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ELEMENTS

OF

MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

ELEMENTS

OF

MORAL PHILOSOPHY:

COMPRISING

THE THEORY OF MORALS

AND

PRACTICAL ETHICS.

BY JOHN L. PARKHURST.

CONCORD, N. H.

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1825.

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DISTRICT OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE, to wit:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In the writing of this volume, the author has availed himself of the labors of others, so far as they have been to his purpose. In the Theory of Morals, he is chiefly indebted to Brown; in Practical Ethics, to Paley.—In making the extracts from the work of Dr. Paley, liberty has been taken to abridge or alter, wherever it was thought expedient; and, in a few instances, where the grammatical construction, the phraseology, or the sense, has been considerably altered, the extracts are marked with single inverted commas.

December 27, 1824.

NOTE. Those who find the THEORY OF MORALS unintelligible or uninteresting, may pass from the INTRODUCTION to PRACTICAL ETHICS, p. 76.

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MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

INTRODUCTION.

KNOWLEDGE is congenial to the human mind. The acquisition of it affords a pleasure, independent of the uses to which it may be applied. But it is the practical utility of any branch of knowledge, which gives it its chief value. The difference between the practical utility of the various branches of knowledge, is very great. Some can scarcely be said to be of any benefit beyond the momentary gratification afforded by the acquisition; others produce an effect on the mind which is indirectly beneficial; and others are directly subservient to the purposes of human life. Such knowledge and such studies, as tend to strengthen and elevate the mind, to induce a habit of reflection, and to withdraw the thoughts from the thousand trifles by which they are so prone to be occupied, exert a salutary influence on the conduct and on the happiness of the individual, by means of the effect which they produce on the mind, though they may not be capable of being directly applied to any practical purposes. But as it is the disposition of heart which individuals cherish, and the course of moral conduct which they pursue, that are the grand source of happiness or misery to themselves and others, that knowledge which is best adapted to meliorate the disposition and to regulate the conduct, must be most worthy of our attention and pursuit.

Man is not guided by instinct to the infallible attainment of his best good. He may fail of it by inaction, or by ill-directed efforts. He finds himself led astray by his passions; and he looks in vain, for a safe guide, to the example of others. It is, then, the dictate of wisdom to inquire, by what means these wayward propensities may be subdued, and his feet guided in the path of peace. Happy are they who make this inquiry in early years. Still happier they, whom, before they are capable of making the inquiry, the hand of instruction has been already guiding in the path of knowledge and virtue.—But what is the knowledge, which the young inquirer should chiefly seek, and the friendly instructer most sedulously impart? What is the knowledge, which tends to recall us from low and sordid pursuits, to fix our affections on better objects, and to form us to such a character, and direct us to such a course of conduct, as will secure the divine approbation, and be most promotive of our own happiness and that of the community of which we are members? It is the knowledge of ourselves, of human nature in general, of our Creator, and of the relations we sustain to him and to our fellow-creatures. Of the means of obtaining a knowledge of our Creator, of the relations we sustain to him, and the duties which result from those relations, I forbear to speak in this place. To obtain a knowledge of ourselves and of human nature in general, we must carefully observe what passes in our own minds and hearts, watch the motives of our conduct, notice the conduct of those around us, study the delineations of human character contained in the sacred pages, and guide all these observations and inquiries

by a scientific acquaintance with the elementary principles of intellectual and moral philosophy. A scientific acquaintance with first principles, is no less important in studying the human character and in forming rules of human conduct, than in the observations of the astronomer and the researches of the physical inquirer.

"Moral philosophy or Ethics," says Dr. Paley, "is that science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it." One advantage of making this science a study, is, to lead the student to reflect on the nature of the motives by which he is habitually actuated, and the tendency of the course of conduct which he is daily pursuing. Although the science should afford no new information in regard to the moral nature of man, nor cast any new light on the path of duty, yet the individual might derive very great benefit from being led frequently and seriously to reflect on the subjects on whch it treats. It is of reflection rather than instruction, that many stand most in need.

Another advantage of studying the science of ethics, is the effect it has on the moral sensibility of the individual. As the external senses, by frequent exercise and by habits of attention, become more ready in perceiving their appropriate objects, and discriminating the various differences that subsist between them; so, by frequent exercise and by attending to its operations, the moral discernment becomes more ready and delicate. If refinement of taste in regard to natural beauty, is so highly prized, of much greater value must be this refinement and delicacy of the moral taste. Thus, the love of virtue and the hatred of vice more strongly and spontaneously arise. The

distinction between right and wrong acquires a more prominent place in the mind. The hand shrinks instinctively from the performance of a wrong action; and the existence of wrong feelings in the breast is followed by a more ready and a deeper compunction.

The moral nature of man, is that which peculiarly distinguishes him from the brute creation. This, as it is virtuous or vicious, either gives him a deformity more odious than brutes ever possess, or adorns him with a beauty by which he is assimilated to angels; and it will eventually either sink him into the deepest wretchedness, or exalt him to the highest felicity. But there is something in man, which disposes him to neglect the means of virtue and happiness,—to neglect even those instructions and commands which come to us with the authority of divine inspiration. Hence, another advantage of moral philosophy is, that it shows Reason to be the friend and auxiliary of Religion. It shows that the dictates of Reason coincide with the precepts of the Bible. This is a consideration, which to the good man indeed is less necessary, yet even to him it affords a satisfaction, and is not without its use; but by the many, who are uninfluenced by the motives of religion, all its weight is needed, to excite them to seek their own moral improvement. Most men are willing to study the maxims which point out the path of virtue and happiness, if those maxims can be presented in connection with the *reasons* by which they are supported, and not as mere commands resting solely on the authority of God. On such, while their minds are enlightened in regard to the nature of virtue and vice, and they are led to reflect on the consequences of each, a salutary effect can hardly fail to be produced.

It is in vain to say, that the Bible is sufficient for the moral improvement of mankind, and that therefore books of moral philosophy are needless. We might as well say, that the Bible is sufficient for the religious improvement of mankind, and that therefore sermons, and systems of divinity, and all religious books of human composition, are needless; or that the law of God is sufficient for the government of mankind, and that therefore the civil law, and all human laws, are needless. If the light and aid of reason in relation to human duty, are to be rejected, then Paul was in an error when he 'reasoned with the Thessalonians out of the scriptures;'*—he ought merely to have *read* to them out of the scriptures. We might just as well say, that all the prophecies and doctrines of the Bible must be so plain, that there can be no need of reason to explain the one or to prove the other, as that all the precepts of the Bible must be so plain and so minute, that there can be no need of reason to illustrate and apply them.

But why is not the *law of the land* a sufficient rule of life? Many, indeed, make this their rule of life; at least, they appear to be "satisfied with themselves, so long as they do or omit nothing, for the doing or omitting of which the law can punish them. But every system of human laws, considered as a rule of life, labors under the two following defects:

1. Human laws omit many duties, as not objects of compulsion; such as piety to God, bounty to the poor, forgiveness of injuries, education of children, gratitude to benefactors. The law never speaks but to command, nor commands but where it can compel;

* Acts, xvii. 2.

consequently it omits those duties, which, by their nature, must be *voluntary*.

2. Human laws permit, or, which is the same thing, suffer to go unpunished, many crimes, because they are incapable of being defined by any previous description ;—of which nature are luxury, prodigality, disrespect to parents, &c. For, this is the alternative: either the law must define beforehand and with precision the offences which it punishes, or it must be left to the *discretion* of the magistrate, to determine upon each particular accusation, whether it constitute that offence which the law designed to punish, or not; which is, in effect, leaving it to the magistrate to punish or not to punish, at his pleasure, the individual who is brought before him ;—which is just so much tyranny."* It is evident, therefore, that by the nature of the case, the civil law cannot be a complete directory of human conduct. Such, indeed, is the depravity of man, that neither reason, nor revelation, nor the civil law, is sufficient effectually to preserve him from crime, and to make him always virtuous and happy. The understanding may receive all the light of which t is capable, yet, without a *heart* to obey the dictates of reason and the commands of the Gospel, mankind will grope as in the dark. Moral Philosophy, resting on the principles of the Gospel, offers herself as an auxiliary in reforming the vicious, in enlightening the ignorant, in elevating the degraded mind to wider views, in inspiring the sordid breast with nobler purposes, and in guiding the consciencious inquirer to those beneficent deeds and that course of conduct which will gratify, in the highest degree, the wishes of his benevolent heart.

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book I. Chap. 3.

THEORY OF MORALS.

CHAPTER I.

Foundation of Moral Distinctions.

By moral distinctions, are intended those, which are denoted by the epithets, 'virtuous' and 'vicious,' 'right' and 'wrong.' These terms, though applied also to external actions, have a primary reference to certain internal feelings, which are the sources of virtuous and vicious actions, and in which all moral differences are really to be sought. One class of these feelings consists of emotions of *approbation* and of *disapprobation*. These I shall denominate *moral emotions;* and those feelings *for which* a man is approved or disapproved, I shall denominate *moral feelings*. Moral emotions, indeed, being virtuous, are a species of moral feelings; yet the distinction just made between feelings and emotions, will be found convenient in the discussions on which we are about to enter.

By an emotion of *approbation*, is meant an emotion of *love* toward a virtuous man, regarded simply as such. This emotion is, by some writers, termed the love of *complacency*, or complacential love. It is distinct from *benevolence*, or benevolent love, which regards its object merely as susceptible of pleasure and pain. Both benevolence and complacency are *pleasant* emotions,—not, however, *consisting* in pleasure, but being immediately *followed* by pleasure.

