar prerogatives. Excessive haste usually betrays a consciousness of weakness, and a conviction that stratagem and overbearing eagerness alone will secure success. There is no impression against which it is more necessary to guard, than that which consists in the popular suspicion of such

weakness in the constitution, and artifice in the administration of government. Deliberation implies strength. Consultation augurs dignity. Patience denotes impartiality. Steady progression exhibits the combination of all these excellences. And as the wisest may sometimes be deceived, and the best informed may sometimes err, — as passion is a very fallible guide where interest is concerned,—as the general sense of mankind may frequently be consulted with signal advantage,— as the expression of their general opinion involves the public themselves in the responsibility of the affair transacted; it is evidently the part of true wisdom, of justifiable policy, to guard as effectually against all precipitancy in the manner, as against all rashness and caprice in the spirit of our political procedure, and justly to implicate others in the supposed losses and disgrace of our unfortunate attempts, as well as to permit them equally to share in the benefits and glory of our more successful endeavours. "Let all things be done decently and in order," is a regulation as indispensable in all political as in all religious transactions.

The next objectionable property of manner that we shall mention, may seem too general in its nature to admit of preciseness in its definition: there is, however, one particular sense in which it is capable of being most appropriately explained.

This, which we may characterise as the foolish or injudicious manner, consists in the selection of improper or unsuitable means for the attainment of a specific end. The object of pursuit may indeed be noble, the motive strictly honourable, the intention just, the vigour and perseverance laudable, and the necessity and practicability of the measure universally apparent; and yet, from some strange inaptitude in the individual, or some strange inaptness in the means employed, or some strange impropriety in the use of the means, the whole scheme shall utterly fail, and disappointment, chagrin, and disgrace, if not misery, distress, and ruin, shall be the only consequences and reward of conscious and undeniable purity, integrity, and devotion. Such an issue in such circumstances must be extremely deplorable; and the effectual remedy of such an evil, must be proportionately desirable. But very extensive knowledge and experience are frequently requisite for the prevention of error in these important negociations. If the requisite share of this knowledge and experience, is not possessed by any single individual, or by any precise number of individuals less than the majority, how obviously just and necessary must it be, agreeably to a suggestion contained in the last article, to consult all those who are concerned in the measure proposed, and affected by the manner and the consequences of its execution, and

thus to remedy the ignorance and inexperience of the few, by the collective wisdom and council of the many. There may be, in the adoption of such a course, an appearance of deep humiliation; but there is no real degradation involved in performing such an act of condescension, or, rather, just solicitation of opinion. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." It is a proof of the soundest wisdom and policy in the applicant or applicants, to make such an appeal. It proves that they are too lofty to be proud, and too prudent to be foolishly and perilously confident. It exalts them in the estimation of those whose judgment and exertions they are anxious to incorporate with their own. It secures such a concentration of mental and physical energies, as is adequate to the discovery of all that is discoverable, and the attainment of all that is attainable either in theory or practice. To the few it is as honourable, as to the many it is equitable and advantageous. Let us, therefore, by means of deep thought, extensive enquiry, and patient and profound experience, endeavour to act as wisely as we think justly, and to secure our object with a degree of certainty equal to the excellence of our principles, the purity of our motives, the genuineness of our patriotism, and the propriety of our views.

Indecency is a species of impropriety that ought to be carefully avoided. A revolting or a

disgusting manner has a powerful tendency to prejudice people against the measures which we desire to introduce or execute: there is as little justice as propriety in needlessly wounding their feelings; for we are all made of the same materials, and liable to be similarly and equally affected by the same causes. Frequently, however, this community of nature is partially overlooked, or even totally forgotten. Some men, indeed, whose personal sensibilities are exceedingly fine, treat all others as though these were destitute of susceptibility; but when any attempt is made to retaliate their unceremonious behaviour, they instantly take huge offence at the want in others of that propriety in which they are so notoriously and egregiously deficient themselves. Let it not be supposed that we are recommending or justifying such retaliation; though the principle of the conduct reprobated is most highly improper, and deserving of the severest censure. "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," is a rule universally applicable to political transactions. This reciprocal and equitable, this critical and practical substitution of ourselves for others, would prevent a multitude of those improprieties which are so intolerably offensive, so fatally prejudicial to the minds and measures of men. When the measures are really good, it is very deplorable, that their excellence and value should be deteriorated or destroyed by

the disgustingly unbecoming manner in which they are proposed and executed. Whatever degree of success or failure, may attend these measures, it is certainly preferable, when we have the liberty of choice, to please rather than to offend, and to gratify rather than to disappoint the common and reasonable expectations of men. The adoption of an impolitic manner, is certainly an instance of very great impolicy.

One species of such indecency, is extreme violence or intemperate eagerness of manner: this scarcely ever fails to shock and irritate others, and to rouse them rather to defend their particular interests from sudden aggression, than calmly to consider and cordially to adopt the measures proposed. No obstructions, therefore, are really greater, no obstacles more insuperable, than such as this apparently overwhelming vehemence creates. Sheer despotism alone can support, and absolute servility alone can tolerate or endure so boisterously rude an infringement of the common rights of humanity. The evil is proportionately great in all the minor departments of society, and offices of life. The toleration of this impetuosity of manner, implies either excessive weakness or uncommon patience. I am not aware, that the latter ingredient is possessed in a very extraordinary degree by the world at large, those instances excepted in which all proper sense of independence, equality,

and dignity, has been completely annihilated by abominable oppression or by damnable slavery. So detestable an annihilation of any man in the view which he takes of his own political being and personal consequence, it is not very desirable or politic to promote. Where it has not been already effected, human nature will, generally and very justly, recoil with honest indignation at the assumption of an overbearing violence in matters which ought to be calmly and deliberately transacted. If this true nobility of soul, has not strength sufficient for the assertion of its dignity, and the maintenance of its rights, it is dastardly and dishonourable in the extreme, to take advantage of its merely physical impotence for the purpose of indulging an imperious temper, or acting in a despotic manner. Extreme weakness, or total incapability of resistance, is the only basis on which despotism can, with any prospect of permanent success, erect her detestable dynasty, and unmask her ferocious features. Tyranny, therefore, is little more than cowardice in disguise. The tyrant vanishes the moment his victims re-assert their right to be treated as the subjects of an equitable government, and as men. Truth and justice are omnipotent; mere force is physical, animal, brutal. God himself is actuated by the former; insensate and irrational matter is impelled by the latter. It is nobler to induce by argument, than to compel by physical

energy. Rational conviction is permanent in its effects; those of physical compulsion, continue no longer than the agency is exerted; and the recoil, when there is any degree of elasticity extant, is always in proportion to the pressure employed. Let us, therefore, in all our political expressions and transactions, carefully guard against even the appearance of violence or intemperance of manner. We shall find it much easier and more convenient, to prevent the storm, than to appease its rage;—much more agreeable and beneficial, to conciliate and employ the kind affections, than to encounter and rule the angry passions of men. Violence of any description and in any case, should be the last resource. In politics, especially, it is liable to be abused to the worst of vices and purposes. Its sanguinary introduction into political systems and national animosities, is, perhaps, the most prolific source of all the temporal evils and miseries in the world. O thou sword! when wilt thou cease to devour? O thou thundering artillery! when wilt thou cease to roar? Alike insatiable and irresistible, ye are the curse and terror of the human race: Sin is your parent; perdition is your award.

A hostile or an unfriendly manner may seem very closely to resemble a violent one; the difference, however, is great and easily perceptible. For the most obnoxious violence or extravagance of

manner may prevail, even when the spirit is most benevolent, and the intention most friendly; and there may be, as there generally is, the most chilling reserve, the most cautious coldness of manner visible, when the disposition is most malevolent, and the design most hostile. Neither of these modes of expression, abstractedly considered, is, however, an infallible criterion of the real feelings and purposes of an individual. For men differ exceedingly, if not infinitely, in their modes of expressing the same sentiment, and accomplishing the same object. Considerable allowances, therefore, are to be made, and indulgence and candour perpetually exercised. The acknowledged excellences of character, must be permitted to atone for some obvious defects and discrepancies of manner. The intention must be augured, the motive interpreted, the design penetrated, the character adduced. But this species of penetration, though its professed object is to discover something internally right that shall plead an apology for something externally wrong, must be used with consummate judgment and extreme caution. It is exceedingly liable to abuse. There are, indeed, no errors more numerous or dangerous than those which are committed in judging abstractedly, in determining, Deity-like, the views and motives of others. We are sometimes, however, compelled to have recourse to these external indications: and unless a man

is a consummate hypocrite, yea, even when he is, he can scarcely avoid betraying something or other that will assist in developing his real character. If his manner exhibits perpetual inconsistency and versatility, we soon learn to discard him as an inscrutable, a dangerous, or an officially useless individual. It is therefore very important and desirable, when the intention is good, that the manner should be friendly; when the motive is honourable, that the expression should be agreeable: the advantages resulting from their coincidence, must be very obvious from the disadvantages consequent on their disagreement. Irrespectively of other considerations, it is a pity that a friend should appear as a foe, or that a favour should be conferred as though an injury were inflicted. Obsequiousness, however, is no more tolerable in the one party, than fastidiousness is justifiable in the other. An agreeableness of expression, correspondent with the benevolence and purity of intention, is all that can be reasonably expected.

Let every one, however, carefully guard against affectation of manner: of the two improprieties, this is the more criminal, since it borders as closely on refined hypocrisy as violence usually argues blunt sincerity. If a man studiously adopts such a mode of expression and action, as is generally believed to be right and beneficial, let him do it entirely from principle, from a full conviction of its pro-

priety and its value. If he adopts it conscientiously, he will exhibit it consistently. If he makes his countenance the index of his heart, and constantly endeavours to keep his heart right with God and man, there is no probability that he will egregiously fail in observing these external proprieties. Unity and harmony, simplicity and purity, will characterise all the various parts of his experience and his procedure. Confidence and dependence will be felt by others: independence and love will be felt by himself. Hypocrisy will tremble in his presence through fear of detection. Dissimulation will abandon her deceptive arts. Truth will advance with boldness, and speak with decision. Integrity will assert her rights, and justice will respect the assertion. Power will be subservient to interest, and the common interest will be identified with the happiness of all.

Frivolity of manner is the last of those properties which the great importance of the subject, requires us to particularise. Frivolity appears to be improper not so much as implying the existence of any thing very bad, as indicating the absence of every thing essentially good. Generally, the frivolous man is too light and airy to be capable of conceiving or executing any thing of considerable magnitude or importance, either good or bad. To him all is surface and air, trinkets and dalliance. He is the child of play, the fairy phantom of aërial

nothingness. He cannot be fixed, unless he be transfixed. He cannot be rendered serious, until death imprints his own ghastly, convulsed visage on his countenance; and even then, he is a mere dancing skeleton, a lover of flight, and fun, and vagary. His clay is never at rest until it is closely imbedded in the depths of the grave. For such a creature to profess any serious concern about the awful realities of time and eternity, would be to give the lie to his whole character. He acts on no principle except that of making no distinctions, and adopts no system except that of confounding and nullifying all the objects and events of all states and periods. He is of no conceivable use except to exercise the patience of the truly rational and useful. He is capable of being applied to no beneficial purpose except that of illustrating the folly and madness of his own conduct. Virtuous gravity claims no alliance with such a being, or rather such a practical nonentity. She cannot act in concert with such a piece of personified versatility. She requires seriousness and solidity in the tempers and countenances, stability and steadiness in the principles and professions of men. Uniformity, intensity, perseverance, are consequently essential in political transactions. Their nature, importance, and influence, all demand the deepest and most serious attention. In such transactions, therefore, frivolity is cruelty; and indifference, a crime; soli-

citude argues affection, and consistency is a virtue of distinguished excellence.

There remains only one other subject of enquiry connected with this section of the subject: and the enquiry is such as admits a direct and single reply. We may, therefore, congratulate ourselves, at least on having successfully brought this part of the Dissertation so nearly to a close. If any apology for its length were required, that apology might be most easily and triumphantly derived from the vast importance of the subject, immediately and most influentially connected as it is with all the best interests, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, of the human race. To have treated the subject superficially, or in too general a manner on the present occasion, would have argued a belief, or implied a confession, that it was one of a trivial nature or of minor importance. Such an estimation of its character, would have been as erroneous, as the declaration of its insignificance or its inferiority, would have been false and criminal. For the proof of this assertion, I appeal boldly to that conviction which a proper view of the subject, taken in all its relations and connections, must inevitably produce. It will therefore imply no breach of charity, or want of candour, to affirm, that if in any instance this impression and conviction do not exist, there must be some egregious error or defect in the nature

or extent of the views or feelings entertained. This verdict of course recoils on myself with equal force, if the views which I have taken are incorrect, and if the importance which I have alleged, is not accurately estimated. By the decision of reason and revelation, to which conjointly I have uniformly and definitively appealed, I express not only my willingness, but my desire and demand, to stand or fall.—The question with which we proposed to close the discussion, is simply this: What is the proper measure of that spirit and manner which we have described? The answer is equally simple:—the measure ought to be determined by the nature and importance of the principle and the occasion; and that which the nature of the principle, and the importance of the occasion, demand, will easily be ascertained by observation and experience, directed and tried by reason and revelation. The particulars involved in the application of each of these criteria, we have already enumerated, and illustrated at considerable length. It is therefore to this enumeration and illustration, that we refer every sincere enquirer for the information which he desires to obtain.