An emotion of *disapprobation* is one that is felt toward a man regarded merely as possessing a certain character. It is totally distinct from *malevolence*, which directly and ultimately desires the *misery* of its object. Disapprobation is usually, and malevolence always, a *painful* emotion; that is, an emotion *attended* with pain. The pain arising from *self*-disapprobation, is called *remorse*. When emotions of self-disapprobation are more vivid than usual, and accompanied with a greater degree of pain, and this state of mind continues for some length of time, it is styled, in the language of theology, *conviction of sin;* and when the emotions of self-disapprobation are such as belong to the class of christian virtues, they constitute *repentance of sin.*

I now proceed to lay down and establish a few propositions, which appear to embrace the *first principles* of moral philosophy.

I. *Moral emotions* are of a *peculiar kind.*

The truth of this proposition, it cannot need much illustration to show. Little more seems necessary, than clearly to show what moral emotions are. The man toward whom these emotions are felt, is regarded as being *amiable* or *odious*, as possessing *good* or *ill desert*, as deserving to enjoy *happiness*, or to suffer *pain*. We feel that there is a *fitness* and *propriety* in making him happy, that seeks the happiness of others; and in making him miserable, that desires to make others so.

An emotion of approbation is distinct from the emotion that is felt in view of natural *beauty*. The emotion which I feel in beholding a virtuous action, is obviously different from that which I feel in looking at a *rose*. But it may be thought that the emotion which is excited by the beauty of the *human countenance*, is often of the same kind with that which is excited by a virtuous action. To

correct this mistake, it is only necessary to distinguish between mere beauty, as consisting in colors and forms, and that *expression* of the countenance, which consists in the ideas that are suggested by these colors and forms. When the countenance is such as to suggest the idea of an amiable disposition, consisting in the habitual exercise of virtuous feelings, no wonder that an emotion of approbation should be excited. Here, however, it is the virtuous heart that is approved,—not the beauty which is the means of suggesting the idea of this virtue to our conception. Let an individual possess the fairest complexion and the most perfect symmetry of features, and at the same time be known, by intimacy of acquaintance, to be destitute of every virtuous feeling;—how far will a look at the beauty of the countenance be from exciting the pleasant emotion of approbation!

Again, an emotion of approbation is distinct from the emotion that is felt in view of mere *utility*. The emotion which I feel in beholding a virtuous action, is obviously different from that which I feel in looking at a newly invented *machine*. The term 'approbation' is, indeed, sometimes applied to a machine, and to various other things which are not virtuous; but, in these cases, the word is used in a totally different sense. No one would say that a machine is *amiable*, that it possesses *good desert*, or is worthy to be *happy*. Even the beneficent actions of men are approved as virtuous, only when regarded as proceeding from a virtuous motive. If, when I see an act of beneficence performed, I am in doubt as to the design of the actor, and, for some reason, cannot conceive him as acting with a good design, I cannot feel an emotion of approbation. The action appears no less *useful* than it otherwise would; but the performance of it does not render the man *amiable* in my view.

The emotion that is felt in view of *knowledge* and *talents*, is equally distinct from that which is felt in view of virtuous feelings. We may, indeed, know or conceive a man to have been influenced by virtuous motives in the acquisition of knowledge and the cultivation of his mind; and, in this case, the exhibitions of his genius and learning will, by suggesting to us the idea of those virtuous motives, excite in us an emotion of approbation. Or his knowledge and talents may be employed in doing good; and thus appear in a still nearer connection with a virtuous heart. But, in both these cases, as in that of the beauty of the countenance, it is the virtuous heart only that is the object of moral complacency. Suppose this extensive knowledge and these superior talents to be possessed by a man who employs them only in injuring and making wretched all who are within the sphere of his agency;—we feel, at once, that in beholding such a man, not one complacent emotion can arise. Yet, if knowledge and talents were objects of moral approbation, we should feel this pleasing emotion in view of such a man, regarded as possessing knowledge and talents, however much disapprobation we might feel of him, regarded as possessing a malignant disposition.

II. *Moral feelings* are of a peculiar kind.

We are so constituted, that we cannot help believing, that there are *causes* of the sensations and emotions which we feel, distinct from those sensations and emotions, and existing independently of them. This belief implies, that there is a *variety* in those causes, corresponding with the variety of sensations and emotions. "To the *union* of all the external causes of our sensations, in one great system, we give the name of the *material world*."* The

* Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Lecture 26.

varieties of those causes,—that is to say, those causes themselves, considered individually, as being *different* one from another,—we call the *properties* or *qualities* of matter. A *certain number* of these, that have, by affecting our senses at the same time, become *associated* in the mind, we call a *body*. When two bodies affect our senses differently, we believe, of course, that they are not both composed of precisely the same combination of properties. For example, we believe, that in sugar and wormwood, there is a difference of properties, which is the cause of their affecting the palate differently;—that wormwood is destitute of some of the properties of sugar, or contains some properties which sugar does not, or both. If we say, that the divine will is the sole cause of these different sensations, and that they are not owing to any difference between the sugar and the wormwood, we must, to be consistent, say, that the divine will is the sole cause of *all* our sensations; and thus deny the existence of the material world, and of all created beings beside ourselves. The existence of secondary causes of our sensations, cannot be proved by reasoning; neither can we prove that those secondary causes are different, one from another. Both the existence and the variety of those causes, are believed by us, because we are so constituted by our Creator, that the belief is intuitive and irresistible.

In like manner, we believe, that in the internal causes of our *emotions*, there is a *variety*, corresponding with the variety of emotions excited. Those feelings, therefore, which excite *moral* emotions,—that is, in view of which moral emotions arise,—must be different from every thing else, because there is nothing else which occasions the same emotions. This difference of those feelings from every thing else, is denoted by calling them *moral* feelings, or by saying that they are of a *moral nature*. So, emotions of approbation being different from those of

disapprobation, the feelings which occasion the one set of emotions, must be different from those which occasion the other set of emotions; and this difference is denoted by giving to the one class of feelings the name of *virtue*, and to the other, that of *vice*.

We learn the nature of material things by the sensations which they excite, and the nature of moral feelings by the emotions which they excite. But there is one point, in which the analogy fails. We know nothing of material things, except through the medium of our sensations; but we have knowledge of our moral feelings by consciousness, as well as by means of our moral emotions. Although, therefore, we had been formed without moral emotions, we should have the same means of distinguishing our moral from our other feelings, that we now have of distinguishing our moral emotions from the other mental phenomena. Take benevolence for an example. We might feel benevolence ourselves, might enjoy a pleasure in the exercise of benevolent feelings, and might have a conception of benevolence in others,—thus knowing distinctly what benevolence is; but we might not, as now, love a benevolent man *for* his benevolence.

I find some difficulty in understanding what Dr. Brown means by saying, in his remarks on the phrase 'moral sense,' and elsewhere, that virtue and vice are mere *relations* to moral emotions, and that without these emotions, virtue and vice would have no existence. He seems to mean, that certain feelings *become* virtuous or the contrary by being approved or disapproved;—that is to say, that a certain feeling is approved *as* virtuous, when, in fact, it is *not* virtuous *till it becomes so by being approved!*

We might, as Dr. Brown admits, have been so constituted, that our moral emotions should be reversed,—that we should uniformly approve what we now disapprove, and disapprove what we now approve. It follows, ac-

cording to his ideas of virtue and vice, that what is now vice, would really then be virtue, and that what is now virtue, would then be vice; that is, that if all men really approved malevolence and disapproved benevolence, there would be nothing absurd or incongruous in such approbation and disapprobation, but malevolence would really be *worthy* to be loved, because we were so constituted as *actually* to love it, and benevolence would really be worthy to be *hated*, because we were so constituted as *actually* to hate it. The truth is, virtue and vice have each a nature of its own, which makes it to be virtue or vice, whether it be viewed with approbation, or disapprobation, or neither. If all our moral emotions should cease, and if the terms 'virtue' and 'vice' should cease, still, the things which those terms now denote, if they continued to exist, as they might, would possess the same distinct and opposite nature as at present. The means of *discovering* moral differences might cease; but the *differences themselves* would remain forever the same.

III. *All men*, without exception, feel moral emotions.

The evidence that they do, is the same, as that all men feel emotions of any other particular kind, as of beauty, or sympathy. We know that we feel these emotions ourselves; and we have all the evidence that the nature of the case admits, that they are felt by all mankind. It is as incredible, that any one, who belongs to the human species, should never feel an emotion of approbation or of disapprobation, in view of the actions of others, or in the recollection of his own, as that any one should regard all objects of sight as being perfectly indifferent to the eye, or should witness the sorrows and joys, the desires and aversions, of his fellow creatures, without ever having one congenial emotion excited in his breast.

IV. The same feelings are *always approved*, and the same *always disapproved.*

The meaning of this proposition is, that a man, who performs a certain action from certain motives, cannot feel, on account of the action, an emotion of self-appprobation at one time, and of self-condemnation at another,—his views of the motives from which the action was performed, remaining the same; or, that two men, possessing the same views of the motives which led to the performance of an action, cannot regard the agent, the one with a sentiment of moral approbation, and the other with a sentiment of moral disapprobation. I shall do little more on this subject, than to give an explanation of those appearances which seem to favor the contrary opinion.

1. It is to be remarked, that though all men feel moral emotions; yet all do not feel them in every instance, in which an action, suited to excite them, is presented to the view. "There are moments,"—to use the words of Dr. Brown,—"in which the mind is wholly incapable of perceiving moral differences;—that is to say, in which the emotions that constitute the feeling of these moral differences, do not arise. Such are all the moments of very violent passion. When the impetuosity of the passion is abated, indeed, we perceive that we have done what we now look upon with horror; but when our passion was most violent, we were truly blinded by it, or at least saw only what it permitted us to see. The moral emotion has not arisen, because the whole soul was occupied with a different species of feeling. The moral distinctions, however, or general tendencies of actions to excite this emotion, are not on this account less certain; or we must say, that the truths of arithmetic, and all other truths, are uncertain, since the

mind, in a state of passion, would be equally incapable of distinguishing these."*

It also seems probable, that even when the mind is not blinded by extreme passion, moral emotions are far from rising invariably in view of virtuous and vicious actions. There appears to be such a thing as moral insensibility;—in consequence of which, most men can sometimes, and some men can habitually, view a virtuous or vicious action without feeling any moral emotion. The apostle, using figurative language, speaks of men, "whose conscience is seared with a hot iron;" which seems to denote a callous, torpid state of the heart, without any susceptibility of moral emotion.†

2. There is an apparent contrariety in the moral emotions of men, arising from the *complexity of actions*. There are many "actions,"—to borrow again the language of Dr. Brown,—"which are so complex as to have various opposite results of good and evil, or of which it is not easy to trace the consequences. An action, when it is the object of our moral approbation or disapprobation, is the agent himself, acting with certain views. These views, that is to say, the intentions of the agent, are necessary to be taken into account, or, rather, are the great moral circumstances to be considered; and the intention is not visible to us like the external changes produced by it, but is, in many cases, to be inferred from the apparent results. When these results, therefore, are too obscure, or too complicated, to furnish clear and immediate evidence of the intention, we may pause in estimating actions, which we should not fail to have approved instantly, or disapproved instantly, if we had known the intention of the agent, or could have inferred it more easily from a simpler result; or, by fixing our attention chiefly on

*Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 74. †1 Tim. iv. 2. See also Eph. iv: 19

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one part of the complex result, that was perhaps not the part which the agent had in view, we may condemn what was praiseworthy, or applaud what deserved our condemnation. If the same individual may thus have different moral sentiments, according to the different parts of the complex result on which his attention may have been fixed, it is surely not wonderful, that different individuals, in regarding the same action, should sometimes approve, in like manner, and disappprove variously, not because the principle of moral emotion, as an original tendency of the mind, is absolutely capricious, but because the action considered, though apparently the same, is really different as an object of conception in different minds according to the parts of the mixed result which attract the chief attention.

Such partial views, it is evident, may become the views of a whole nation, from the peculiar circumstances in which the nation may be placed as to other nations, or from peculiarity of general institutions. The legal permission of theft in Sparta, for example, may seem to *us*, with our pacific habits, and security of police, an exception to that moral principle of disapprobation for which I contend. But there can be no doubt, that theft, as mere theft, or, in other words, as a mere production of a certain quantity of evil by one individual to another individual,—if it never had been considered in relation to any political object, would in Sparta also, have excited *disapprobation* as with us. As a mode of inuring to habits of vigilance a warlike people, however, it might be considered in a very different light; the evil of the loss of property,—though in itself an evil to the individual, even in a country in which differences of property were so slight,—being nothing in this estimate, when

compared with the more important national accession of military virtue."*

"When the usages of a country allow the exposure of infants, is it not still for some reason of advantage to the community, *falsely* supposed to require it, that the permission is given? Or is it for the mere pleasure of depriving the individual infant of life, and of adding a few more sufferings to the general sufferings of humanity? Where is the land that says, Let misery be produced, or increased, because it is misery? Let the production of happiness to an individual be avoided, because it is happiness? Then, indeed, might the distinctions of morality in the emotions which attend the production of good and evil, be allowed to be wholly accidental. But if nature has everywhere made the production of good desirable for itself, and the production of evil desirable,—when it is desired and approved,—only because it is accompanied, or supposed to be accompanied, with good, the very desire of the compound of good and evil, on this account, is itself a proof, not of love of evil, but of love of good. It is pleasing thus to find nature, in the wildest excesses of savage ignorance, and in those abuses to which the imperfect knowledge even of civilized nations sometimes gives rise, still vindicating as it were her own excellence, —in the midst of vice and misery asserting still those sacred principles, which are the virtue and the happiness of nations,—principles of which that very misery and vice attest the power, whether in the errors of multitudes who have sought evil for some supposed good, or in the guilt of individuals, who, in abandoning virtue, still offer to it an allegiance which it is impossible for them to withhold, in the homage of their remorse.

* Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 74.

It never must be forgotten, in estimating the moral impression which actions produce, that an action is nothing in itself,—that all which we truly consider in it is the agent placed in certain circumstances, feeling certain desires, willing certain changes,—and that our approbation and disapprobation may therefore vary, without any fickleness on our part, merely in consequence of the different views which we form of the intention of the agent. In every complicated case, therefore, it is so far from wonderful, that different individuals should judge differently, that it would, indeed, be truly wonderful if they should judge alike, since it would imply a far nicer measurement than any of which we are capable, of the mixed good and evil of the complex results of human action, and a power of discerning what is secretly passing in the heart, which man does not possess, and which it is not easy for us to suppose man, in any circumstances, capable of possessing."*

3. There is sometimes an apparent disagreement in the moral sentiments of men, arising from the *imperfection of language.* Words which denote the operations of the mind and the feelings of the heart, are frequently understood differently by different persons. This difference appears to arise from the circumstance, that an emotion or desire cannot be perceived, at the same moment, by different individuals. If a question arise concerning the color of a certain flower, the flower can be produced, and a simultaneous view of it will at once bring the parties to an agreement on the subject. But if a question arise whether a certain emotion or desire, anger for instance, be innocent or criminal, the parties have no such means of coming to a decision. They may not both mean the same thing by anger; and may be unable to ascertain

* Ibid.

whether they do or not. In like manner, disputes respecting various things which are not subject to the cognizance of the senses, frequently arise, not from any real difference of sentiment, but solely from the parties, not being able, or more frequently not taking proper means, to understand one another.

4. Men are liable to err in judging of their own past feelings through a *fault in the memory.* Moral feelings and moral emotions, in most men, receive *little attention* and are soon *forgotten.* Various operations of the mind, frequently, from not being objects of attention, pass away without being remembered a moment.* We need not wonder, then, that in a being so depraved as man, moral feelings and emotions should be neglected and forgotten; that in one so little disposed to listen to the whispers of conscience, those whispers should fall unheeded on the ear, and soon pass into oblivion. And this inattention, as it respects the moral emotions, is increased by the circumstance, that those emotions are usually *less vivid,* than the other emotions that arise in the breast. The consequence is, that in this, as in other cases, when a man endeavors to recollect things, to which he did not sufficiently attend to impress them on the memory, he falls into frequent mistakes. That which he conceives, is not that which really was. If he felt a feeble emotion of disapprobation at the time of performing an action, he now, perhaps, conceives himself to have felt an emotion of approbation; and hence concludes, that the motives from which he acted were good. Or if, sensible that he cannot recollect his moral emotions, he endeavors to recollect his moral feelings, he falls into a mistake of the same kind. His motives may, in fact, have been bad; but, they being forgotten, good motives, perhaps, arise to his

*See Stewart on Attention, in his Philosophy of the Mind.

conception; and, in view of these, he feels an emotion of self-approbation. The feelings of which he approves, are really virtuous; but they are feelings that were not his. The mistake lies in conceiving himself to have experienced feelings which he did not experience.

5. Moral emotions are frequently influenced by *association*. The words 'justice,' 'injustice,' &c., denote *classes* of actions. Suppose we see or hear of an action that belongs to "a class that we term *unjust*, we feel instantly," to use the words of Dr Brown, "not the mere emotion which the action of itself would originally have excited, but we feel also that emotion which has been associated with the *class* of actions to which the particular action belongs; and though the action may be of a kind, which, if we had formed no general arrangement, would have excited but slight emotion, as implying no very great injury produced or intended, it thus excites a far more vivid feeling, by borrowing, as it were, from other analogous and more atrocious actions, that are comprehended under the same general term, the feeling which *they* would originally have excited."*

Association operates in a different manner, when an action, apparently vicious, is performed by one whom we know to possess many excellent qualities, especially if the person is one whom we love. Seeing the action done by *him*, the many virtues which we know or believe him to possess, rush into our mind, and exclude those suggestions of bad motives, which would otherwise arise. The mere habit of regarding his actions as proceeding from good motives, is sufficient to lead us to ascribe them to such, even in cases where an impartial spectator would see evidence of an evil design.

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*Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 74.