If, in conclusion, I might assume an admonitory strain, and not only do the privileges of the ministerial character authorise me to exercise its sacred functions as a right, but its solemn injunc-

tions require me to perform it as a duty,—I would take this opportunity most solemnly to declare, that though nothing of a merely temporal nature, is so trivial or transient as to be unimportant in a moral or religious point of view; yet, the most important of all temporal things, abstractedly considered, sink into absolute insignificance, when contrasted with the awfully grand and overwhelmingly vast realities of eternity. It is solely from the consideration of that infinite importance which, in the present state of being, things temporal derive from their inseparable connection with things spiritual and eternal, that we have been induced to devote to the former that large share of deep attention which, in this relative point of view, they seemed justly, absolutely to demand. Our object has been to discuss the question not of politics merely, but of Christian politics, and to describe the character not of the politician merely, but of the Christian politician. Let us ever conscientiously keep this distinction and union prominently and fully in view. Let us ever evangelically connect eternity with time, judgment with probation, and endless, perfect, celestial felicity, with the transient, inferior, and imperfect enjoyments of the present life. And may that God, by whom all our conditions and destinies are providentially appointed, and finally and infallibly decided, enable us uniformly to act in every situation and capacity, so

conscientiously and consistently, that we may never be chargeable with either violation of law, or neglect of duty, but may incessantly here, and eternally hereafter, enjoy the inestimable blessings derived from the exhaustless plenitude of his wisdom and power, his grace and love,—the ineffable glories and felicities experienced in the paradise of his presence, the heaven of his beatific smiles.

PART III.

PRIVATE OPINION AND ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNION.

PART THIRD.

PRIVATE OPINION AND ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNION.

Man is a social being. Whatever his character, experience, or pursuits may be, he feels a natural and an irresistible propensity to mingle with his species, and to supply, by compact or combination, the defects or incompetency of his individual strength, knowledge, or enjoyment.

His passion for society originates chiefly in his boundless desires of information, and his extraordinary capacities for the acquisition, and capabilities for the communication, of universal knowledge and entertainment. His insatiable curiosity requires to be gratified with inexhaustible novelty. All the treasures of science, human and divine, are not more than adequate to the vastness of his comprehension, the depth of his penetration, the variety of his functions and faculties, the permanence and intensity of his relations and affections. His vigour is only increased by activity. His mind is only strengthened by expansion. His docility is only

stimulated by the variety of his attainments. His genius acquires proficiency by application. But his tongue is as capable of uttering as his mind is of conceiving ideas; and his ear is as quick in perceiving as his tongue is rapid in expressing articulate sounds. His knowledge acquires perfection, and by communication serves innumerable purposes of the greatest utility. Whilst his intellectual faculties are engaged in the production of thought, his eyes, his lips, his gestures, all speak, fully, clearly, and delightfully, the perceptions and emotions of his soul. His knowledge, consequently, has no limits except those which bound the globe that he inhabits, the universe which he contemplates, and the infinity of space with the eternity of being which his immortality emboldens him confidently to anticipate.

This association of human beings, gives rise to an endless multiplicity of relations and engagements. Connections are produced which combine the whole mass of mankind in one common bond of intercourse and union. Distance vanishes. Obstacles disappear. Languages amalgamate. Complexions blend. The whole world is converted into one field of action and fruition, of which respectively all its inhabitants are the common cultivators, and of the infinitely various productions of which they all mutually partake. Deficiencies are supplied, inconveniences remedied, enjoyments

generalised. The savage and the sage instruct each other. The feeble and the strong employ each other. Business and pleasure are conjoined. Interest and enjoyment are united. The cords of society, alternately contract and expand so as to afford an endless diversity of relation and occupation to the human race. The streams of knowledge, diverge and converge in proportions and directions innumerable. By the operations of this passion, schemes the most stupendous are executed, arrangements the most comprehensive in time and place completed, the character and aspect of the globe morally and physically changed, the very elements and climates are, by those changes which the combined skill and strength of man produce, materially modified, the discoveries and improvements of all ages and nations accumulated and perfected, the occupations and concerns of life originated and regulated, and the destinies of eternity itself, as well as the issues of time, greatly influenced, or rather, principally decided. The purposes to which the social passion is applicable, are infinite in number and variety. To indulge it indiscriminately, irrationally, prejudicially, would be an egregious folly, an enormous crime. For the prevention of these dreadful evils, judgment and prudence consummate are, in its application equally momentous and indispensable. Contamination or purity, iniquity or equity, degeneracy or improvement,

disgrace or distinction, misery or enjoyment, are all more or less determined by the course of conduct adopted in the social department. Selection is easy and optional; decision is no less important than generally permanent.

What therefore are the objects which we ought to propose for accomplishment by the indulgence of the social passion? The perfection of our nature and condition, is, most obviously, that object which this passion ought to be uniformly and universally employed to promote. But this object includes a multitude of subordinate and subsidiary ones. Exactly to enumerate, and precisely to define all these, would be a task of greater length and labour than this discussion requires. The communication of knowledge, and the alleviation of misery, the discouragement of vice, and the promotion of virtue, the purification of the human heart, and the elevation of the human character, the confirmation of justice, and friendship, and truth, the reconciliation of opponents, the pacification of enemies, and the cultivation and applause of humanity, humility, and love,—these are some of those minor though all-important objects in the promotion of which this passion is an indispensable, and is capable of being rendered a most efficient auxiliary. Solitude has its peculiar demands and advantages; but it is of too retired and exclusive

a character to be constantly sought, or perpetually enjoyed, by creatures constituted as we are. Total sequestration is productive either of the deepest melancholy, or of such a state of inactivity, both bodily and mental, as is equivalent to a virtual annihilation of its voluntary victim. The social principle indeed seems more or less to pervade the whole universe. The Deity himself is represented as delighting in eternal converse with the purest and happiest of his created intelligences. It is the perfection of this intercourse which renders heaven the habitation of light, and bliss, and love; and its absence or infernal prostitution which constitutes hell a dungeon of everlasting and overwhelming horror, rage, and terror. Objects directly the reverse of those which we have specified, are probably capable of being equally promoted by the perversion of this passion. For its flexibility and and its strength are not perhaps very materially affected by the nature of the objects to which it is applied.

What are those rules, therefore, by which propriety, observation, and experience, require that the social passion should be regulated? These rules ought to be all equally obvious, natural, and easy: their excellence depends on the possession of these qualities. The following may properly be considered the fundamental rule:—That we should

associate with our superiors for the purpose of improving ourselves, and with our inferiors for the purpose of promoting their improvement; with those who are wiser, that we may acquire knowledge, and with those who are ignorant, that we may communicate information; with the happy, that we may participate their enjoyment, and with the wretched, that we may relieve their sufferings; with the virtuous, that we may acquire a greater degree of moral excellence, and with the vicious, only that, by guarded social intercourse, we may facilitate their reformation. The test of all social propriety, therefore, is the existence of an obvious tendency to improve ourselves or others, or to advance mutually the improvement of both parties. Every species of intercourse that has not this tendency, or that has an opposite one, is manifestly improper and dangerous, or inevitably injurious, and frequently fatal. This test is perfectly simple and infallible; it is of easy and universal application. We need not for a moment entertain the least imaginable doubt respecting the propriety and utility of its adoption. We shall therefore constitute it the basis of all our reasonings and illustrations on the subject of this most interesting and important enquiry: — To what extent is the independent exercise of Private Judgment compatible with the free enjoyment of Ecclesiastical Communion?

The first question that naturally arises is this: To what extent are our Private Opinions capable of being subjected to our own control? But perhaps it will be no less requisite than advantageous, previously to define the term—Private Opinion. Within the limits of this term we by no means include those innumerable and undefinable fancies, those vagaries of thought, and shadowy, fleeting images of an ideal nature, to which on every subject a prolific imagination may give birth in rapid and endless succession. These evanescent, impalpable productions of the mind, though capable of being in some degree familiarised by the frequency of their repetition, are at this time undeserving of our attention. They are merely the flickering scintillations of genius, dazzling for one moment, extinguished the next, and followed by others of equal shapelessness and evanescence. They are incapable of being systematised, because they observe no regular law of origination or distribution. They serve merely for the amusement of our leisure moments; they are not worthy to occupy our serious hours. By Private Opinions, generally, we mean those views which we ourselves personally entertain on any subject to which we have given sufficient attention, and concerning which we have received sufficient information to enable us to form a deliberate and an impartial judgment; and by Private Opinions, in matters of religion, we mean of course

those views which, after due and competent examination, we individually entertain respecting the doctrines and precepts of divine revelation. Every man who properly examines revealed religion, must have some opinions of this personal nature. For the truths of Scripture are neither indefinite nor incomprehensible. Perspicuity and precision uniformly characterise the Sacred Writings, those instances excepted in which the Holy Spirit has, for purposes infinitely wise and important, adopted a figurative or mystical strain that requires, for the full comprehension of its meaning, the exercise of vigilance, faith, and patience, until the prediction shall be interpreted by the event, and the obscurity of the intimation or representation removed by the gradual development of its significance. The whole compass of divine revelation, however, is in our treatment of this subject, supposed to be included within the range of our examination; all its truths, and every part of each truth, are considered equally eligible for the occupation of our thoughts. Now, the question for discussion is: To what extent are these private sentiments, these personal views, capable of being subjected to our own control, of being modified or determined agreeably to our own inclination? To this interrogatory, it will be necessary to give a very cautious reply. For it would seem at first sight, as though these private sentiments were in no measure capable of being subjected to

our own control; and this impression would certainly be correct, if man were a pure intelligence, either wholly unimpassioned, or uninfluenced by passion, either wholly unprejudiced, or incapable of being affected by prejudice. Such an intelligence God is; such intelligences we presume angels are: — the Deity being absolutely perfect in the degree, as well as infinite in the measure of this excellence and exemption, and angels approximating to the Deity in these respects in proportion to the purity of their nature, the clearness of their views, and the correctness of their deductions; — the Deity judging infallibly at one glance, and angels arriving at a similar conclusion by progressive, though inconceivably rapid induction. But man is the creature of passion as well as of reason. His emotions are as strong as his perceptions are vivid; and the workings of his passion, very greatly disturb and interrupt, derange and weaken, confound and neutralise, the operations of his reason. These two rival powers of the intellectual empire, though they ought ever most harmoniously to co-operate, yet seldom act in unison. Mostly, they are not only at variance with each other, but in a state of violent opposition; and the struggle for supremacy is productive of the most disastrous consequences. Reason, which ought invariably to preside, is generally the slave of passion; and the slavery is not a light or an easy servitude. The

predominance of passion, is generally as complete and dictatorial, as the degradation and debasement, the servility and prostitution of reason, are infamous and extreme. Violence, anarchy, misery, are the results of these disorders and conflicts in the intellectual world. The question, therefore, which we have proposed, resolves itself into another:—To what extent are our passions and prejudices capable of being so controlled, that they shall not interfere with the exercise of our reason, or shall interfere with the proper discharge of its functions in a comparatively immaterial degree? Is passion irresistible? if it is not, what is the degree of its weakness, the measure of its power? Is prejudice irremediable? if it is not, what is the appropriate remedy, and what are the proper mode and strength of its application? That passion is not irresistible, is evinced by numberless and glorious victories continually obtained over the potent, and all but omnipotent adversary. That prejudice is not irremediable, is demonstrated by the innumerable transitions and favourable modifications which it constantly undergoes.

Patient and impartial deliberation,

Cautious and inflexible resolution, achieve this conquest of passion.

The expansion of intellect,

The extension of knowledge, and

The indulgence of a just liberality, effect this

gradual abolition and final extermination of prejudice.

By the two former of these subduing and transforming agencies, the tyrant of passion is not merely dethroned, but is reduced to a state of most useful and gratifying subserviency; and by the three latter, the monster of prejudice, is changed into the very being of loveliness and love. To an examination of these several agencies respectively, therefore, we shall devote a share of our present attention. The ultimate attainment of our grand object, will be very greatly facilitated by the adoption of this preliminary caution and exactness. Precipitancy of discussion has frequently involved important subjects in confusion and indistinctness, and rendered what would otherwise have been easy of solution and advantageous, inextricable and pernicious. Rapidity of progress is only proportionate advancement in error, deviation from rectitude, unless a proper direction has been taken, and it continues to be pursued. The vaster is the edifice in its dimensions, the greater the accumulation of materials in its construction, and the more speedy and dreadful will be its downfall and ruin, unless the foundation laid is adequate in strength and extent to the height and weight of the structure progressively erected. It were better to be motionless than to move in error. It were better

to enjoy repose, than to work only for the purpose of spoiling the materials, and prostituting the energies employed. We shall endeavour, therefore, to make the foundation of our reasoning as broad and solid, as we desire its superstructure to be useful and permanent. We shall endeavour to select a course as direct and infallible, as the end at which we propose to arrive, is important and delightful. And as the Rock of Eternal Truth, is preferable to every other basis; so is the path of Eternal Truth, preferable to every other course of procedure.

Patient and impartial deliberation, is of essential service in the formation of our Private Opinions. Its effects are of the most admirable and beneficial description. The glow of passion cools. The ardour of desire abates. The intensity of feeling, relaxes into a more equable and uniform tone. The distortions of objects vanish. Confusion disappears. Error, trembling at the closeness of the scrutiny, drops her mask, and confesses the whole imposture. Derangement assumes the appearance of order; intricacy, of exactness; obscurity, of splendour; confusion, of accuracy; perplexity, of ease. Mysteries become easy of comprehension. Problems of extraordinary difficulty suggest their own solution. The face and features of every object, are very greatly, sometimes entirely changed.

Discoveries multiply rapidly. Elucidations flow spontaneously. A divine tranquillity reigns in the soul. The love of truth acquires ascendency in the breast. The desire of pure, essential knowledge, becomes itself a passion, the gratification of which involves the interminable improvement of our intellectual faculties, the unlimited accumulation of our moral and scientific attainments. And is not the exercise of this patience practicable? Is not the predominance of this impartiality attainable? Is not habitual impatience, is not conscious partiality inexcusably criminal? Ought not the most strenuous exertions to be made for the purpose of preventing the occurrence or prevalence of these culpable emotions? Are not interest and duty equally involved in effecting this determined opposition or suppression? Is not the indulgence of intemperate eagerness to arrive at a decision, is not the exercise of conscious partiality for the purpose of facilitating the attainment of this final issue, manifestly inconsistent with the supposed admission of those difficulties which generally attend the acquisition of knowledge, and some of which occasionally appear for a time wholly insuperable? Have not ages, and centuries of ages, been required to raise the pile of human knowledge to that height which it has now attained? and are not centuries of ages more required to raise this pyramid of science to the highest summit of intellectual aspi-

ration and exertion? Have not these stupendous achievements been realised chiefly by patient and impartial deliberation? and is not precisely the same kind of rational application requisite for the completion of what others have begun, for the perfection of what others have prosecuted, for the extirpation of those errors which their occasional indulgence of a less deliberate spirit, may have incorporated with their respective systems, and for the origination of those new discoveries and contemplations which may have escaped their generally and wonderfully patient, laborious, and scrutinizing inspection? Is it not possible to check, and impede, and overcome, this breathless and injurious haste? Is not a large portion of this precipitate and impatient exertion spent worse than in vain? Are not dignity and security, expedition and gratification, yea, consistency and accuracy analogous to those of infallibility itself, promoted by calmness of thought and closeness of attention, by correctness of motive and purity of intent, by regularity and uniformity, patience and impartiality, in our intellectual procedure? And since the truths of religion, though incomparably excellent, are, in some instances, extremely difficult of comprehension, is it not evident that patience, admirable for its temper, and impartiality, perfect in its character, are essentially requisite in all our religious investigations and enquiries, controversies and

conversations; and is it not obvious, that in proportion to the possibility and perfection of this patience and impartiality, the Private Opinions of every individual, will, so far as the interference of passion is concerned, be placed more or less under his own control?

But the longer some persons deliberate, and the more irresolute they grow. Their power of exertion, seems to diminish exactly in proportion to the length of their hesitation. Delay has with them a congealing, a paralysing influence. Their protracted schemes terminate in inaction. The proper season of active operation expires; and nothing seems to have been done, except an attempt made to devise a plan for doing something. Of the two extremes of precipitancy and deliberation, it is not easy perhaps to determine, which is the most improper and injurious. It is certainly easier to decline the performance of an action, than to undo it when it has been once done. But when an act is in its nature laudable, in its tendency beneficial, in its utility indispensable, and in its obligation paramount, it is certainly better to perform that act, sincerely though imperfectly, than to leave it wholly unattempted. For if we are to do nothing unless we can do it perfectly, taking this term in its absolute sense, it is evident that we shall have little or nothing to do. Degrees of approximation to absolute and infinite perfec-

tion, are all that is attainable by mere creatures. Amongst finite intelligences, therefore, that only is best which is relatively better than every other of the same kind. Of Deity alone can perfection, absolute, infinite, and consequently eternal, be predicated. Of all other beings and objects, the capacities and perfections are finite and relative. We are by this consideration furnished with powerful and eternal motives and encouragements to incessant exertion and illimitable advancement. Total quiescence is a species of indolence most highly criminal in the sight of God. It is a state of being which neither He personally, nor any perfect specimen of his multifarious works in any part of his boundless universe, exhibits. All is action, ceaseless action. Matter and mind, when properly disposed and employed, equally exhibit the phenomenon of incessant and powerful activity. The proper direction of their respective energies, leads to a ceaseless exhibition of order and beauty, an endless progression of improvement and felicity. The suspension or improper direction of these energies, inevitably tends to the production of the darkness, disorder, and wretchedness of a physical and moral chaos. The grand essentials of human excellence, therefore, are these:—to do every thing that ought to be done, and to do it at its proper time and in its proper manner. The proper time and mode of its performance, it is the object of

that deliberation which we have already described, to ascertain. Its total omission, or its needless procrastination, is that which this article so strongly deprecates. Now, on subjects of a religious nature, it is perfectly proper and indispensably requisite, that we should form an opinion. We are bound by the most sacred, solemn, and inviolable obligations, to investigate these subjects with the deepest, the devoutest, and most anxious attention. Totally to neglect such an investigation, or to perform it with reluctance and indifference, indicates a recklessness and contempt awfully criminal and prejudicial. God regards such conduct as an intolerable insult offered to himself, an impious and audacious disavowal of all moral obligation. For, humanly speaking, God has taken extraordinary pains and precautions to furnish the human race with a volume of instruction, complete and infallible, on all subjects of a moral and religious nature. During successive ages, he gradually revealed the biblical scheme of human redemption; and having eventually, at the expense of the infinitely precious and sacrificial blood of his only Son, completed the propitiatory part of this most wonderful, unparalleled scheme of mediatorial wisdom and love, he justly considers all inattention or indifference to this special provision, as an indication of desperate and incurable depravity. The difficulty of attaining at once a distinct and full comprehension of the whole,

in place of authorising or excusing the slightest inattention or oversight, supplies one of the most powerful inducements to bring all our faculties, affections, and resources, to bear vigorously and immediately on every part of this divine, mysterious plan. Had not the revelation of it been sufficiently intelligible and comprehensible for all practical purposes, it would never have been given as a complete and universal system of faith, experience, and morality. Its very existence and character, therefore, afford most satisfactory proofs of the success that will attend a proper application to the development of its import. But the whole of life is not to be spent in a merely theoretical examination of its contents, in the ingenious distortion of its truths into as vast a multitude of different forms as the most rankly fertile imagination can invent. Simplicity in our perceptions, and consistency in our views, are the qualities chiefly requisite to enable us to disentangle every subject from the intricacies of its incidental connection, and properly to classify and compare it with all those kindred subjects which are likely to illustrate it by relation or analogy. Such a rational and logical exercise is equally definite and delightful. Patient and careful deliberation, may be generally required; yea, in most instances, it is indispensably requisite. But even such deliberation has its proper season of issue. It arrives eventually at a state of maturity sufficient

for the decisive determination of opinion, and the actual commencement of operation. This, therefore, is the critical period at which inflexible resolution is demanded. This is that moment which tries and decides the intellectual and moral character of the individual. If passion triumphs over resolution, the cause is lost, the labour is in vain. The conception is mature, but the moral fœtus is stifled in the birth, or so materially weakened and mortally mutilated by its production, as to be of little or no strength, utility, or duration. But if resolute obstinacy is possible in the one case, is not inflexible resolution practicable in the other? and is not every man responsible to God for the degree of resolution which he exercises, no less than for the measure of deliberation which he employs? Is it not therefore evident, that to the full extent of our capability to exercise an invincible resolution, the formation of our Private Opinions, is subject to our own control?

Passion and prejudice, though very distinct and easily distinguishable from each other, are frequently combined in the same person, and conjointly exhibited on the same occasion. They frequently arise from the same causes, produce the same effects, and yield to the same remedies or correctives; for the regulation of the one, and the removal of the other, therefore, several of the pre-

ceding observations will be found most efficiently available. Strong and violent emotion, however, which constitutes passion, may exist where the effects of a wrong education or of improper instruction, which constitute prejudice, prevail only to a very limited extent; and the latter of these, may exert a predominant influence in the comparative or total absence of the former. The remarks already made are intended chiefly to expose the essential impropriety, and counteract the injurious tendency, of inordinate and irregular passion. To render the same service in the detection and complete extermination of prejudice, will require us to consider the propriety, necessity, and efficiency which characterise the expansion of intellect, the extension of knowledge, and the exercise of just liberality.

Though there are no ideas more simple than those of pure quantity, whether finite or infinite, yet there are none more perplexing than these, when any attempt is made to compare with each other things so totally incommensurable as finitude and infinity. For no possible or imaginable aggregation of finites, can make the least sensible approach to infinitude; and when the aggregation or extension becomes to us inconceivably great, immeasurably vast, we cease of course to have any definite idea of its magnitude, or adequate

conception of its dimensions. Whatever may be the measure of our capacity or incapacity for the full comprehension of infinity and eternity, the one being boundless space, and the other boundless existence, the real nature of these infinitudes remains unaltered, unaffected. Our ideas and descriptions of these objects, therefore, though eternally progressive, must eternally be finite, everlastingly circumscribed by perfectly distinct, though eternally diverging limits. It is the prerogative of the Great Infinite, the Great Eternal alone, literally and fully to comprehend that infinity and eternity which characterise the extent and duration of his own being, the measure and glory of his underived attributes and incomparable perfections. But though absolute infinity is only partially comprehensible by the eternal enlargement of our finite capacity, and eternity is only approximately conceivable by the endless progression of our existence through the countless ages of an immortal being; yet, there is a certain species of infinity imaginable, which arises from the impossibility of fixing any extreme limits to the ceaseless expansion of finite, human intellect, and the incessant accumulation of finite wisdom and moral excellence. It is of this comparatively infinite expansion of capacity, and endless multiplication of attainments, that I conceive the human soul is capable. There never have been any impassable boundaries fixed or attained, and

I conceive there never will be. I am not aware that there is, either in the scientific or in the religious world, any indication of the remotest approach to such a final, visible extremity. To superficial observers, the reverse of this description, may appear to be more correct. But if those who have competently considered the subject, are to be believed; that observation must be very superficial indeed which does not discover, that we have made very little progress beyond the first elements of intellectual and moral perfection. Much has been done; but an eternity of effort and acquisition more will be required to effect the consummation. The bliss of heaven, I am apprehensive, consists chiefly in this endless expansion and progression in every species of intellectual and moral excellence. But why should we confine our attention to eternity? For, if the expression were allowable, eternity will be to us no more than eternal time, endless day, deathless life; and the present moment of the present day of the present life, is as real a portion of our whole existence, as any ulterior part of eternity will be. Every moment of the present life, therefore, we are bound to occupy in improving to the greatest possible extent, all our faculties, resources, and opportunities. Of all the various duties and exercises to which these invaluable moments ought to be devoted, the expansion of our intellect is one of the most practicable, important, and beneficial.

By this expansion of intellect, we mean such a gradual development of our faculties, and progressive enlargement of our capacity, as will enable us more clearly to perceive, and more fully to comprehend, all those considerations and subjects which the formation of a correct opinion, requires us to examine. Such a development, such an enlargement, will be very greatly promoted, in addition to other more obvious expedients,—by widening the sphere of our observation,—by engaging in contemplations previously supposed to be too sublime or profound for our conception or penetration,—by endeavouring to regulate the force of those restrictions which early education has imposed,—by admitting, for the sake of argument and illustration, the possibility of what may appear improbable, and the probability of what may appear, in some points of view, absurd,—and by bringing the whole of our intellectual machinery into a state of action, of powerful, well-directed, and well-intended operation.

The expansion of intellect, and the extension of knowledge, are, by necessity, coincident. It is scarcely possible perhaps to conceive, that either of these processes can exist without involving, in some degree, the existence of the other. Knowledge has a natural tendency to expand the mind, to sharpen and strengthen the intellectual powers, and to render them capable of exertions almost

incredibly great. This expansion of mind, widens the field of intellectual vision, and multiplies, diversifies, and renders agreeable to an incalculable extent, the objects of mental contemplation. The quantity of knowledge which has been already collected, and permanently recorded, is, in one point of view, immense. But immense as it is, it is constantly receiving large accessions; and the amount to which it is capable of being eventually raised, no human being can either imagine or define. The undiscovered stores of information, are greater probably than we have any immediate reason to suspect. The latent properties of imperfectly known objects, are in all probability very numerous. Endless diversity and delight continue to reward intense application, and accurate inspection. Every development invites to deeper research; and the more deeply we penetrate, the more are we astonished at the number and variety of the wonders continually disclosed. The mines of literature, are as inexhaustible as the mines of nature. Languages, living and the dead,—history, sacred and profane,—science, human and divine,—worlds and beings, visible and invisible—periods and circumstances, present, future, and eternal: these all simultaneously crowd our intellectual vision, and strongly urge their respective claims to distinct and patient attention. To judge, therefore, as confidently, with a comparatively small

share of information, as though we had actually comprehended the whole range of universal knowledge, would betray a degree of inexcusable ignorance and intolerable presumption. For the most superficial observer cannot fail to perceive, that a comparatively limited acquaintance with any subject, must be liable to the supposition of containing some mistaken, erroneous, or imperfect views. Even though no such views should actually exist, even though the knowledge, so far as it extends, should possibly be perfect or complete; yet surely it will be allowed, that a more extensive and profound acquaintance with the subject, would be productive of some additional, and proportionately greater advantages. No man judges so confidently, or confides so implicitly in the judgment of others, as when he is conscious of his own or of their proficiency in the subject of consideration. It is this consciousness that inspires boldness, dependence, and perseverance; it is the want of this consciousness that occasions uncertainty, hesitation, versatility, and irresolution, with all the momentous evils consequent on the existence of such distraction and indecision. To one whose office is professedly to instruct others, this consciousness of proficiency is indispensable: the want of it must be an obvious and a total disqualification for the proper and effectual discharge of his functions. The deficiency or incompetency would expose him to the just impu-

tation of consummate folly and guilt. And those whose occupation consists rather in acquiring than in communicating knowledge, will experience pleasure and exhibit improvement exactly proportioned to the degree in which they rationally and fully confide in the competency of their teachers. The extension of our knowledge, therefore, is manifestly an object of the greatest importance and utility; its influence in the formation of our Private Opinions on all subjects, especially on those of a religious nature, must be incalculably great. Differences in the degrees of this extension, it is highly probable, constitute that source from which almost exclusively, arise those differences of opinion which exist on every subject; and it is equally probable, that in the proportion in which men approximate to each other in their degrees of information, they will generally approximate to each other in coincidence of opinion. This assertion of course is very properly qualified; because the incidental causes of derangement and opposition, are numerous: as a general maxim, there is no doubt whatever of its correctness. It must indeed be admitted, that the opportunities and the capabilities for acquiring information, are very different and disproportionate to each other in different individuals. But it must also be admitted, that to the full extent of our capacity and opportunity, knowledge ought to be acquired: and that in proportion to the measure

of its rapid and successful acquirement, the formation of our Private Opinion, will be subjected to our own control.