The view we have taken of the subject, is, I trust, sufficient to obviate every objection to the position, that, though, while the *external act* is the same, an emotion either of approbation or of disapprobation may arise, according to the conceptions that are formed of the design of the actor, yet the same *motives*, the same *moral feelings*, are, if any moral emotion arises, always approved, and the same always disapproved. If we should admit this *not* to be the case, we must give a new definition of virtue. We must say, that those feelings are virtuous, in view of which an emotion of approbation arises *more frequently* than of disapprobation. And if any individual should be so unfortunate as to feel a disapprobation of virtue as often as an approbation of it, he must, in order to come at the truth, disregard his own moral emotions altogether, and inquire what are the feelings which mankind *in general* approve.—Now it must be impossible, in many instances, for a man to know whether a certain emotion which he feels, harmonizes with those which he has *usually* felt in similar circumstances. If the feelings, of whose moral nature he would judge, are some which he has never had before, or which he cannot recollect that he ever had before, he is utterly unable to ascertain whether they are virtuous or the contrary. If he has reason to apprehend that the moral emotions which he habitually feels, are not accordant with those of mankind in general, the difficulty of ascertaining the moral nature of particular feelings, must be greatly increased ; and the instances must be numerous, in which it is impossible even to form a probable conjecture whether a particular feeling be virtuous or not.

It seems to me incredible, that He who has formed man to be subject to a moral law, should so constitute the mind of any individual, that he shall experience moral emotions whose only use is to deceive ; and that he

shall be, many times, reduced to the necessity of judging erroneously, if he judges at all, of the nature of his moral feelings. It avails nothing for a man, when subject to such a moral delusion, to examine his motives with a close, and impartial, and faithful scrutiny; for after all, he will feel, perhaps, a vivid emotion of self-approbation in acting from motives, which all the world beside and God himself would agree in condemning. Those very desires and affections, which, at another time, he would feel to be criminal, he now feels to be amiable and commendable. This is indeed,—in a worse sense even than that intended by St. Paul,—to be given up to "strong delusion, so as to believe a lie."

The views that have been taken in this chapter, will afford a solution of three questions that have been discussed by writers on ethics:

1. Is conscience a *distinct faculty* of the mind?
2. Is it an *original* faculty of the mind?
3. Is conscience ever *erroneous?*

These three questions correspond with the first, third, and fourth general heads of the present chapter. I shall make a few remarks upon each in order.

1. Is conscience a *distinct faculty* of the mind?

Here a preliminary question arises; What is a faculty of the mind? In reply, I would observe, that the words, 'intellect,' 'heart,' 'reason,' 'conscience,' are general terms, invented to denote certain *classes* of mental phenomena. The mind is endued with various powers and susceptibilities, or, in other words, is capable of existing in a great variety of states. Of these various states, some are similar to one another, and some are dissimilar. They are, therefore, capable of being classed, by assigning to each class those phenomena which possess a similarity one to another. A faculty of the mind, there-

fore, is not a *part* of the mind, or an *organ* of the mind, but the indivisible mind itself, regarded as capable of exhibiting, or as actually exhibiting, a certain class of phenomena. A knowledge of the mind can be gained only by a careful observation of the phenomena which it exhibits. Without this observation of the phenomena themselves, the general terms used to denote them,—in other words, the terms which are used as names of the faculties,—must be unintelligible. Much perplexity has arisen, from attempting to study the philosophy of the mind, merely by reading about the faculties, and laboring to determine the precise limits of these faculties, without looking into the *mind itself.* To him who knows how to apply the inductive philosophy to the study of the mind, it is comparatively unimportant, whether the mind be considered as having a greater or a less number of faculties. In some instances, faculties which really exist, have remained without a name ; but in a greater number of instances, faculties have been ascribed to the mind without foundation. Moral feelings are the most important of all the classes of mental phenomena ; yet the *moral faculty* has never received a name ; nor has any material inconvenience arisen from the want of a general term appropriated to this purpose. When we wish to speak of man as being susceptible of moral feelings, it is sufficient to say that he is a 'moral agent.' To denote the class of moral emotions, however, the term 'conscience' is generally used. The phrase 'moral sense' has been used for the same purpose by some writers. These terms, however, appear not to be used by all to include precisely the same class of mental phenomena ; and this is an evil, which, though of no small magnitude, is many times inseparable from the use of general terms. I prefer to use the term 'conscience' as denoting the class of moral emotions ; and taking it in this sense, it is certainly a distinct faculty of the mind.

Dr. Brown objects to the phrase 'moral sense,' that the class of mental affections intended to be denoted by it, consists of *emotions*, not of *sensations* or *perceptions* analogous to those of the external senses. But although the phrase is not to be used in a philosophic classification of the mental phenomena, yet it may, without impropriety, be used metaphorically. Natural beauty, as distinct from the colors and forms of external objects, consists wholly in a peculiar emotion of the mind; yet it is common to speak of *seeing* or *perceiving* the beauty of an object. In like manner, the amiableness of virtue is denominated *moral beauty*, and we speak of seeing or perceiving this beauty. And if there is a moral beauty and a moral vision, there must, of course, be a *moral eye*,—in other words, a 'moral sense.' Dr. Brown, though he avoids the phrase 'moral sense,' yet admits that it may be used metaphorically, and actually uses metaphors of equivalent import. He speaks of '*perceiving* moral differences,' and of being '*blinded* to moral distinctions.' If, therefore, I should find it convenient to use metaphors of this kind, I shall feel myself at liberty to do it, without trespassing against propriety of language.

The following observations of Dr. Brown, illustrate the distinction between conscience and REASON; and define the limits of the two faculties, in relation to each other:

"If all the actions of which man is capable, had terminated in one simple result of good or evil, without any mixture of both, or any further consequences, reason, I conceive, would have been of no advantage whatever in determining moral sentiments, that must, in that case, have arisen immediately on the consideration of the simple effect, and of the will of producing that simple effect. Of the intentional production of good, as good, we should have approved instantly—of the intentional production of evil, as evil, we should as instantly have disapproved;

and reason could not, in such circumstances, have taught us to love the one more, or hate the other less;—certainly not to love what we should otherwise have hated, nor to hate what we should otherwise have loved. But actions have not one simple result, in most cases. In producing enjoyment to some, they may produce misery to others,—either by consequences that are less or more remote, or by their own immediate but compound operation. It is impossible, therefore, to discover instantly, or certainly, in any particular case, the intention of the agent from the apparent result; and impossible for our selves to know, instantly, when we wish to perform a particular action, for a particular end, whether it may not produce more evil than good,—when the good was our only object,—or more good than evil, when our object was the evil only. Reason, therefore,—that power by which we discover the various relations of things, comes to our aid; and, pointing out to us all the probable physical consequences of actions, shows us the good of what we might have conceived to be evil, the evil of what we might have conceived to be good, weighing each with each, and calculating the preponderance of either. It thus influences our moral feelings indirectly; but it influences them only by presenting to us new objects, to be admired or hated, and still addresses itself to a principle which admires or hates. Like a telescope, or microscope, it shows us what was too distant, or too minute, to come within the sphere of our simple vision; but it does not alter the nature of vision itself. The best telescope, or the best microscope, could give no aid to the *blind*. They imply the previous power of visual discernment, or they are absolutely useless. Reason, in like manner, supposes in us a discriminating vision of another kind. By pointing out to us innumerable advantages or disadvantages, that flow from an action, it may heighten or re-

duce our approbation of the action, and consequently, our estimate of the virtue of him whom we suppose to have had this whole amount of good or evil in view, in his intentional production of it; but it does this only because we are capable of feeling moral regard for the intentional producer of happiness to others, independently of any analyses which reason may make."*

2. Is conscience an *original* faculty of the mind?

In saying that it is, I only mean, in the words of Dr. Brown, " that we come into existence with certain susceptibilities of emotion, in consequence of which, it will be impossible for us, in after life, but for the influence of counteracting circumstances, momentary or permanent, not to be pleased with the contemplation of certain actions as soon as they have become fully known to us, and not to have feelings of disgust, on the contemplation of certain other actions."† Any faculty or power is properly denominated *original* and *natural*, which is called into exercise in every individual to whom suitable occasions for its exercise are afforded. It is not necessary that a faculty, in order to be termed original, should be exercised as soon as a human being begins to exist, any more than that it should be exercised at every moment during his whole subsequent life. If, when an infant is born, we can predict, that in case opportunities are afforded, he will certainly be the subject of certain sensations or emotions, it is sufficient to render it proper to apply the epithets ' original' and ' natural' to that faculty or power to which those sensations or emotions are ascribed. However desirable it may be to the parent, therefore, as an auxiliary in early education, to know at what period and on what occasions moral feelings and moral emotions first arise in the breast of his child, it is

*Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 76. †Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 74.

of no consequence at all in determining the question whether the moral faculties are original and natural, or *accidental* and *acquired* properties of human nature.

I would take this opportunity to remark, that when we tell how God has *constituted* or *formed* the mind, or speak of the original *tendencies* which he has given it, our meaning is not, that the mind has any resemblance to a machine, which is so *constructed*, that it will, of itself, gradually develope certain results; or to the germ of a plant, which contains, in miniature, the various parts which are to be *unfolded* to view in the progress of vegetation;—but we mean simply to declare the fact, that every human mind, which God has created, exhibits, in certain circumstances, certain phenomena. To ascribe any of these phenomena, therefore, to the original constitution or tendencies of the mind,—in other words, to say that these take place *because* the mind has been so constituted by the Author of its being, is to make an event or a series of events the cause of itself.

To conclude, I would inquire of those who say that conscience is wholly *acquired*—that it is merely the creature of education—whether they believe that a child can be so educated, as to think that he merits the favor both of God and man, by doing to others, in all respects, *just the contrary* of what he would wish them to do to him.

It seems to be the object of some, who are fond of maintaining that conscience is wholly acquired, and may receive any modification whatever from accidental circumstances, to cast off the restraints of morality and religion. They may, indeed, cast off these restraints; they may habitually stifle the voice of conscience;—but let them remember, that their moral feelings do not cease to arise, because their moral emotions are suspended, and that the eye of Omniscience does not cease to view their

character as it is, because they have become blind to it themselves.

3. Is conscience ever *erroneous?*

The various causes which have led many to believe that conscience may be perverted and erroneous, have been considered at some length under the fourth general head of this chapter. Such errors as these, however, are not properly ascribed to conscience. If there is any man, however depraved, who really thinks that benevolence is a hateful thing, and that a man deserves to be punished for loving his fellow creatures and promoting their happiness; and who, on the other hand, thinks that malevolence is an amiable quality, and that it is a duty to hate and torment, as far as lies in our power, every being that exists; then, I will acknowledge that conscience may be erroneous.

In treating of moral distinctions, I have, in conformity to the ideas of Dr. Brown, spoken only of moral feelings and moral emotions. These, however, seem not to include all the moral phenomena of the mind. There is another class, which I would denominate the moral *perceptions.*

Good and ill desert are certain *relations* of a moral agent to *enjoyment* and *suffering.* But the idea or perception of a *relation* is an *intellectual* state of the mind,—not an emotion. The perceptions of good and ill desert are, therefore, not the same thing as the moral emotions, and hence may exist independently of them. Thus, the benevolent man, even to those who wish him ill, appears *worthy* to be *happy;* and the malevolent man, even to himself, appears *worthy* to be *miserable.* Thus, a criminal is often sensible of the *justice* of the punishment which he suffers, while he hates those by whose authority it is inflicted. Perhaps also the relations of a moral agent to

approbation and *disapprobation*, may be *perceived* by us, without feeling, at the time, the moral emotions themselves. For example, the virtuous man, even to those by whom he is *hated*, may appear *worthy* to be *loved*. A perception of one's own ill desert, may be accompanied with pain. If the pain is slight, it may be called a sense or feeling of ill desert; if increased, it becomes remorse. Perhaps the moral emotions are always preceded by the moral perceptions.

I would not ascribe these moral perceptions to a peculiar faculty; but to *reason*, "that power by which we discover the various *relations* of things."

Since the moral perceptions may occasion remorse, without an intervening emotion of self-disapprobation, it follows, that although the moral emotions are virtuous, yet wicked men may, while on earth, and hereafter in the world of misery, suffer the torments of remorse, without any virtuous feelings, being involved in their remorse.

CHAPTER II.

Nature of Virtue.

1. THOSE *feelings* are virtuous, in the consciousness of which in ourselves, or the conception of which in any one, an emotion of approbation arises in the breast.

2. The term 'Virtue' denotes such *habits of action*, as may naturally be supposed to proceed from virtuous feelings. Justice, veracity, and temperance, are instances of this kind. *Individual* actions also, though not habitual, are termed virtuous, when they appear to proceed from virtuous motives.

Strictly speaking, it is the *agent only* who is virtuous, as it is he only who is the object of approbation. A feeling or action is virtuous only in a secondary sense. A virtuous feeling is one which renders a man virtuous; and a virtuous action is one which affords an *indication* that a man is virtuous.

Thoughts, feelings, and actions, have no existence distinct from the agent. An action is an agent acting; and thoughts and feelings are the mind thinking and feeling. In other words, thoughts and feelings are *mind*, existing in certain states; and an external action, consisting merely of certain bodily motions, is *matter*, existing in certain states. Motion is a state of matter, and thoughts and feelings are states of mind.

The definition above given of virtue, includes *two classes* of feelings; of which the one may be denominated *instinctive* and *social* virtues, and the other, *christian* virtues. The former are those which *all men*, in some degree, possess; the latter are those which are *peculiar* to *christians*. Emotions of approbation are also virtuous, and belong to the one or the other class of virtues, according to the kind of virtue that is approved. Emotions of disapprobation are also virtuous, and may belong to either of the two classes of virtues.

To draw, between the christian virtues and those that are of an inferior order, a line of distinction, by which the difference may, in all cases, be perceived, belongs rather to the department of theology, than to that of ethics. For information on this subject, I would refer to "Edwards on the Affections," "Spring's Essays on the Distinguishing Traits of the Christian Character," and other writers who treat of the nature of christian virtue. The term 'virtue' is, however, generally limited to such duties toward other men and toward ourselves, as have no direct reference to a future state of existence.

Duties toward God, and all duties that relate to a future state, are denoted by the terms 'piety' and 'religion.'

The terms, 'virtue,' 'merit,' 'obligation,' all have reference to *one* feeling of the mind, that of approbation; and differ only as denoting a difference of *time*. Virtue denotes a certain feeling or action as *present;* merit, as *past;* and obligation, as *future*.* The terms 'right' and 'wrong,' 'good' and 'bad,' applied to a feeling or action, are synonymous with 'virtuous' and 'vicious.' Dr. Paley, however, speaks of actions as being right or wrong in the *abstract*, according as they have a tendency to promote the general happiness, or the contrary. But the term 'right,' in this sense, becomes synonymous with 'useful;' and if this sense of the term be admitted, we shall frequently have occasion to denominate an action right in the one sense, which is wrong in the other,—which would be liable to produce perplexity. A man, through ignorance or want of judgment, may, though with the best intentions, perform a very *hurtful* action; and this action, however hurtful, is yet, as connected with the moral feelings from which it proceeds, virtuous or right. On the other hand, a man may, though with an evil design, perform a very *useful* action; and this action, however useful, is yet, as connected with the moral feelings from which it proceeds, vicious or wrong.

An action is right or wrong, then, only as it proceeds from good or bad motives,—in other words, as the agent is virtuous or vicious in its performance. When an action is said to be right or wrong, there is always an allusion, more or less direct, to an agent, who is supposed to act under the influence of certain views and feelings. When we have reference to no particular agent, we denominate those actions right, which any man, who should

* See Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 73.

form a just estimate of their consequences, would feel under obligation to perform. And when we refer to a particular individual, who has performed a certain action, not knowing, with certainty, the moral feelings which influenced him to act, we pronounce upon his conduct on the presumption, that he acted from those motives, which only could have influenced ourselves, in the same circumstances, to act in the same manner. We say, that he did *right*, or *wrong;* though, at the same time, if it shall appear, that we mistook in regard to the motives from which he acted, our language will have been incorrect, and our commendation, or censure, unmerited. In like manner, we say that a man *ought* to perform a certain action, presuming that his views of the tendency of the action are the same with our own. The *condition* that is *understood* in assertions of this kind, is, as in many other cases, so *easily* understood, that it seldom need be expressed.

The expressions, 'I am under *obligation* to do an action,' 'I am *bound* to do it,' 'I *ought* to do it,' and 'It is my *duty* to do it,' all mean the same thing. We are said to be under obligation to exercise right feelings, and to perform right external actions. To be under obligation to exercise certain feelings, means, that if we exercise those feelings, we shall be proper objects of moral approbation; and that, if we do not exercise them, it can only be owing to our exercising feelings of the contrary nature, which render us fit objects of moral disapprobation. To be under obligation to do a certain external action, means, that if we do that action, we shall appear amiable or worthy of approbation; and that, if we abstain from it, we shall appear odious or worthy of disapprobation. In other words, to be under obligation to do an action, means, that the exercise of right feelings will infallibly lead us to do the action; and that, consequently, our neg-

lecting to do it, will afford evidence of the exercise of wrong feelings. To feel under obligation to do an action, is to be sensible, that if my moral feelings are right, I shall do the action; and that nothing but wrong feelings can prevent my doing it. The guilt of violating an obligation, consists in those wrong feelings, to which only our neglect of the action can be owing. Man, as a moral agent, is so constituted, that when an action is presented to view, which the exercise of right feelings would lead him to perform, he cannot be destitute of all moral feelings, and therefore cannot abstain from doing the action without being the subject of wrong feelings. Thus it is, that all guilt, considered as lying in the heart, is *positive*, though, as respects *external conduct*, there appears to be no impropriety in speaking of "sins of omission," or of the guilt of *neglecting* duty. The commission of vicious actions is criminal only as it is indicative of wrong feelings; and the omission of virtuous actions is frequently as indicative of something wrong in the heart; so that bad external actions and the omission of good external actions, are criminal in precisely the same sense.

The preceding illustration of the nature of moral obligation, may enable us to see what we are to understand by the 'dictates' and the 'reproaches' of conscience, and also to determine one or two questions relative to the nature of duty.

When an action, which we have ability and opportunity to perform, is presented to the mind, the idea of the feelings which would lead to its performance, is suggested; and we approve of these as right feelings, or disapprove of them as wrong. We will suppose the action to be such, that we *approve* of the feelings which would lead to its performance. The idea of the feelings which only can hinder its performance, is also suggested; and we disapprove of these as *wrong* feelings. Either or

both of these moral emotions, constitute a sense of duty or obligation to do the action. Perhaps, however, in most men, a sense of duty consists chiefly of a disapprobation of the anticipated guilt of neglecting a virtuous action. "To know that we should feel ourselves unworthy of self-esteem, and objects rather of self-abhorrence, if we did not act in a certain manner, is," says Dr. Brown, "to feel the moral obligation to act in a certain manner."* A sense of duty is called, metaphorically, the voice, dictates, or monitions of conscience. If the contemplated action is performed, and from good motives, the moral emotion that is felt, is called the approbation of conscience. The emotions of pleasure which are connected with this approbation, are the pleasure which arises from an approving conscience. If the duty is neglected, or if any action is performed from wrong motives, the emotion of self-disapprobation that is felt, is attended with emotions of pain. These emotions of self-disapprobation and of pain, constitute the reproaches of an accusing conscience. The same painful emotions are sometimes called remorse of conscience and the sting of conscience.—Such are the ideas which appear to be couched under the figurative terms in common use respecting conscience, when those terms are analyzed, and their meaning expressed in literal language.