But the efficiency of all these operations, will be very greatly modified by the temper of mind which we indulge towards those whose opinions differ, more or less, from our own. That this temper ought to be a perfectly candid and liberal one, will be rendered very evident by simply reversing the position, and considering how cruel, unjust, and censurable in others, we deem their want of candour and liberality towards ourselves. The obligations to cherish such a spirit are therefore mutual; the occasions of its exercise are reciprocal; the advantages arising from its cultivation are equally great and desirable. Liberality has justice for its foundation, truth for its object, and peace for its reward. Its absence changes profitable discussion into angry disputation, and the search of knowledge into the excitement of hatred. Illiberality closes the avenues of the soul against the accession of knowledge from an immense variety of sources. It circumscribes exceedingly the limits of all beneficial intercourse, whether intellectual, social, or religious. It leaves error to extend its progress unchecked, or attempts to check its progress by means which only accelerate its rapidity. It consigns acknowledged excellence to neglect and oblivion, or notices it in such a manner as betrays

the rancour of the distempered soul, the virulence and hypocrisy of the pretended friendship. It distorts, discolours, and disallows every species of excellence that is not of a certain class, or name, or connection; and it as greatly exceeds the bounds of justice in appreciating and eulogising the same species of excellence, when it does chance to be of that peculiar and favourite name, or class, or connection. Illiberality, therefore, weakens by dividing their force, and renders inefficient by interrupting in their operation, the energies of all the literary and religious denominations that are actuated by its malignant spirit. The points of distinction, are in some instances exceedingly trivial, almost imperceptibly minute, deriving their sole importance from the morbid or frenzied imaginations of those who allow trifles so contemptibly insignificant, to operate to the exclusion of each other from unanimity of design, and unity of action, in some plan of great and common benefit. Other persons who are not immediately concerned, can perceive how truly contemptible those faint lines and shades of difference are which the parties, opposed to each other, seem agreed to regard as insuperable barriers to that intercourse the object of which is, to illumine and expand the mind, and to multiply and diversify the sources of its improvement, by gaining an easy access to all the treasures of information which others have accu-

mulated, and rewarding them for this inspection of their intellectual stores by exhibiting our own acquisitions, just as unreservedly, for their candid examination. From such a comparison of knowledge, from such a collation of intellect, regulated by mutual and amicable confidence, and by strict and uniform integrity, the greatest advantages might justly be expected to arise. The feelings of our common nature, would be very greatly improved. The sources of our enjoyment, would be exceedingly multiplied and enlarged. The virtue of universal charity, would be uniformly exhibited. Innumerable impressions of a mistaken or an erroneous nature, would be removed. Obstacles hitherto thought to be insuperable, would vanish. The most wonderful discoveries of unsuspected excellence and moral goodness, would be made. The violation of truth and justice in our conception of the opinions, and in our judgment of the characters of others, would be prevented in ten thousand instances. The combination of intellect and effort, would be universal and irresistible. And, what is chiefly important to the precise object of our present enquiry,—by the exercise of this liberality, innumerable errors, mistakes, oversights, and exaggerations, would be detected and rectified in the formation of our Private Opinions. That it is possible and proper, to exercise this liberality commensurately with all the demands of truth and

justice, there will I conceive be no doubt entertained. To the extent of this capability and propriety, therefore, it is evident, that the formation of our Private Opinions, admits of being subjected to our own control.

We are now, therefore, enabled to reply, in answer to the original question, that to the full extent of our ability to exercise patience and impartiality in our deliberations, caution and firmness in our decisions, freedom in the expansion of our intellect, diligence in the acquisition of all requisite information, and candour and liberality of sentiment on all occasions of a personal nature,—that in proportion to the measure of all these capabilities, the formation of our Private Opinions, may be subjected to our own control. The determination of this point, is of considerable importance. For this general principle, which we have carefully considered, and endeavoured accurately to define, will be found to pervade and to affect, more or less, the greater part of this discussion. We shall not hesitate, therefore, decisively to appeal to this principle, as frequently as occasion may require, and as confidently as its conceived soundness authorises. The clearness and propriety of the sentiments on which it is founded, are such, we presume, as even the most fastidious judgment can feel no disposition to doubt or deny. We calculate

with the greater confidence on this concurrence of judgment, because the sentiments embodied in this general principle, have arisen spontaneously, naturally, in our development of its character; there has been no conscious violence done to the subject, no ambitious desire of originating a new system entertained, no inclination to favour or establish a previous theory indulged. I felt anxious to ascertain by an unpremeditated, a natural process of deduction, what the sentiments and dictates of my own mind were, — assured that all others whose minds were similarly constituted, and whose search of truth was similarly directed, would with equal confidence and satisfaction coincide with myself in admitting the correctness and conclusiveness of the final result. Should there be any who dissent, after adopting an equally careful and laborious process, their judgment and verdict will be entitled to equal attention and authority, though, if I mistake not, their reasons will have to be brought from very remote quarters and through very circuitous directions, and exhibited with no ordinary degree of dexterity and effect, to invalidate the few, simple arguments and illustrations which have been adduced. It is hoped, that the spirit of this remark, will not be misapprehended, or the language of its expression misinterpreted; it is confessedly intended to give distinctness and precision to our future observations, and to promote this object by asserting

the confidence with which we adopt the general principle that has been developed, and that may be considered as the principal basis or criterion of what we have to advance.

Immediately consequent on the preceding investigation, is another enquiry no less important in its nature, no less general in its application:— To what extent are we responsible for our Private Opinions? Is man capable of altering his opinions according to his will and pleasure? or are there not certain opinions, which, when they have been formed in a prescribed, specified manner, he finds it morally impossible to change? If man has power absolutely to control his Private Opinions, he is evidently responsible for the manner in which he exercises this absolute agency. But if there are certain limitations to the exercise of this control, and if, in arriving at those limitations, man is free to select and pursue his own line of procedure; he is then responsible for the use which he makes of this liberty of selection and prosecution, within the sphere which these definite limits comprise. That the human mind, when abandoned to those influences and impressions which the derangement or abuse of its powers occasions, is capable of the most shocking extravagances and irregularities, of the most criminal indecision, vascillation, and violence, is an equally undoubted and lamentable fact;

in some instances of this description, all the characteristics and glories of mind appear to be almost completely annihilated, so little remains of that rationality and consistency which constitute the essence and excellence, and which ought ever to characterise the appropriation and exhibition, of its nature and functions. But we are not now endeavouring to determine, what the greatest extremes of folly and debasement are, to which our intellectual powers can possibly be reduced: instances, alas! too numerous and deplorable, are of constant occurrence. But the man who is guilty of these enormities, reduces himself below the level of rational intelligence, and, consequently, by the forfeiture of his distinctive character, excludes himself in the present instance from any share of our consideration. Our enquiry, therefore, respecting the absoluteness or the limitedness of the control exercised over our Private Opinions, takes as granted, that the most proper and efficient use is uniformly made of all our faculties, resources, and opportunities. Now, when the question is qualified by this specification, it does appear, that the control which man exercises over his Private Opinions is not absolute, and that when he has, in the course of his investigations, arrived at a certain final point, it is morally impossible for him to pass, with equal confidence and conviction, to a different or an opposite point, unless he clearly discovers, accurately

demonstrates, and frankly acknowledges, that the course of ratiocination by which he arrived at that first point, was really an improper or a wrong one; and it does also appear, that when he has passed from that first point to this second one, which is confessedly different or opposite, he must now permanently remain at this second point, unless he makes a discovery and an acknowledgment in this latter instance, similar to what he made in the former, which would bring him to the formation of no opinion at all on the subject examined; that is, he must permanently remain at one or at the other of these points, unless either he continues in a state of constant vascillation, which, even if it were practicable, would be exceedingly dangerous and undesirable, or affirms that these two different or opposite points and directions are one and the same, which is absurd. It is evident, therefore, that when an infallibly right course is pursued, a certain limit is ultimately attainable at which that course properly terminates,—terminates as directly and infallibly, as exclusively and unalterably, as the course itself by which this limit has been attained, is believed to be direct and infallible. When man has arrived at this ultimate limit, his responsibility extends no further; for the real, essential nature of things, is such as he cannot possibly alter by adopting any diversity or contrariety of intellectual operation, and purposely introducing it into his

examination of the objects contemplated. Truth is truth, eternally and unalterably. His responsibility, therefore, is confined chiefly if not exclusively, to the course by the adoption and prosecution of which he arrives ultimately at this extreme point, or at a limit which he sincerely believes is this final and infallible point. Now, this course is capable of being as endlessly diversified, as the legitimately exercised ingenuity of man, is exhaustless in its devices, and the proper objects to which that ingenuity is directed, and the different aspects of those objects, are numberless. Discrimination and selection are, therefore, practicable and indispensable. The right selection of the means used, and the right use of the means selected, constitute that species and department of intellectual exercise in which our responsibility consists. The whole question concerning the degree of our responsibility is, therefore, ultimately resolvable into this: To what extent are this selection and use of the means proper to be employed, subject to our own control? The solution of this enquiry, will obviously be precisely identical with that of the last; or, in other words, it will be perceived, that the degree of responsibility which attaches to the possession and profession of our Private Opinions, is exactly proportionate to the measure of control which we are capable of exercising in the formation and retention of these opinions. The precise measure of this

control, it was the special object of the last section to determine. In place, therefore, of repeating its arguments and illustrations, I shall take the liberty of subjoining what some, perhaps, would consider an unnecessary digression, but what I deem an essential part of the discussion in which we are now engaged.

I am a minister of the Gospel, of that religion which exhibits Deity invested with an aspect and a character such as reason alone could never have discovered. I conceive, therefore, that it is neither foreign nor inappropriate, but perfectly relevant and suitable on the present occasion, to profess my belief in the distinct existence and peculiar agency of the Holy Spirit, agreeably to the sense in which these terms are used by all reputedly orthodox classes of Christians. The indispensable assistance and illumination of this Holy Spirit, have been promised, for the purpose of omnipotently strengthening and infallibly directing us in all our spiritual concerns. To slight or neglect this promise, is, in any professor of Christianity, an act of fatal unbelief or impious presumption, implying either such an approximation to infidelity as differs very little from a total renunciation of the Christian religion, or such a measure of confidence in his own insulated ability, such an entire dependence on his internal resources, as is equivalent to a conviction and declaration, that unassisted reason is adequate

to the production of all those glorious truths which divine revelation alone contains. The fact is:—man frequently confounds his capacity to comprehend the truths of revelation, when they have been actually communicated, with his ability to discover the truths themselves, previously to all divine communication; whereas, no two kinds of capability, can be more different or distinct than these: they are in some instances infinitely remote from each other. Truths totally and eternally undiscoverable by uninspired man, may, when supernaturally revealed, appear to be of wonderfully easy comprehension. For man to deny the necessity and reality of the inspiration, solely in consequence of the perfect facility of his subsequent apprehension, would stamp his character with the basest ingratitude and folly. The Bible is full of such revelations, most of which are proverbially simple and easy, but all of which are so incomparably profound and sublime, as to be manifestly worthy of that Infallible Spirit by whose inspiration they were successively communicated. Amongst these divine declarations are several which directly intimate, that though the composition of the Sacred Volume is closed, and closed for ever, and therefore it is at the extreme and eternal peril of any human being, whatever his fictitious credentials may be, to profess that he has received a new dispensation, authorising him to diminish or augment the truths

of the Sacred Records; yet, if any man is deeply conscious of his ignorance, or of his inability fully to comprehend what is revealed, he has only sincerely to supplicate the superintending assistance and guidance of the Divine Spirit, and he shall be put into possession of all the spiritual knowledge that his essential requirements demand. But this assistance is not so rendered as to supersede or suspend the proper exercises of our rational faculties, or to stamp with the seal of absolute infallibility all the particular results of our separate enquiries. It is precisely such assistance as human free agency and responsibility admit. For though all requisite aid is offered, yet no violence is exercised. Though the purest and most brilliant light is provided, yet no compulsive agency is exerted. The provision of a Divine and an Infallible Guide, however, leaves us not at liberty, presumptuously to close our eyes, or sluggishly to sink into a state of inactive quiescence. It is only on the condition of most extensively employing all our ordinary capabilities and resources, that we are taught to implore, and authorised to expect, this divine aid and guidance. The principle of this discussion, proceeds on the supposition of these two grand essentials being, in our search of truth, uniformly combined.

The introduction of the Gospel into this dis-

cussion, and the assertion of its glorious doctrine respecting the Holy Spirit's auxiliary agency, lead us naturally and directly to consider that species of religious intercourse, that kind of spiritual communication, which we have designated—Ecclesiastical Communion, and with the perfect enjoyment of which we have proposed, as one of the professed objects of this Dissertation, to reconcile the formation and expression of Private Opinion.

But what is Ecclesiastical Communion? Is it so extensive in its range, as to embrace the largest imaginable assemblage of Christians, promiscuously and incidentally associated, or so confined in its extension, as to be capable of comprising only the very smallest number that constitutes plurality? or is it totally irrespective of all comparative, numerical considerations, and determinable, only or chiefly, by the nature of the principle on which its participators associate? Comparative magnitude of numbers, appears to involve no essential difficulty. For, provided the views and feelings, the disposition and character of the individuals, are apparently similar or essentially the same, multitudes may be associated as easily and effectually as a few solitary individuals. If, in these respects, there exists no such apparent similarity or virtual identity, the principle itself of all amicable and profitable communion, has no existence. Men who totally

differ from each other in these points of view, appear to constitute not only nominally distinct, but even morally different classes of being. Their community of generic nature remains; but their community of moral intercourse, is extinct. Principle, therefore, not numbers, is that chiefly which we have to consider on the present occasion. Having thus ascertained this point, we proceed to observe, that Ecclesiastical Communion may be considered as a peculiar, moral modification of the social passion, characterised by an expressly spiritual adaptation of it to purposes of a religious nature. For if man had not been endued with a natural disposition to associate, his religion, I conceive, would have been exclusively of a solitary character; because religion was evidently never intended to change the original constitution of the beings capable of its experience and observance. There is no doubt, therefore, that human nature was originally constituted—social, as it is, and that it was so constituted, partly at least, that religion might eternally be enjoyed in full perfection,—that its duties, which are all so many privileges and sources of gratification, might be endlessly multiplied,—that unity and unanimity might universally reign amongst those numberless, moral intelligences who were all designed to be regulated and preserved by its influence, — that they might move collectively in one course of perfect rectitude, and

occupy conjointly one paradise of ineffable delight. Agreeably to this representation, we find, that no one of the principles or institutes of true religion, is in the least repugnant to the proper indulgence of the social passion; but that, on the contrary, they are all compatible with its exercise, all essential to its perfection. It is irreligion, it is false religion, that strike with deadly effect at the very root of all genuine, social intercourse and enjoyment. Impiety separates God from his creatures; iniquity separates men from each other. Heaven closes her gates against these spirits of discord; hell alone opens her jaws for their reception. Devils, raging and blaspheming devils, are the only proper companions of those who have thus abandoned all moral excellences and associations. Religion and the social passion, therefore, may properly be considered, as having mutually contributed to render each other's existence necessary, each other's character complete, and their common connection and reciprocal influence — permanent sources of inexpressible delight.

If this view of the subject be correct, it is evident, that Ecclesiastical Communion consists in the spiritual association of moral, human intelligences, agreeably to that exercise, direction, and influence, which true religion gives to the social passion. Though this description sufficiently distinguishes such communion from every other species

of intercourse; yet, as the definition may appear to be rather complicated, it will not be improper to render it still more explicit and intelligible. Whatever man knows that is excellent, he has a natural desire to communicate; whatever he feels that is right, he is as naturally and as powerfully prompted to express. By this species of communication and expression, his attainments of knowledge are very greatly augmented, and his experience of pleasure is proportionately increased. Now, religion stores his mind with information, equally various, vast, and invaluable; and fills his soul with emotions equally diversified, ecstatic, and permanent. Exclusively to confine these stores of knowledge and fruition within the limits of his own cognizance and consciousness, were next to impossible; for if they did not vanish or become extinct under this unnatural confinement, their excellence would be gradually deteriorated, and their sphere continually more and more contracted, until the former was reduced to a mere nonentity, and the latter to an imperceptible point. Such an event, however, is extremely unlikely to occur. The natural constitution of the soul, renders the exercise of such violence, if not totally impracticable, at least so very difficult, that there exists no probability of its occurrence except in very limited degrees, and in very modified instances, arising from some capricious eccentricity or deplorable

peculiarity in the temper or education of the individual. The social passion bursts all artificial bounds, and defies all arbitrary prescriptions. The extraordinary impulse and improvement which it receives from religious knowledge and excitement, render its force as irrepressible, as its indulgence is purely natural and universally beneficial. The great fountain of social gratification, pours its contents impetuously through all the channels that are capable of their reception and conveyance; its various currents gradually form one immense reservoir, which eventually overflows in consequence of the innumerable accessions which it constantly receives; the pellucid streams then return by a reflux direction to their original source; and from this source, thus replenished, and rendered by its incidental accumulations greater if possible, and more copious than before, these streams are again distributed through the same or innumerable other channels:—the whole thus incessantly ebbing and flowing, with a vastness and a regularity of which the magnitude and the tides of the ocean, can alone convey an adequate idea. It is in such a reciprocal, such an endlessly increasing interchange of religious knowledge and excitement, that Ecclesiastical Communion consists.

Since Ecclesiastical Communion, therefore, consists in the social interchange of religious information and affection, it is evidently the object

of such communion, to promote this interchange so as to secure the largest measure of these two essential and delightful ingredients. When this interchange is perfect, the communion is perfect; when this interchange ceases, the communion ceases. Dependent on each other for their existence, they are exactly proportioned to each other in all their various measures and movements, whether large or small, progressive or retrograde. Whatever impedes or accelerates, restricts or facilitates the one, equally accelerates or impedes, facilitates or restricts the other. Extreme ignorance and apathy, therefore, totally disqualify an individual for this communion; whilst the maturest and most exalted wisdom, and the correctest moral feeling, are perfectly compatible with its constant and consummate enjoyment. The intelligence and gratification that are communicated through the medium of this intercourse, ought to be strictly of a religious character and tendency. Mere philology, however excellent, mere amusement, however innocent, cannot, without great inconsistency and deficiency, be considered as the essential components of such intercourse. Universal literature is indeed entitled to the closest attention and most indefatigable prosecution; it claims the profoundest, the most patient and ample discussion. Its utility is incalculable; its necessity indispensable. Let philosophers and sages of every class and colour,

therefore, let the literati of every age and clime, establish such an intercourse with each other as shall appear best calculated to bring all useful, scientific knowledge, into a state of general perfection, and course of universal circulation. And if, from the inexhaustible stores of pure literature, whether of science or of language, there can be derived any appropriate illustrations and confirmations of religious truth, let them be freely and liberally devoted to these purposes. But let the application of this philological assistance, be sacredly made; let the services which literature thus renders, be considered as purely sacred services,—literary contributions, consecrated to the interests of pure and vital religion. The mode of communicating religious knowledge, ought of course to be such as the nature of the subjects discussed, the capabilities and capacities of the informants and recipients, and other obvious circumstances of a local and a personal nature, require. Ostentatious display of attainments on the one hand, and proud rejection of instruction on the other, are equally improper. The common stock of information, should be accessible and available to all; and all should equally avail themselves of the advantages which their possession of this common right of access and participation, affords. All knowledge flows originally from only one source, — the intelligence of the Deity. All truth flowing from this uncreated and

exhaustless source, is, therefore, eternal and divine. Consequently, how diversified soever may be the main channels, and how numerous, extensive, and minute soever may be the ramifications, through which these primeval emanations of essential wisdom, flow; our primary obligations, and those of all other beings, are obviously due to the Deity alone. To receive knowledge from the Great Infallible, involves no degradation. The very possession of that capability and opportunity of intellectual and moral acquirement, which we have primarily derived from the Deity alone, constitutes an honour and a privilege of inestimable value. The archangel himself is merely an humble student in the department of sacred science; to learn is his ceaseless occupation and delight. Angels, who transcendently excel in knowledge, are not ashamed to learn, how disgracefully bashful and reluctant soever ignorant men may be, to acquire information. But, as we formerly observed, man is the subject of passion no less than of reason; and the perfection of his nature, demands — not the extinction, but the proper regulation of his passions or affections. In no department of his conduct is this regulation of his passions more strictly required, than in that of his religious intercourse; evils of the most enormous magnitude, or advantages of the most splendid attraction, will accrue agreeably to the nature, and proportionately to the degree and expression of

their excitement. It is evident, therefore, that the feelings to be excited, like the knowledge to be communicated, ought to be strictly of a religious character and tendency. Deep and impassioned emotion of a physical kind, originating in strong, mutual, personal attachment, or in deathless, devoted friendship, may be very proper, very advantageous, when regulated by the dictates of reason, and kept within the limits of due moderation. But this rational propriety of these merely animal propensities or social inclinations, does not exalt them into species of religious emotion. Such feelings may be, and indeed they ought invariably to be controlled by motives of a religious nature. Their subjection to such a species of control, however, does not alter their distinctive character; they still continue merely animal, merely social, even though exceedingly refined and unexceptionably regulated. Purely religious excitement, therefore, we should characterise as that which originates in sources of a purely moral or spiritual description. The various relations that subsist amongst moral intelligences, and the various duties and exercises consequent on the existence of these relations, multiply and augment the sources of this purely religious excitement to an indefinitely large extent. That these reciprocal, spiritual emotions, therefore, may be most strongly excited, all moral relations and obligations ought to be most prominently and impressively

exhibited; the excellences of all rational intelligences, ought to be impartially ascertained and acknowledged; and the prospects of futurity, especially those of eternity, solemnly and vividly presented. The attributes and the character of Deity, ought to be rendered incomparably the most prominent. His promises of present and future aid and felicity, ought to be subjects of the deepest meditation and most delightful discussion. Whatever is just and lovely, ought to be contemplated with feelings of admiration, and applauded in expressions of sincere approval. The underived happiness of the Deity, though perhaps intrinsically different from all created felicity, yet evidently arises,—not merely from his possession of eternal being and resistless power, abstractedly considered, for these qualities alone do not seem to involve the fruition of infinite enjoyment, as the necessary consequence of their exclusive and absolute existence, — but from his boundless possession, illimitable communication, and endless admiration of all moral goodness. It is this absolute, moral perfection of the Deity, which constitutes his character supremely excellent and amiable, and his felicity infinitely great, eternally inexhaustible. Though by necessity inferior in its degree, yet precisely such in the moral nature of its origination and expression, ought to be the happiness of all moral intelligences, and that social, spiritual enjoyment especially which it is

one of the objects of Ecclesiastical Communion to promote.

Having arrived at this stage of progress, the remainder of our course will be comparatively short and easy, consisting solely in the application of those principles which we have already developed, and the consequent solution of those practical enquiries which the proper conclusion of the subject, requires to be proposed. Of these enquiries, the following appears to be the most natural, important, and prominent :—What are those coincidences which Ecclesiastical Communion requires, and what are those differences which such communion tolerates, in sentiment, conduct, and character? The latter part of this complex enquiry, may seem to be merely the negative of the former: the two questions, however, are perfectly distinct; and consequently each is entitled to a separate examination. But perhaps it may be thought, that we have completely overlooked one grand and essential distinction, — that which exists between universal and particular communion, — between that universal coincidence in some things of a fundamental nature without which the universal Church of Christ, could, as such, have no possible existence, much less any definite character, and those minor coincidences in each of the various sections of the Church without which either its distinctive

existence, as a peculiar part of the whole, would be impossible, or its principle of internal union extremely indefinite and imperfect. The fact is, we have never lost sight of this distinction; but we have, for reasons that will afterwards appear, chosen to proceed synthetically rather than analytically,—chosen to commence with a close examination and precise definition of the several parts, in order that, subsequently, we might by their combination produce an harmonious, a perfect whole. We shall therefore reserve the more comprehensive of these two parts of the subject, for the close of this discussion. There is only one general remark which, before we proceed, we deem it necessary to make in justification of the course which we have adopted: it is,—that an absolutely perfect and universal coincidence in sentiment and experience, probably never did exist in the Church of Christ, and probably never will exist;—that its existence is a mere chimera of the imagination, and essential neither to the unity nor to the harmony of the Church, neither to the interests of religion, nor to the happiness of individuals, or the welfare of the community;—and that to bring it within the limits of possibility, would require such a miracle to be wrought as would totally change, if not entirely destroy, the present, most admirable and incomparable constitution of the human mind. To proceed, therefore, with the

rational and practical discussion of the subject:—What are those coincidences without which Ecclesiastical Communion, taken in its more limited sense, could not possibly exist? and what are those differences the toleration of which does not materially affect the constitution, or endanger the existence of such communion? In reply to these enquiries, we feel authorised to state, as the result of our most mature deliberation on the subject,—that we conceive it is only in things absolutely essential that the individuals who compose a Christian community, are required to coincide, and it is only in things considered non-essential that they can be permitted to differ; or, in other words, that, to engage in Ecclesiastical Communion, they must coincide in some essential number of essentials, and they may differ in any non-essential number of non-essentials. Each of these two enquiries, therefore, very naturally resolves itself into two others, more definite though perhaps not less difficult, namely:

What things are essential? and

What things are non-essential?

What number of essentials is essential? and

What number of non-essentials, may be considered non-essential?

We are therefore ultimately brought to moot those very questions which have in all ages divided

the Church of Christ. For us to attempt a perfectly and universally satisfactory solution of those difficulties which attend this subject, and which all others who have examined it rightly, have found to be vast in magnitude, if not wholly insuperable, would imply a measure of confidence in our own ability, and a secret assumption of intellectual superiority, very inconsistent with that humility and submission, caution, deference, and candour, which ought ever to be cherished and inculcated in discussions of this nature. A definition of the terms, therefore, is all that we shall immediately endeavour to execute. The mode of settling the disputed point to the perfect satisfaction of every man's own conscience, to the approbation of the Deity, and the universal benefit of the Christian Church, is that which we shall subsequently endeavour humbly but incontrovertibly to ascertain. If others are able to prove that our views are incorrect, we shall receive their correction of our errors as gratefully and cordially, as we require them to receive our statements, if incontrovertible, cheerfully and candidly. Truth is the object of our search. In prosecuting this investigation, the more numerous and qualified the guides are, and the better. To me, a child that conducts me to the discovery of truth, is an angel of light; to me, an archangel that would designedly betray me into error, is the arch-demon of darkness, pre-eminently the prince of hell.