It has been made a question by some, whether it is the duty of men to be *perfectly holy*. The question, however, is quite unmeaning, and can only have arisen from obscure or erroneous ideas of the nature of duty. It results from the very nature of moral obligation, that it is our duty to exercise right feelings toward every object, toward which we exercise any moral feelings at all.

Another question is the following: 'Ought the dictates of conscience always to be obeyed?' This question,

*Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 73.

too, will be found, on examination, to be wholly unmeaning. The 'dictates of conscience' are a sense of duty. The question, then, is, 'Ought a sense of duty always to govern our conduct?'—in other words, 'Ought we always to do our duty?'—in other words, 'Is it our duty always to do our duty?' or, 'Ought we always to do what we ought?' If, indeed, conscience might contradict itself, and condemn at one time what it approved at another, we might admit that the dictates of conscience ought *not* always to be obeyed. But enough, I trust, has been said on this subject under the fourth general head of the preceding chapter. Or if we should admit a right and wrong in the *abstract*, as an immediate foundation of duty, advantage might be taken of the ambiguity of terms, to say that the dictates of conscience ought not always to be obeyed. To illustrate my meaning, suppose that a man, in a certain instance, ought not to do what he really thinks he ought to do. It follows, that he ought to do something which he really thinks he ought not to do. And if, among the innumerable variety of things which he believes it would be wrong for him, at that time, to do, he fixes upon some one, there is a *possibility*, that by intending to do wrong, he may happen to do right. But it is said by some, and it would seem seriously said, that in such circumstances, a man will *inevitably do wrong*;—for, if he does what he thinks he ought, it will be wrong, because his views of duty are erroneous, and the action is in itself wrong; and if he does what he thinks he ought not, it will be wrong, because he acts with a bad design. Be it so;—with equal truth I reply, that a man, in such circumstances will *inevitably do right*;—for, if he does what he thinks he ought to do, it will be right, because he acts with a good design; and if he abstains from doing it, it will be right, because the action is in itself wrong, and ought to be abstained from. These seeming contradic-

tions arise from assuming, in each case, *two standards* of duty, and, of course, using the terms 'right' and 'wrong' in two different senses. The two parts of the alternative are made to appear both right or both wrong, by shifting the standard in passing from the one to the other. But it is to be remembered, that even if we use the term 'right' in an abstract sense, such a rectitude as this does not constitute duty.

I will make a remark or two, illustrative of the way in which some have been led to imagine that conscience might sometimes err. When a man has performed an action that is followed by calamitous consequences, which men in general would have foreseen, and which he, with more information or a better judgment would have foreseen, his neighbors very naturally ascribe the action to an evil design. And if he assures them that he meant well, that he acted conscientiously, this, instead of effacing from their minds the impression that he was influenced by wrong feelings, leads them to suspect that he was deceived in regard to the nature of his feelings, and to conclude, that if his conscience could approve such motives, it must be a perverted and erroneous conscience. Thus they persist in condemning him, because they cannot admit the belief, that his motives were really good. They could not, themselves, perform such an action from good motives; and they cannot conceive that any other could. Or, the man may have been previously criminal in neglecting to obtain that information, which might enable him to judge correctly of the tendency of the action; and they, fully persuaded that there is blame somewhere, have not sufficient discrimination to attach it to that part of the man's conduct, to which it really belongs. And possibly, the man himself may err through the same want of discrimination; or, more probably, amid the bitter regret which he feels, and the unanimous reproaches of others,

he may forget his real motives, falsely conceive himself to have acted from bad motives, and hence conclude, that the self-approbation which he felt at the time was delusive, and that he did wrong in obeying the dictates of his conscience. If, however, he avoids this mistake, and retains a consciousness of rectitude, he may repel every imputation of blame by saying, 'I know that my motives were good; and it is unreasonable to censure me for consequences which I did not foresee nor intend, and which had I foreseen, I should by means have performed the action.'

But is there not danger, lest some should justify themselves in the commission of real crimes, under the pretence of honest intentions? Madame de Stael suggests a danger of this kind. "What reply shall we make," she asks, "to those who should pretend that in departing from duty, they obey the dictates of conscience?"* But I imagine that no great evil is to be apprehended from this source. In ordinary cases, it is easy to make a man see, that he can maintain the pretence of good intentions only by pleading ignorance or want of foresight; and there are few,—so depraved is man,—who would not rather be suspected of want of integrity than of want of understanding.

The case of St. Paul merits a particular consideration. He says, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."† Was it, then, his duty to persecute the christians, and to lay waste the church?—On this subject, two or three preliminary remarks may serve to guard against misapprehension.

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* Que répondre, à ceux qui prétendroient, en s' écartant du devoir, qu' ils obéissent aux mouvemens de leur conscience.—*De L'Allemagne, Tome III. p.* 205.

† Acts xxvi. 9.

1. Paul's views of Christ and of christians, were, before his conversion, very erroneous; and these erroneous views, so far as he was led to entertain them by prejudice, or pride, or any bad passion, were *criminal*. They were criminal in the same sense that any external conduct is,—that is, as proceeding from wrong feelings of heart. We often hear of the innocence of error; but error is frequently as criminal as falsehood, fraud, and other vices of the kind, because it originates in moral feelings equally bad.

2. Paul was criminal, not only in forming, but in *continuing to entertain*, those erroneous views. Right moral feelings would have led him to examine the subject of christianity *impartially* and prayerfully; and such an examination would have ended in his conviction.

3. Paul was highly criminal in persecuting the christians. He says that he was "exceedingly mad against them;" and there is much evidence that he was actuated by a malevolent and persecuting spirit. Such a spirit, his conscience could not approve; neither could he think, that by indulging it, he should meet the approbation of God. It appears from the context, that he did not say that he once thought he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus, in the way of exculpating himself, but to show how erroneous his views of the christian religion had been. In another place, too, he represents his persecuting the saints as the summit of his wickedness.*

4. I now proceed to observe, that Paul's views of the nature and tendency of the new religion, appear to have been such, that it was actually his duty, while he entertained these views, to oppose the progress of this religion. But it was his duty to oppose the christians with right feelings,—with the same humble and benevolent

* 1 Cor. xv. 9.

spirit, with which they were laboring to propagate their religion. This spirit, however, would have soon led him to see that his views were erroneous; and of course, with the change in his views, his duty to oppose christianity would have ceased.—Is it said, that because his erroneous views were criminal, the course of conduct resulting from those views, must have been criminal? I reply, that there is only one thing which can render the conduct criminal; and that is, its proceeding *directly* from wrong feelings. I said "directly;" I mean, *as* directly as any external conduct can proceed from the moral feelings, that is, through the medium of the conceptions and volitions. Criminal thoughts, criminal opinions, and criminal conduct, are all criminal in the same sense; that is, not because one of them may proceed from another, but because they all proceed alike from wrong feelings. And although the moral feelings which a man had years ago, may, through a concatenation of intervening opinions, actions, and events, render his present conduct different from what it would otherwise have been, yet this conduct is not to be denominated right or wrong according to the nature of those distant feelings, but according to the nature of the feelings from which it now springs. Such an indirect and complex method of estimating the morality of actions, would occasion infinite confusion in the language of ethics.

Paul says, that he really thought he ought to do many things in opposition to Christ; and though he says this to show in how great a mistake he had been in regard to christianity, yet it contains an explicit declaration, that he "*thought*" he ought to oppose Christ;—and what a man *thinks* he ought to do, he is, while he thinks so, under obligation to do. A man may, soon afterwards, mistake in regard to his moral emotions, through the fault of his memory; but he cannot make such a mistake at the

time. To use the words of Madame de Stael, "The voice of conscience is so delicate, that it is easy to stifle it; but it is so clear and distinct, that it is impossible to misunderstand it."* But it does not follow from this, that a man will in fact act from good motives in doing that which he previously felt it his duty to do. The same action may be performed from various motives; and an action which right feelings would lead us to perform, may, nevertheless, be performed under the complete influence of wrong feelings. A man may feel that he should be self-condemned, if he forebore to perform the action; and yet may immediately proceed to perform it, impelled by feelings even worse than those which alone could have prevented him from performing it, and perhaps without once suspecting the real motives of his conduct. Although, therefore, it was Paul's duty, while he thought so, "to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" yet we cannot infer from this that he actually did his duty, in opposing Christ,—since duty is performed only when we act from such motives as conscience approves.