Truth is the foundation of Jehovah's throne,—the centre of radiance from which all his other attributes derive their ineffable, overwhelming splendour. May a ray of that divine illumination, which singly is brighter than all the suns and stars of human and angelic intelligence combined, guide us in all our future researches, and conduct us ultimately to those regions of uncreated light the effulgence of which, shall invest us with the semblance of the glory of the Deity, and by strengthening all our powers of perception, and inconceivably enlarging the sphere, and improving the circumstances of our entire vision, shall enable us to know even as we are known.

The terms—essential and non-essential, are of very frequent use. The genuine meaning of each of these terms, I apprehend, it is possible precisely to ascertain. The sole point of view in which their adoption is capable of leading to controversial discussion, is that which concerns the propriety or impropriety of particularly selecting either of these terms, and employing it exclusively to designate any given, distinct, and specific object concerning which a diversity of opinions prevails. But it is evident, that, in all instances of this nature, the controversy respects rather the nature of the object examined, than the meaning of the epithet employed; and the abstract examination of the objects

investigated, is a process totally different from the grammatical definition of terms which characterise a variety of objects, and is an exercise capable of being rendered wholly independent on all mere appropriations of language. When the nature of objects, has been exactly ascertained, or ascertained at least to the perfect satisfaction of the individual engaged in the investigation; nothing is easier, provided he has a competent acquaintance with an adequate language, than the selection of definitive terms explanatory of their nature. The only two terms with which we are more immediately concerned, are, as we have stated,—essential and non-essential. The terms—non-essential and indifferent, we shall use promiscuously; because, though they may, as we shall casually indicate, easily be distinguished from each other, yet their shades of distinction, are such as to render it not improper, to consider them sufficiently synonymous to be equally available for all the purposes of this discussion: the incorporation of this term, will enable us to embrace, verbally as well as really, the whole range of enquiry that is usually taken on this subject.

In theological phraseology, those things, I believe, are termed essential with which an individual conceives he cannot possibly dispense without endangering or forfeiting the salvation of his soul.

Those things which he considers indispensable to salvation, may consist either of doctrines which he believes it is at his peril to reject, or of precepts which he deems it equally, fatally perilous to neglect or violate. The impressions which he receives from viewing these two classes of objects in this light, are of an indelibly deep and absolutely decisive character. He perceives that there is no room for vascillation or hesitation; that there is no alternative, no interchangeable equivalent. He feels himself bound by an obligation that is incapable of being modified in the least,—either to receive the whole as a whole, or to reject the whole as a whole. In all cases of this description, therefore, the weight and influence of mere human authority, dwindle in his estimation into nothing, or less than nothing. Physical violence, employed as an instrument of coercive conviction, he despises with feelings, and ridicules in language of consummate, fearless contempt. All the engines and horrors of torture and death, he laughs to scorn, when invented and inflicted for the purpose of forcibly constraining his judgment and decision. Life is nothing; death is nothing; pleasure is nothing; pain is nothing; when promised or threatened as an inducement to alter his decision, or to acknowledge that his position is one of limited, measured importance. The nature of the subject, is such as irrevocably to determine his faith and profession,

his resolution and practice. He considers the character of God, and the nature of these essentials, equally, as absolute and immutable.

Things which he deems non-essential or indifferent, he views in a totally different light, so far as the extreme rigidness of his adherence is concerned. He does indeed regard even these as being in their nature precisely the same as the former; for if they were totally incompatible with the former in nature or essence, he would consider this moral contrariety alone as a reason sufficient for their instantaneous, unqualified rejection. But though he views them as identical in quality of moral nature, yet he considers them so inferior or subordinate in degree of relative importance, that even if they were practically omitted, the omission would not endanger his salvation, or inevitably occasion the forfeiture of his eternal felicity. And these things, like the former, may either be of a doctrinal or of a practical description;—if doctrinal, the doctrines are such as, from some peculiarity in their origin, character, or connection, he conceives he is not imperatively required to believe; and if practical, the duties or offices are such as, from some peculiarity in their nature or circumstances, he considers he is not absolutely bound to discharge. If he receives the one, and observes the other, he claims no special praise or reward; if, on the contrary, he declines or omits, he feels

no condemnation or regret. His mind, therefore, is perfectly at ease respecting their occurrence and consequences. He is prepared to listen to the suggestions of salutary prudence, urgent necessity, or virtuous policy. To indulge an inflexible obstinacy in things of this nature, and to make any extraordinary or very painful sacrifices for this purpose, he would deem perfectly needless, if not highly criminal. He has made sure of all essentials; he is therefore comparatively indifferent respecting whatever does not come within the limits of this description. If any thing which he had deemed essential, afterwards appears to be non-essential, his views and feelings alter in a degree and manner correspondent with the change which his judgment has undergone. If, reversely, any thing which he had deemed non-essential, afterwards appears to be essential, his experience and his conduct on that point also become proportionately different from what they previously were. But perhaps some will assert, that there are in reality no such things as those which we have described under the designation of non-essential or indifferent. We again repeat, that it is not with the real, the essential nature of things, abstractedly considered, that we are now immediately concerned, but with the definition of those terms which are employed in describing the various classes of objects, as those objects are classified

by the different views and opinions of men. For it is such a classification as this which ultimately, much more perhaps in some instances than the absolute, intrinsic nature of things, determines the existence and character of Ecclesiastical Communion. It is true indeed, that things are what they are, and that they are not what they are not, whatever the views or opinions of men respecting their qualities and properties may be, or may not be. But no degree of intelligence, inferior to infallibility, can without presumption absolutely decide respecting the nature and essence of every thing that exists, or of every thing that may be submitted to human inspection. There arises, consequently, a necessity for the universal exercise of all the powers of intellectual research that human beings possess. That an invariable coincidence of opinion, should be the result of all the innumerable speculations and reasonings that arise, observation and experience teach, it would be preposterous to expect. Different men frequently have different views, arising from the different lights and aspects in which they view the same objects. Terms have been invented expressive of these differences of opinion, implying, of course, the existence of corresponding differences, real or supposed, in the nature of the objects examined. It is the precise definition of these terms which we have endeavoured to achieve; the nature of the objects them-

selves, because unchangeable, we have consequently left unchanged. This is the course of necessity; it is the course of reason and propriety.

But there may be more essentials than one. For there is not, in the nature of unexamined objects or subjects, any peculiarity discoverable that can be considered, *a priori*, as obviously restrictive of the number of their respective essentials. In proportion to the greatness of the number, variety, and coincidence of the essentials eventually discovered, will be the extreme degree of certainty connected with the whole subject. For though it is evident, from the very nature of one essential, that its importance and obligation are perfectly distinct from those of any other; yet, when there is, connected with the same object or subject, any considerable number of these essentials, all perfectly coincident with each other, their common accordance appears to provide a collectively greater security against the commission or supposition of error. It is in this relative point of view, that the number of these essentials, collectively taken, may be deemed a point of essential importance, no less than the nature of each essential, separately considered. To be perfectly satisfactory, therefore, the scheme of essentials, ought to be complete. It were easy, if requisite, to illustrate this observation. The foundation and the superstructure of

a building, are both essential. For a foundation without a superstructure, would be useless; and a superstructure without a foundation, could not exist. Now, when, in the mind of any person, there exists such a connection amongst the conceived essentials of religion, as that which exists between the foundation and superstructure of a building; then it is that the incorporation of all these into one grand whole, becomes a point of specific and indispensable necessity. The combination of these gives to the whole a unity, consistency, and cogency, which render it morally as impossible to dispense with any portion of the whole, as to change at will the nature of any particular part.

When the number of things deemed essential, and therefore absolutely indispensable, has been precisely ascertained; the number of things supposed to be non-essential, and therefore comparatively indifferent, may consequently be most easily determined. For these are the only two general classes into which, agreeably to the dictates equally of propriety and convenience, we have proposed to divide matters of a religious or an ecclesiastical nature. But how insignificant soever any minute object, when viewed separately, may in reality or in appearance be, an immense aggregation of such objects, obtains an importance which each of its

component ingredients, when thus insulated, seems not to possess. It were easy to illustrate this distinction by referring to the atomical constitution of the universe at large, and that of all the variously constructed objects, of which it severally consists, whether of stupendous or comparatively smaller magnitude. Though, in this particular point of comparison, there may not exist a perfect analogy or connection between things physical and things spiritual, yet it cannot be denied, that a closely related and associated multitude of non-essentials, morally and collectively considered, has a claim on our attention very distinct from that which any one of these non-essentials, taken alone, seems entitled to receive. The greatness of the number itself, excites concern or alarm. The largeness of the accumulation, seems to give to the combined whole a very weighty and influential at least, if not even an essential and a paramount importance. And as we have already employed an architectural allusion in illustrating the former part of this subject, perhaps it would not be very difficult, to derive from the same rational and beautiful science, such an elucidation of the present theme as should not be considered wholly inappropriate or inefficient. The foundation and the superstructure of a building, are its intrinsically essential parts. But the completion of the whole structure, consisting in the precise adaptation of

all its parts and details to the purpose or purposes originally designed, is also an object of essential importance, so far as the original intention of the architect, and the ultimate appropriation of the edifice, are concerned. In the gradual progress of this adaptation or completion, however, there may exist a very extensive range for the diversified exercise of judgment and fancy in determining the number, value, and magnitude, the selection, arrangement, and appropriation, of the several parts included in the whole scheme of utility or pleasure. Now, in reference to any one of these parts generally, or some one of them particularly, there may be considerable doubt or hesitation felt respecting the propriety or impropriety, the necessity or inutility, of its introduction, exclusion, or modification. But if this doubt or hesitation is extended so as to comprehend a very considerable number of these parts; then, the original plan and final effect of the whole structure, seem to be in danger of being materially affected or modified by this subsequently extensive alteration or transformation. A degree of essential importance which no one of these particular parts, possesses in a completely insulated or separate state, is thus eventually acquired by their combination and exhibition in one large, imposing, and characterising aggregate. The principal idea contained in this allusion, affords a very appropriate illustration of the distinction that we wish

to convey. When the number of things deemed indifferent or non-essential, becomes so very large, as to threaten materially to affect the character, or ultimately endanger the existence of religion itself, or that system of doctrinal and practical essentials which we have personally embraced; the very circumstance of their combined influence being so momentous, renders it imperative and indispensable, as a matter of consummate importance, that they should be subjected, severally and collectively, to our profoundest and most serious examination, and that their separate and their collective character and weight should be most impartially and precisely ascertained. If their number, when they are viewed in a state of aggregation, should, like their nature, when they are examined in a state of separate existence, appear to be non-essential or indifferent; then evidently must the whole number, how great soever, be considered as non-essential, or comparatively unimportant. But we are now obviously treading on very dangerous, though perfectly substantial ground. Lest, therefore, we should inadvertently plunge ourselves or others into inextricable difficulties and fatal mazes, we shall immediately observe without apology or compromise,—that the proper classification of objects agreeably to these definitions, is of supreme importance, because of infinite and eternal moment;—that impatient examination and premature

decision, would be extremely culpable and perilous;—that total inattention or complete indifference, would be the greatest and most fatal of all crimes.

We have now defined the terms essential and non-essential;—we have also stated what is meant by an essential number of essentials, and by a non-essential number of things indifferent;—and we have affirmed, that it is only in an essential number of things absolutely indispensable, that Ecclesiastical Communion requires the subjects of it perfectly to agree; and that it is only in a non-essential number of things confessedly indifferent, that such communion permits those who compose it freely to differ. What things are in reality essential, and what are in reality indifferent, are, in this discussion, left entirely to be determined, in the case of each and every human being, by the Private Opinions which he individually forms and maintains: to secure the formation of these opinions agreeably to the dictates of reason, and the doctrines of revelation, and consonantly to the voice of conscience, and the express intimations of the Spirit of God, we have already given such instructions and regulations as, in our view of the subject, appeared to be indispensable, incontrovertible, and complete. A simple reference and recurrence to these instructions and regulations, therefore, would

seem very naturally and immediately to conclude this part of the discussion, were it not perhaps possible for a suspicion to arise, that we have prematurely adopted the principle of coincidence and difference, on which we have asserted that Ecclesiastical Communion depends. We shall therefore previously establish the correctness of the principle which we have assumed, and subsequently close the whole by generalising this principle of Ecclesiastical Communion, so as to extend it to the universal Church of Christ.

We are first required to prove, that a coincidence in things essential, is an indispensable requisite of Ecclesiastical Communion. There will be very little difficulty, we are apprehensive, in achieving this demonstration. An impression that the truth was a self-evident one, is that probably which betrayed us into an apparently premature assumption of its correctness. That Ecclesiastical Communion should exist without some coincidence or other in the Private Opinions of the individuals associated, appears to me an absurdity too glaring to require exposure. The elements of such an incongruous communion, like those of primeval chaos, would exhibit a mass of confusion, darkness, and discord, repulsive and horrific in the extreme. That some coincidence or other is therefore necessary, cannot rationally be denied. In what, then,

shall this indispensable coincidence exist? It must be admitted, that, when men act with consistency, the practice which they adopt, is conformable to the doctrines which they believe. Every particular species of morality, and the doctrinal system of which that species of morality is the practical profession and exemplification, are, therefore, in this respect, only two parts of one and the same thing — the entire conduct of the individual by whom that system is conscientiously embraced, and its concomitant exemplification practically exhibited. If, then, it be asserted, that conformity of moral practice, is that in which Ecclesiastical Communion requires men to agree,—I answer, that since there must be as great a diversity of moral practice, as there is variety of doctrine in their different systems of theoretical belief; it is evident, that if we commence with that which is properly entitled to precedence, because it is that which suggests and determines the actual conduct of men; we shall adopt their coincidence or difference in opinion on subjects of this nature, as the origin and criterion of their coincidence or difference in moral and religious action. That these two parts of human conduct should be exactly conformed to each other, is natural, consistent, and perhaps generally unavoidable; if they are disunited or opposed to each other, this disunion or contrariety originates in the imperfection or immaturity of the opinion

or opinions formed, or in some motive which disposition or character, interest or expediency, impracticability or danger, suggests. Now, if the individuals desirous of religious association, totally, or even very materially differed from each other in moral practice, either such Ecclesiastical Communion as we have described, would properly have no existence whatever, or if a spurious form of it were invested with a plausible appearance of cordial union and co-operation, its adoption would be attended with so many inconveniences and restrictions, and would be productive of so much jealousy, repugnance, crimination, discord, and hostility, that the close combination and practical intercourse of such irreconcileable characters, would be, to all parties and interests, fraught with the most dangerous and direful consequences. It is evident, therefore, that a coincidence or difference of Private Opinion, must be the foundation and criterion of all proper Ecclesiastical Communion, because it is the very foundation and criterion of all actual, personal conduct and character in a moral point of view: or, in other words, it is evident, that, as the existence of a morally essential difference in the practice of men, precludes the possibility of engaging in Ecclesiastical Communion; so, the existence of any essential difference in their opinions respecting things which they deem essential, will, by the inseparable connection that

exists, inevitably oppose the same insurmountable obstacle. Any species of Ecclesiastical Communion that may be formed in mere caprice, will be as capriciously conducted and dissolved, as it has been irrationally and unscripturally concocted and continued. If the ecclesiastical superstructure is to be useful and beautiful, stupendous and permanent; its basis must be founded in principles possessing all these desirable qualities—moral utility, spiritual beauty, vastness of comprehension, and eternity of duration. Whatever view, therefore, we take of the subject, we shall perceive, that a coincidence of opinion in things essential, and in an essential number of essentials, is absolutely requisite for the right formation, and for the harmonious, beneficial, and prosperous continuance of Ecclesiastical Communion. Of course, there will be as great a number of ecclesiastical communions, or, rather, as great a number of religious denominations, as there can be found classes of persons whose opinions on subjects deemed essential, either exactly coincide, or are so very nearly coincident with each other, as to render the extremely minute and almost undefinable shades of difference in the sentiments entertained—inconsiderable. What my own religious tenets and denomination are, future publications, already prepared, and devoted to these in common with other equally interesting and momentous topics, will most explicitly and amply

testify. From these publications it will be clearly seen, that I am neither ashamed to confess, nor afraid to avow, what my own religious opinions and distinctive designation are; especially as my creed, profession, and association, are such respectively as I have deliberately formed, conscientiously adopted, and preferred agreeably to the principle of communion which I have propounded, and by which I conceive it is the duty of all others individually, to regulate their conduct in making their own election, whatever their religious views may be, whether wholly and essentially coincident with mine, or, on some controvertible subjects, essentially different. But it would obviously be very irrelevant and unseasonable, to introduce into this discussion, any very specific or circumstantial declarations and details on these comparatively private, personal topics, and more partial considerations; since it has been my avowed and grand object, not prominently to exhibit and minutely to particularise my own religious sentiments, and imperatively to impose them on others as an infallibly correct system of evangelical truth, how deep and permanent soever my own conviction of their rational propriety, of their mutual consistency, and of their consonance with the whole code of divine revelation, may be, and that such is my conviction, I hesitate not to affirm, but — to ascertain the principle on which I and all others who profess

the religion of Jesus Christ, ought to engage in what is strictly called Ecclesiastical Communion. That appearance, which the adoption of this principle, may seem to exhibit, of tolerating, authorising, and even encouraging schism, is merely a bugbear by which those only will be frightened and paralysed, who have conceived the idea of such a perfect unison of sentiment, and permanently invariable uniformity of discipline, being attainable, as never have demonstrably existed, and such as probably never will exist to the latest age of time, or those who are actuated by interested, selfish, prejudiced motives in wishing to impose restrictions inconsistent with the inalienable rights of human reason, and the essentially unchangeable, universally tolerant institutes of divine revelation. The inconveniences and dangers supposed to be consequent on establishing such a system of universal, religious toleration, are, I conceive, much more imaginary than real; whilst the facilities and benefits necessarily or adventitiously derived from the establishment of such a system, are signally great and numerous. If the dangers and inconveniences should in any instance become real and prejudicial, and the benefits and facilities doubtful and precarious, the fault or failure will probably be found to originate chiefly in the neglect or in the violation of this obvious principle,—that without a coincidence of opinion in things essential,

and in the number of essentials, there can be no just or beneficial communion of an ecclesiastical nature.

But an absolutely perfect, a constantly invariable coincidence of judgment on every subject that can possibly be suggested for investigation or discussion, is not to be expected even in a very small community, perhaps not even in the very smallest society of human beings. There will constantly and inevitably occur subjects which, being viewed by different men in almost as many various or different lights, will very naturally and properly give rise to amicably controversial discussion. So far as these subjects are of fundamental character and superlative importance, the existence of any material difference of opinion on these essential topics, amongst individuals composing the same ecclesiastical community, would be, as has been already demonstrated, incompatible with the soundness of its constitution, and fatal to the advancement of its prosperity. The only point, therefore, which remains to be established, is, that the members of such a properly constituted, ecclesiastical community, may, without inconsistency or detriment, entertain a greater or less difference of opinion respecting things believed by them to be non-essential, and respecting any essentially unimportant number of such things. The correctness

of this view of the subject will, I apprehend, admit of a demonstration very similar to the one employed in the last section. It may not, however, be improper or unnecessary to premise, incidentally, that the members of such a properly instituted society, are by no means absolutely necessitated always to differ in judgment respecting non-essentials, any more than they do respecting things essential; there may indeed be instances in which their coincidence of judgment, is as complete, or nearly as complete, in the former class of objects or subjects as in the latter. For every system of essentials, is conceived to have its concomitant system of non-essentials; and, in either case, the precise determination of the one, generally involves an equally precise determination of the other. To apply this maxim directly to the subject of discussion:—in every particular system of evangelical truth, as embraced and professed by some one Christian community, the number of essentials is definite and limited; whatever is not comprised within this number and designation, must be comprehended within the department and appellation of less essential or non-essential. But the last of these, the non-essentials, though in respect of moral nature, precisely identical with the main class first mentioned, yet will often be, in point of number, determinable and determined only by the variety and extent of the views taken, and the diversified circumstances

of a personal nature by which the associated individuals who take these different views, are unavoidably characterised: since these variable causes of modification may, in some instances, be so very numerous and powerful, as to render it irrational even to conjecture, that a perfect uniformity of sentiment will invariably prevail amongst all the individuals who compose the same Christian community; we have, in our elucidation of this subject, expressly provided for the unavoidable occurrence of such a diversity of opinion. Any attempt entirely to prevent, or capitally to proscribe, this diversity of sentiment, would involve the ceaseless interruption, or the total suppression or annihilation of all Ecclesiastical Communion; its existence, therefore, must be tolerated, or all such communion, strictly considered, must cease. No prejudicial consequence is to be apprehended from allowing the most extensive toleration of so qualified a diversity of opinion; for, be it observed, it is not respecting essentials that we are asserting the propriety of tolerating this generally unavoidable dissentience, but respecting things which all the members of each community, are supposed to consider non-essential, and respecting any collective number of those things which they consider non-essential: if, from any peculiar circumstance of connection or influence in time or place, any number of things otherwise indifferent, acquires,

collectively, an essential importance; then, that group of non-essentials, ceases to be classed under this head, and properly becomes itself one of those essentials concerning which a proper coincidence of opinion, is indispensable to the very existence of Ecclesiastical Communion. We repeat, therefore, that no injurious effects can arise from exercising the proper toleration for which we plead. For even if it were asserted, that the criterion of doctrinal orthodoxy, is to be derived from the practical effects produced in the conduct of those who have embraced different systems of religious belief, rather than to be determined by a metaphysical investigation of the sources and objects in which the peculiar doctrines of each system, originate; still, it would be equally evident, that consequences comparatively unimportant in a practical point of view, must be the result of tolerating a difference of opinion respecting things indifferent, and an allowedly unimportant number of such things. By the proper allowance and use of this universal, indispensable toleration, effects the most beneficial and lasting will be produced. Legitimate freedom of discussion will be secured. A very agreeable, though precisely circumscribed latitude of opinion, will be indulged. The independence of Private Judgment on all merely human and consequently fallible tribunals, will be preserved unviolated and inviolable. Space will be left for

the suggestion and adoption of improvement in every truly evangelical community, and for its gradual approximation towards a state of final perfection. The occurrence of needless and capricious schism, will be, as extensively as possible, prevented. A spirit of concession, will have the widest range afforded for its honourable, courteous, and profitable exercise. Soundness of judgment, and correctness of discrimination, will be most effectually promoted. The cultivation of a peaceful and an harmonious disposition, will be most extensively facilitated. The growth of piety, the exercise of charity, the prevalence of virtuous and friendly emotion, and the attainment of all possible excellence and prevalence in morality, truth, and enjoyment, will be mutually accelerated, and permanently maintained. The evils consequent on the rejection, violation, or only partial adoption of this tolerant indulgence, are too obvious to require enumeration, and in some instances too vast and deplorable to admit of calculation or description. The arguments and instructions already adduced, are, I humbly conceive, sufficient to prove that the principle of this toleration, is incontrovertible, and that its tendency is decidedly and universally beneficial. How reluctant soever some denominations of Christians may be, to admit the correctness of these assertions at first sight, they will all ultimately discover on reflection, that these are the

sources in which their separate existence and independence originate, and that these are the principles by which their inalienable rights as individuals, and their peculiar privileges as religious communities, are secured.

Having now concluded the discussion of Ecclesiastical Communion, strictly and properly so called, we proceed to redeem our pledge by extending the enquiry so as to comprehend the universal Communion of the Church of Christ. We shall endeavour for this purpose to ascertain, on what principle or principles this universal communion can possibly be founded, and by what rules and regulations it ought properly to be conducted. Now, it is evident, at first sight, that the principle or principles of such an all-comprehensive communion, must be of the most general, or rather of a literally universal kind, to render its establishment or existence at all possible. The institution of any Private Opinion, or any number of Private Opinions, as the test of admission to this universal, religious intercourse, would involve the necessity of an unattainable conformity in private sentiment, and would therefore constitute a palpable absurdity. All private and particular criteria, must therefore be excluded. A measure of latitude must be afforded, sufficiently large for the merging of all these private, personal considerations in one grand

universal principle of admission. What shall that most comprehensive concession be? It is evident, that, in some instances, the Private Opinions of those who profess Christianity, differ exceedingly on religious subjects. The adoption of private sentiment, therefore, as a universal criterion of doctrinal eligibility, is, as we have already observed, totally inadmissible. But are these peculiar views, are these private sentiments, casually and capriciously formed, or are they not all professedly derived from some one common source of religious information which is, solely and confessedly, of superhuman origin and authority? in other words, do not all these sentiments profess to be derived from some perfect, acknowledged system of revelation, or complete and finished series of revelations, which is equally and universally considered by all true believers—an oracle of truth, and a rule of life, demonstrably divine in its origin and communication, literally absolute in its authority and decision, and consequently, in its nature and dignity, infallible and supreme? If these Private Opinions originated exclusively in human judgment or caprice, or if they acknowledged no such a universal and an infallible criterion of faith and practice as that which purely divine revelation alone supplies; then, it would be sheer folly and madness, to attempt either any systematic, mutual reconciliation of sentiments so opposite and

contradictory, or any amicable and beneficial, ecclesiastical association of persons professing to adopt systems of faith and practice, so indeterminate and indeterminable as must then inevitably arise: the attempt would issue in disappointment and chagrin. If the universal rule of judgment and decision, were of merely human origin, it would then have no more authority than what human fallibility possesses; and the moral impossibility of inducing all men to acknowledge the confessedly fallible judgment of any one mere man, as a universal and an infallible criterion of religious belief, is too obvious to require any special exposure by argument of the monstrous, practical absurdity involved in the supposition of the experiment. But if any criterion can be found, which has an indisputable divinity of origin to urge in favour of its professed infallibility and avowed universality; then, all those who agree in acknowledging that its origin is divine, and that its communications are uncorrupted, must equally agree in admitting its infallible and supreme authority as an absolute and a universal rule of faith and practice. Now, such precisely are the origin and character which Christianity claims: a claim which Christianity most triumphantly establishes by every species of information that can be supernaturally conveyed, and by every kind of conviction that can be produced in the mind of man by ages of verified prophecy,

by multitudes of diversified miracles, and by every other description of external and visible, as well as internal, moral evidence. All those who admit the validity of this claim, are, nominally at least, Christians. All those who reject this claim as invalid, have no title whatever to be considered even nominal Christians. They may be atheists; they may be deists; they may be infidels, or fatalists, or materialists, or pagans, or religious non-descripts of any kind that human ingenuity, folly, and caprice can imagine or institute. But to call them Christians, is an abuse of words, and a contradiction of terms, foolish, absurd, and ridiculous in the extreme. If individuals are undecided respecting the validity of this claim, that very indecision incapacitates them for the proper, consistent, and full assumption of the Christian name and character. Or if they receive the Christian revelation as a compound of truth and error, the discrimination of which is to be effected by the exercise of their fallible judgment, their uninspired reason; it is not easy, perhaps, to discover which to condemn the most, — their folly in asserting the intermixture, or their presumptuousness in attempting the separation. Of all the enemies of Christianity, such a self-constituted and conceited, semi-fallible, semi-infallible judge, as this anomalously sceptical individual appears to be, is, in my opinion, the least honourable and the most

formidable. According as he applies or varies his system of capricious analysis, Christianity becomes any thing, every thing, nothing; it answers all purposes, — it answers none that are of any moment or value; and least of all, consistently with such an alchymical scheme of transformation and transmutation, is it applicable or serviceable as a determinate and an infallible rule of faith and life. Since all the various elements and parts of which Christianity consists, are all essentially indispensable to each other, all perfectly consistent with each other, and all consequently comprised in one perfectly consistent whole; it is obvious, that the man who receives or who rejects the whole as a whole, acts, in this point of view, with infinitely greater consistency and honour, than the man who insidiously professes neither to receive it nor to reject it as a divine and complete system of religion, but whose capricious and presumptuous analysis of its contents, accompanied by the most arbitrary omissions and groundless interpolations both of expressions and ideas, amounts actually to a rejection of the whole the most criminal and baneful that could possibly be imagined. He pretends inoffensively to untwine the branches, but in reality he strikes a deadly blow at the root. He assumes the Christian name and character; but any other appellation and profession, however opposite to these, would be much more appropriate.