If Paul had correct views of the divine character, and believed it to be the will of God that the christians should be persecuted and destroyed, he might have been as justifiable in dragging them to prison, in pursuing them even to foreign cities, and in giving his voice against them when they were put to death, as the Israelites were in destroying the inhabitants of Canaan in obedience to the divine command. But I do not suppose he did believe it to be the will of God, that he should persecute them in the manner that he did. I suppose, indeed, that even if he had been actuated by good mo-

* La voix de la conscience est si délicate, qu' il est facile de l' étouffer; mais elle est si pure, qu' il est impossible de la méconnoître.—*De L' Allemagne, Tome III. p.* 183.

tives, he would have been led, till he saw his error, to do "many things" against the church; but not *so* many nor *such* things as he actually did, impelled by a malevolent spirit, which "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." It is probable, that the whispers of conscience were drowned amid the clamors of passion and the impetuosity of zeal. Had he paused to reflect, and to examine the motives by which he was actuated, he might probably have become sensible of his error and his guilt, even in the midst of his persecuting career.

The preceding discussions bring us to an important practical conclusion;—That it is impossible to be too conscientious; that tenderness of conscience ought ever to be cultivated; that the reproach of scrupulosity ought never to be feared; and that the moral emotions ought to be carefully attended to and remembered.

I now proceed to an inquiry more directly illustrative of the nature of virtue, than the definitions, explanations, and reasonings, with which this chapter has, thus far, been occupied.

Why do virtuous feelings lead to the performance of one action, rather than of another?

It is obvious, that the foundation of this preference, must be a difference, of some kind, in actions themselves, or in their relations, or consequences. What this difference is, constitutes, then, the object of inquiry.

The subject on which we are now entering, is one on which various and discordant opinions have been entertained. Some have supposed one thing and some another, to be the sole ground of virtuous preference in acting; and some have supposed there are various co-ordinate principles of virtuous action. Some of these suppositions we shall briefly consider.

1. The *will of God* is supposed by some to be the sole reason why the virtuous man prefers one action to another. The will of God is an infallible *rule* of duty, and his commands, in many instances, make *known* to us our duty; but there is a reason why it is our duty to conform to the will of God and obey his commands, and this is, that his will is perfectly benevolent, and his commands are perfectly suited to promote the ends of infinite benevolence. Duty results from the nature and relations of things; and is immutable, so long as that nature and those relations remain the same. Therefore, even on the supposition that God should require his creatures to exercise hatred and malice toward one another, or should forbid them to act from benevolent motives, they could not feel an approbation of such a command and such a prohibition, and therefore, could not feel a self-approbation in complying with them;—in other words, it would not be their *duty* to comply with them.

"We consider the Deity," says Dr. Brown, "as possessing the highest moral perfection; but, in that theological view of morality which acknowledges no mode of estimating excellence beyond the divine command itself, whatever it might have been,—these words are absolutely meaningless; since, if, instead of what we now term virtue, he had commanded only what we now term vice, his command must still have been equally holy."..... "God has, indeed, commanded certain actions, and it is our virtue to conform our actions to his will; but if the virtue depend exclusively on obedience to the command, and if there be no peculiar moral excellence in the actions commanded, he must have been equally adorable, though nature had exhibited only appearances of unceasing malevolence in its author, and every command which he had delivered to his creatures, had been only to add

new voluntary miseries to the physical miseries which already surrounded them."*

2. Some suppose, that there is a '*moral worth*' in certain actions, independent of their utility; and that this moral worth constitutes a reason why the virtuous man performs actions of that kind. What this moral worth is, however, is difficult to be conceived. Does the moral worth of *truth*, for instance, consist in the *fitness* of things, in the *adaptedness* of one thing to another, and in the *correspondence* of words with the ideas which they represent, and of signs with the things signified? Then is there the same moral worth in the correct solution of a mathematical problem, in the musical concord of voices in singing, or in the exact delineation of an object in painting, as in speaking the truth, or keeping a promise. There is, indeed, a moral worth in the *motives* from which truth proceeds, when those motives are good; but in truth itself, abstractedly considered, there appears to be no worth or value, of any kind whatever, except what may be called a *natural* worth, consisting in the useful tendency of truth.

3. Some suppose, that the tendency of actions to promote *one's own best interest*, is the sole reason of performing them, in the mind of the virtuous man. According to this system, which is advocated by many able writers, virtue consists in a *rational regard* to one's own happiness; and virtuous actions are those which are considered as being best adapted to promote this object. This is the system of Dr. Paley. In answer to the question, "Why am I under obligation to keep my word?" he says, "Because I am urged to do so by a violent motive, (namely, the expectation of being after this life rewarded, if I do, or punished for it, if I do not,) resulting from the

* Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 80.

command of another (namely, of God.) This solution goes to the bottom of the subject, as no further question can reasonably be asked. Therefore, private happiness is our motive, and the will of God our rule." And in accordance with this, is his definition of Virtue : " Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."

A ' rational regard' to our own happiness, must mean, a *desire* of personal happiness, controlled and directed by *reason*. But reason, which is wholly an *intellectual* faculty, is no part of virtue. If it were, there would be something of virtue in the operations of the reasoning faculty, when employed in accomplishing the basest and worst of purposes. The reasoning powers are employed in adapting means to an end in deeds of cruelty and oppression, precisely in the same manner, as in deeds of kindness and philanthropy. The adaptation of means to an end, is the sole use of reason in the actions of men. The heart chooses and desires the end, and reason selects the means. Reason may, indeed, be employed in the preliminary process of estimating the probable good and evil consequences of an action, of which the performance is a subject of deliberation ; but this is before the action can be said to have commenced ; and besides, the faculty of reason is employed in the same manner in estimating the future consequences of actions, whether they are to be chosen for the sake of their good, or for the sake of their evil, consequences. It is evident, then, that in making virtue to consist in a ' rational regard' to one's own happiness, the epithet ' rational' is superfluous; and that, according to this system, virtue consists in the *desire of personal happiness*, whether rational or irrational. If a man sincerely and supremely desires the promotion of that object, in desiring and promoting which all virtue consists; and if he exerts all his powers and directs all

his actions to this laudable end, who would blame him for missing, wholly or partly, of the object, merely through want of more extensive knowledge or more skilful calculation? It is to be remembered, that, on this plan, reason is not to be employed in promoting the happiness of others, except merely as a *means* of promoting our own; nor in guarding against encroachments on the happiness of others, except just so far as those encroachments might be liable to bring evil upon ourselves. Hence, if this world were our only state of existence, it would be innocent, and even virtuous, to trample on the rights of others, and sacrifice their interest, whenever it happened to interfere with our own. And though a virtuous man of this stamp may *appear* to make some sacrifices to the wishes, or interest, or wants or others, yet it is in no degree for their sake, but wholly for his own; for, unless he hoped to gain by it, sooner or later, he would not deny himself the smallest gratification for the sake of saving others from the greatest evils, or securing to them the most important benefits.

Such is "*the selfish system*,"—as it is very correctly denominated. As a picture of the human heart, such as it is found in the great majority of mankind, this system may not be far from the truth; but as a picture of the virtuous man, it is utterly false. Indeed, the representation is not perfectly correct, even when applied to the human heart in its natural state. For although selfishness is the supreme, and perhaps the most habitual, principle of action, in all who are destitute of christian virtue, yet, even in them, it is not the *sole* principle of action. They have not their own happiness in view in all their actions. They do not love virtue because this love is attended with pleasure; nor do they relieve the distressed because the recollection will give them pleasure. The following remarks of Dr. Brown will set this subject in its true light:

"Many philosophers seem to think, that they have shown man to be necessarily *selfish*, merely by showing that it is *delightful* for him to love those, whom it is virtue to love; and whom it would have been *impossible* for him *not to love*, even though no happiness had attended the affection;—as it is impossible for him not to despise or dislike the mean and the profligate, though no pleasure attends the contemplation."*

"Though we cannot, when there is no interfering passion, think of the virtues of others without pleasure, and must, therefore, in loving virtue, love what is by its own nature pleasing, the love of the virtue, which cannot exist without the pleasure, is surely an affection very different from the love of the mere pleasure, existing, if it had been possible for it to exist, without the virtue."†

"The immediate object of our desire, in rushing to the relief of one who is in danger, is not the pleasure of giving relief, but the relief itself,—the subsequent contemplation of which is, indeed, by a bountiful provision of Heaven, associated with delight, as the failure in the attempt to afford it, is accompanied with pain—but which we desire instantly, without regard to our own personal delight that would follow it, or the pain that would be felt by us, if the relief were not given."‡

"He who counts only the pleasure which the offices of virtue are to yield, and who acts as virtue orders, therefore, only because *vice* does not offer to her followers so rich a salary,—is unworthy, I will not say merely of being a follower of virtue, but even of that pleasure which virtue truly gives only to those who think less of the pleasure, than of the duty which affords the pleasure."§

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*Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 60.
†Ibid. Lect. 59.
‡Ibid. Lect. 95.
§Ibid. Lect. 98.