It is evident, therefore, that the admission of the Christian revelation as the infallible rule of faith and life, is that fundamental and indispensable concession which constitutes the basis of universal, Ecclesiastical Communion. This concession supplies a centre from which Private Opinion may radiate in innumerable directions; it also fixes a circumference within which these diverging radii shall always be properly confined.

But a very superficial glance will be sufficient to convince all who reflect on the subject for a moment, that, by the establishment of universal Communion, we do not mean merely the verbal appropriation of one common term to all who acknowledge the divine authenticity of the Christian scheme and revelation; for this acknowledgment is to be regarded, chiefly or solely, as the universal, indispensable qualification for entering into such Communion. Other qualifications are, or some other qualification at least, is essentially required to render a communion, founded on this acknowledgment, available for all those practical purposes which ecclesiastical or religious intercourse is intended to serve. Diversified as these purposes, when expanded into all their different ramifications, may be, they are, as we have already observed, all ultimately reducible to these two:— the social communication of religious knowledge,

and the social excitement of religious emotion. From this view of the subject, therefore, arises the necessity of a direct and decisive reference to the intellectual and moral character of the candidates for such an all-comprehensive communion. A total incapacity to receive, or inability to communicate knowledge, or a degree of apathy on the subject equivalent to such an incapacity or inability, as it would disqualify the individual for rational intercourse of any description, so would manifestly exclude him from all participation of spiritual communion. We shall therefore suppose the existence of such a measure of capacity, and desire of promoting and receiving improvement, as are essential to qualify the individual, mentally and intellectually, for this ecclesiastical intercourse. There remains then to be specified, only one qualification more; but it is of so indispensably requisite a nature, as to render it imperative on us not only to particularise it on the present occasion, but to enforce it in terms of absolute injunction. This qualification, I am apprehensive, will, by characters of some descriptions, be considered as, morally, a most painfully severe, and, numerically, an exceedingly restrictive one. But whatever may be the degree of pain inflicted, or the measure of limitation prescribed, the qualification is one which the degeneracy of human nature, and the opposition to that degeneracy which Christianity uniformly

presents, absolutely require for the complete extermination of the former by the triumphant establishment and supreme ascendency of the latter. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the qualification to which we attach so transcendent an importance, consists in the possession and exhibition of such a measure of real, practical morality, such a degree of genuine, experimental piety, as are indispensable to the proper communication of religious knowledge, and the proper excitement of devout emotion. Let it not be supposed, that we are now contending, obstinately and exclusively, for extraordinary measures of rectitude and degrees of sanctity; though, in our opinion, the greater these respective attainments of spiritual and moral excellence are, and the better qualified will Christians of all denominations be, not only for general but for universal Communion. Virtue, especially distinguished virtue, is no disqualification for any society except that which is vicious and profane; the larger and brighter this moral star is in the constellation of human excellences, and the more admirable is its solar beauty, the more intense and expansive its centrally radiant illumination. Wickedness of any kind or degree, is, on the contrary, no recommendation of any individual to any society; it is the darkest and ugliest feature of human character; it is comprehensive of all detestable and pernicious qualities and effects; it is a

blot, a stain,—a disease, a pestilence,—death, hell. Demons claim wickedness as their chief characteristic and distinction. Satan employs it as the means of effecting individual and universal destruction. Darkness, moral and infernal, is its native abode. Misery, immediate and everlasting, is the reward of its obstinate and impenitent exhibition. The supposition of its predominance in the soul, and of its prevalence in the character, is therefore totally inconsistent with the acceptable observance of all the essentials and requirements of Ecclesiastical Communion, whether general or universal. It is with inexpressible pleasure that we embrace this most favourable opportunity of bearing the strongest of all testimonies to the essential propriety, the incalculable advantages, and the indispensable necessity of Christian morality, in all the possible transactions of religion and of life, and especially in all kinds and degrees of proper, Ecclesiastical Communion. Perhaps those who are orthodox in doctrinal sentiment, but heterodox in moral practice, will charge us with narrowing the bounds of communion more than religious intercourse requires, or Christian charity allows. But if our representations of the inestimable value, and the indispensable importance of morality, are correct; then, it is obvious, that they alone are chargeable with incurring by their misconduct these painful and penal forfeitures, whether their immo-

rality consists merely in such follies and improprieties as would scandalise religion, or in the most flagrant and detestable enormities that could disgrace human nature. These morally objectionable characters may be Christian in name, but they are unchristian in practice. As their Christianity, therefore, is merely nominal, existing theoretically in the head, but not influentially affecting the heart; they cannot complain of injustice being exercised, if they are debarred the enjoyment of those ecclesiastical privileges which are connected, solely, with the experimental possession of all evangelical graces and benefits, and with the practical exhibition of all essential, Christian morality. They are not excluded from intercourse with society at large. They are not denied a proper place in the commercial or the political world, or in the domestic or the social sphere. They are not prohibited admission to the walks of science, or the lists of fame. But they are denied access to that purely spiritual communion for which they are destitute of one essential, indispensable qualification: — a communion, for which, in fact, they have as little taste as desire, and which, were they indulgently admitted to its participation, they would only derange, disgrace, and destroy: a communion which can be continuously enjoyed in full perfection by those only who have experienced a complete regeneration of moral nature, and whose whole deportment

has consequently become proportionately conformable to the perfect model of evangelical righteousness. O that speedily the whole of the human race may realise this experience, exhibit this rectitude, and thus participate the eternity and infinity of pleasure and advantage inseparable from the perfect enjoyment of that Communion which we have described, and consequent on the entire observance of that course of procedure which we have, through the whole of this Dissertation, endeavoured infallibly to prescribe.

LEEDS:

A. PICKARD, PRINTER, CROSS-COURT, TOP OF BRIGGATE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In place of prefixing to the preceding Dissertation, an introduction of the ordinary form, the Author has thought it advisable to subjoin a copy of the original Prospectus, by which the publication of this first Volume, and consequently that of the whole intended Series, was preceded. He has been the more strongly induced to adopt this plan in consequence of perceiving, that, in addition to other practical information which may still be as serviceable as before in the transaction of typographical business, the Prospectus contains all the observations of a general nature that he should have wished an ordinary Preface to comprise. Of the Work or Works next selected for publication, the earliest intimation will be given, as in the case of the Dissertation now published. Any enquiries respecting this selection, or on any other subject which the following Prospectus may suggest, will be resolved with great pleasure by the Author, now residing at Dewsbury, or, in future, by the same at any other place to which, should he live, he may in the providence of God be appointed. The following is a *verbatim* copy of the original Prospectus, including, of course, the Title of the present Work.

January, 1836.

PROSPECTUS.

READY FOR THE PRESS, AND INTENDED TO BE PUBLISHED,

As soon as an adequate number of Subscribers shall have been obtained, or any other equally eligible mode of publication adopted, the works of DANIEL CHAPMAN, on subjects Moral, Philosophical, and Religious:—Prepared to a very considerable extent, and designed no less to influence the practice, than to direct the judgment of the human race.

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IN THREE PARTS,

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1. PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

2. POLITICS AND RELIGION.

3. PRIVATE OPINION AND ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNION.

All letters of business or advice addressed to the Author, in connection with the object of this Prospectus, will receive immediate attention and acknowledgment. And as the Author has not yet proceeded beyond this general announcement of his preparations and intentions, he will feel obliged to those friends, publishers, or stationers, to whom he transmits copies of this Prospectus, for any

suggestions or proposals which they may be disposed to submit. — A further intimation will of course be required for the public generally, as soon as any particular plan is finally adopted.

DANIEL CHAPMAN.

2, *Haywood-Street, Nottingham.*

SINCE the above Prospectus was published, considerable numbers of the Author's friends, have, personally and by letter, prosecuted very kind and urgent enquiries respecting the particulars of the intended issue; and several have with equal kindness and eagerness endeavoured to obtain some general idea of the principal object or objects which he proposes to accomplish. To all these and to all others, the Author most respectfully addresses the following unreserved statement of his motives, achievements, and plans.

The acquisition of pecuniary emolument, is not his principal object; though when the labour performed is of a profitable description, the labourer is worthy of his hire; and there exists no such difference between intellectual and physical exertion, as entitles the latter alone to such a species of remuneration. Pecuniary advantage, therefore, should any ultimately accrue, the Author has no objection to share proportionately with those to whom the typographical execution of his Works may be entrusted. Such considerations, however, and all others distinct from the intrinsic excellence and practical utility of his Publications, he regards as not only inferior, but comparatively insignificant. The consciousness of having, by the assistance of God, contributed to promote through the present and succeeding ages, the best interests of his species, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, would be to him a gratification and a recompense incomparably exceeding the pleasures of transient affluence, the enjoyment of evanescent applause. The proverbial brevity and uncertainty of human life, the ordinary adequacy of the supplies derived from his sacred function, and the exhaustless copiousness of the resources possessed and dispensed by a bountiful Providence, are considerations which dispose the Author to regard with comparative unconcern, all results except those which affect the essential character, and the permanently practical influence of his Publications. Should these results prove as beneficial as his wishes are benevolent and ardent, their measure and extent will be greater than language can describe. For he solemnly and conscientiously declares, that he is wholly unconscious of being actuated by any other motives than those which this Prospectus developes. Should he have advanced any thing, therefore, that can be certainly demonstrated to be erroneous or prejudicial, so far from feeling or manifesting the slightest chagrin or hostility at the exposure and counteraction of this error and injury, he will deem it a favour conferred upon himself personally, and a contribution to that universal good which alone he is anxious to promote, to have the fallacy detected, and its

consequences prevented, to have pure truth substituted, and its inestimable advantages to every human being secured. This, however, he feels himself authorised to require of all his fraternal auxiliaries in the cause of truth,—for by this friendly designation he chooses to call those who may differ from himself in sentiment or opinion, rather than designate them by the frequently unjust and opprobrious epithet of rivals, opponents, or antagonists,—that these should endeavour, previously to their condemnation and denunciation of his views, to think for themselves most deliberately and profoundly, to judge dispassionately and impartially, and then to declare their own dissent, and recommend the adoption of their own final conclusions, equally in a manner and in language suited to subjects of so sacred and transcendently important a nature. Any representations of this controversial character, he will be most happy to examine with all the promptitude, attention, and candour which they require; and, if necessity demand, to reply in confession or defence. Mere strifes of words, disputatious and captious wranglings, he abhors as a waste of time, a prostitution of intellect, as disgraceful to rational, fatal to immortal beings. Controversial discussion, judiciously and amicably conducted, however, he regards as perfectly compatible with the interests of truth, and the welfare of society; though to even this form of controversy he will not have recourse, unless impelled by most obvious reasons of paramount importance.

The precise extent of his labours, can be determined only by the length of his life, and the measure of his ability. For so long as he is permitted to live, and to enjoy a competent share of leisure and capability, he purposes sacredly and unreservedly to consecrate his existence and powers to the glory of God, and the good of man. The subjects which he has already discussed, judging from the quantity of them which he has now existing in finished manuscript, would occupy probably five or six volumes. And all these, if the public required, the Author could with very little additional application, prepare for immediate submission to the Press. It is not, however, at present, intended to publish them all collectively, unless some such demand as this should be generally made, subsequently to the appearance of the single work announced in the Prospectus. For this work, though the introductory volume of the series, is yet complete in itself, and independent of all the others. It will, therefore, be published and vended separately. And the purchasers of this work, will not be considered as thus tacitly involving themselves in any kind of responsibility or pledge to purchase future ones. If, however, any of these friends should choose to accompany their subscription for this work, with the expression of a desire and an intention to take its immediate successor, or all its successors, the Author or his publisher will be most happy to receive and record the intimation. Were this done to any considerable extent, the publication of these succeeding volumes would be materially promoted and facilitated. The work announced in the Prospectus, as these observations imply, will be published by subscription. The typographical execution of the volume, is intended to combine utility and elegance, and to commence as soon as five hundred

subscribers have been obtained. Its price will not exceed eight shillings. The names of subscribers, addressed without loss of time, will be received with great pleasure by the Author. Perhaps it would be most conducive to economy and despatch, if each person who receives a copy of this Prospectus, were to procure as great a number of subscribers as the range of his own immediate circle, and the extent of his casual intercourse, allowed, and were then collectively to transmit to the Author the names and addresses of the respective individuals. And he is not without hopes of an early issue of the volume, as many of his friends in different parts of the country, have kindly expressed a desire to become subscribers, and stated that they knew others who were desirous to do the same. But the principal difficulty which they have experienced, has arisen from the want of explicit, circumstantial information in the first Prospectus. That information, therefore, which it was the object of the first Prospectus to create a general desire to obtain, is now most respectfully supplied.

DANIEL CHAPMAN.

2, *Haywood-Street, Nottingham.*