If virtue consists in the desire of personal happiness, the more undisguised this selfish desire is, the more virtuous must an action appear; and the more any one is led, by benevolence toward others, to forget himself in acting, the less virtuous does the action become. But if this is so, why do men take so much pains to appear disinterested? It seems there is a feeling in the breast, even of the most selfish, which tells them that selfishness is not a virtue. This feeling is the moral emotion,—to which our ultimate appeal must be made, in all questions relative to the nature of virtue. On this subject, I again quote the language of Dr. Brown:

"If two individuals were to expose themselves to the same peril, for the same common friend,—and if we could be made to understand, that the one had no other motive for this apparently generous exposure, than the wish of securing a certain amount of happiness to himself, at some time, either near or remote,—on earth, or after he had quitted earth;—the other no motive but that of saving a life that was dearer to him than his own,—in which case would our feeling of moral approbation more strongly arise? Is it the more selfish of the two whom alone we should consider as the moral hero; or rather, is it not only in thinking of him who forgot every thing but the call of friendship, and the disinterested feeling of duty which prompted him to obey the call,—that we should feel any moral approbation whatever? It is precisely in proportion as selfish happiness is absent from the mind of the agent, or is supposed to be absent from it, in any sacrifice which is made for another, that the moral admiration arises."*

But it may be asked, If the moral emotions of men are never erroneous, and if a supreme desire of person-

*Lect. 79.

al happiness is not virtuous, how does it happen that the selfish system has found so many advocates? Why do not every man's own moral emotions tell him that such a system is false?—Of this difficulty, which seems not to have occurred to Dr. Brown, a solution may, perhaps, be found in the following considerations: There are certain states of mind, in which moral emotions do not arise. Extreme passion and moral insensibility have been already mentioned, as instances of this kind. Perhaps the strength of the selfish principle in many men, and the warmth of their attachment to a theory of virtue, which makes their own virtue appear so great, and an abandonment of which would be almost to relinquish all claim to virtue,—may prevent the rise of moral emotions when their attention is turned to their favorite theory, and especially whenever this theory is attacked. An *intellectual* state of mind may also prevent both moral feelings and moral emotions from arising. Hence, while the advocate of the selfish system, is deeply engaged in advocating that system, or in contemplating the arguments which are used both to attack and defend it, he is in a state of mind which incapacitates him for *feeling* that his system is a false one.—But there is one circumstance attending the moral phenomena of the mind, by which the advocates of the selfish system are not only prevented from seeing their error, but actually confirmed in it, and by which they may have been originally led to embrace this system. When a man acts under the influence of feelings which his conscience approves, these feelings are attended, not only by emotions of self-approbation, but also by sensations of pleasure. Hence he concludes that the pleasure which immediately results from virtuous feelings or a virtuous action, was the ultimate object of desire; and, of course, that the desire, approved by his conscience as virtuous, was merely the desire of his own

happiness. But this fallacy has already been brought into view, in the extracts which have been recently made from Dr. Brown. I only add, that the philosopher, in drawing his inference, forgets, that that only is the object of desire, *in view of which* the desire is felt ; and that enjoyment may immediately result from a virtuous feeling or action, without having been previously thought of or desired.

That form of the selfish system, which makes *eternal* happiness the sole object of virtuous pursuit, is, on some accounts, worthy of a separate consideration. The happiness of heaven may be considered as differing from that of the present life in two respects,—in its *nature* and in its *quantity*. Its nature is more pure ; and its quantity is infinitely great,—being not only more intense in degree, but also eternal in duration. It is thought by some,—who would reject any other modification of the selfish system, —that there is virtue, and that of the purest kind, in seeking such happiness as will be enjoyed in heaven, although it be sought exclusively or supremely as an object of private enjoyment. " If," says Madame de Stael, " those who maintain that virtue is founded on interest, will exclude from this interest whatever relates to the present life, they will then harmonize in sentiment with the most pious men."* And in another place she has the following remarks : " Kant maintained, that to make the prospect of a future life the object of our actions, was to corrupt the disinterested purity of virtue. Several German writers have completely refuted him on this point. In fact, heavenly im-

* Si les partisans de la morale fondée sur l' intérêt veulent retrancher de cet intérêt tout ce qui concerne l' existence terrestre, alors ils seront d' accord avec les hommes les plus religieux.—*De L' Allemagne, Tome III. p.* 166.

mortality has no analogy to the pleasures and pains of which we conceive here on earth. The sentiment which makes us aspire after immortality, is as disinterested, as that which would make our happiness to consist in being devoted to that of others ; for the first fruits of religious enjoyment are in the sacrifice of ourselves ; so that every kind of selfishness is necessarily excluded."*

In order to determine whether the epithet ' selfish' is properly applied to the man who makes his own eternal happiness the supreme object of desire and pursuit, it is necessary to inquire definitely what selfishness is. Selfishness is a *preference* of an interest which is *one's own* to an *equal* or *superior* interest which is *not* one's own. The selfish man prefers his own interest simply because it is his own ; and upon the interest of others, though of equal value in itself, he places an inferior value, simply because it is not his own. It makes no difference in what this interest consists. The child, who attempts to deprive another child of a toy or an apple, exhibits an instance of selfishness. The man, who covets the wealth or honors that another has obtained, exhibits an instance of selfishness. So also does he, who envies another the possession of superior talents or of more extensive eruditicn. And so, too, does he, who makes his own eternal happiness his supreme object,—regarding the happiness of the whole universe beside as a subordinate object. The selfishness is not diminished by increasing the *mag-*

* Kant a prétendu que c' étoit altérer la pureté désintéressé de la morale que de donner à nos actions pour but la perspective d' une vie future ; plusieurs écrivains Allemands l' ont parfaitement réfuté à cet égard ; en effet, l' immortalité céleste n ' a nul rapport avec les peines et les récompenses que l' on conçoit sur cette terre ; le sentiment qui nous fait aspirer à l' immortalité est aussi désintéressé que celui qui nous feroit trouver notre bonheur dans le dévouement à celui des autres ; car les prémices de la félicité religieuse, c' est le sacrifice de nous-mêmes ; ainsi donc elle écarte nécessairement toute espèce d' égoïsme.—*De L'Allemagne, Tome III. p.* 192.

nitude of the object which is preferred, while the magnitude of the object to which it is preferred, is equally increased. Neither is the selfishness diminished by the *purity* and *excellence* of that which is preferred, while that to which it is preferred, is equally pure and excellent. A man is not, indeed, to be denominated selfish merely for desiring and seeking his own happiness, sensitive, intellectual, moral, or religious; but for seeking these objects with a desire of *such a kind* as to interfere with that equal regard which he owes to his neighbor, that superior regard which he owes to the community, and that supreme regard which he owes to God.

After all, there is no danger that such happiness as is enjoyed in heaven, will ever be, to any one, the object of supreme desire. The human mind is so constituted, that no one can have a *conception* of any thing which is different in kind from all that he has experienced. The pleasures of religion are, like their source, different in kind from all others. Of course, those who have never tasted these pleasures, cannot have any conception of them; and that of which they cannot conceive, cannot be to them an object either of supreme or subordinate desire. Therefore, the future happiness which such imagine and desire, differs not in kind from what they enjoy on earth; so that they cannot be shielded from the imputation of selfishness, by alleging the purity and celestial nature of the object of their pursuit. As to those who have enjoyed a foretaste of the real happiness of heaven, they love God supremely, and their neighbor as themselves; and, of course, regard their own happiness even in eternity, as a subordinate object.

But it seems to be merely the vast amount of eternal happiness, which, in the mind of Dr. Paley, renders it virtuous to make this the object of all our actions; for he "holds that pleasures differ in nothing but in continuance and intensity." This is to make virtue consist in a

'rational regard' to our own interest,—excepting that it is a little irrational and inconsistent to deny the appellation of virtue to such a pursuit of earthly pleasures as we may engage in without endangering our eternal happiness, or diminishing the sum total of our enjoyment. If all pleasures are the same in kind, and if virtue consists in the rational pursuit of pleasure, it must be as truly virtuous to desire the pleasures of sense, so far as they can be innocently enjoyed, as to desire 'everlasting happiness;'—the only difference being, that to desire to eat an apple or an orange is a small virtue, while the virtue becomes greater as the desire is directed to pleasures of greater intensity or greater duration. "The doctrine of Paley differs," says Dr. Brown, "from the general selfish system, only by the peculiar importance which it very justly gives to everlasting happiness and misery, when compared with the brief pains or pleasures of this life. In the scale of selfish gain, it is a greater quantity of physical enjoyment which it has in view. It is a sager selfishness, but it is not less absolute selfishness which it maintains."*

"This form of the selfish system is, I cannot but think, as degrading to the human character, as any other form of the doctrine of absolute selfishness; or rather, it is in itself the most degrading of all the forms which the selfish system can assume: because, while the selfishness which it maintains is as absolute and unremitting, as if the objects of personal gain were to be found in the wealth, or honors, or sensual pleasures of this earth; this very selfishness is rendered more offensive, by the noble image of the Deity which is continually presented to our mind, and presented in all his benevolence, not to be loved, but to be courted with a mockery of affection.

* Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 79.

The sensualist of the common system of selfishness, who never thinks of any higher object in the pursuit of the little pleasures which he is miserable enough to regard as happiness, seems to me, even in the brutal stupidity in which he is sunk, a being more worthy of esteem than the selfish of another life; to whose view God is ever present, but who view him always only to feel constantly in their heart, that in loving him who has been the dispenser of all the blessings which they have enjoyed, and who has revealed himself in the glorious character of the diffuser of an immortality of happiness, they love not the Giver himself, but only the gifts which they have received, or the gifts that are promised."*

4. A fourth supposition,—which I shall endeavor to illustrate and maintain,—makes *benevolence* the leading trait in the virtuous character; and makes all virtue, which does not consist in benevolence, to consist in feelings that harmonize perfectly with the views of benevolence. All those virtuous feelings that are not directly benevolent, yet bear such a relation to benevolence, that their separation from this principle would render the character inconsistent and imperfect.

Disinterested benevolence is the highest and most unequivocal exercise of virtue. By disinterested benevolence, I mean a benevolence which is impartial and universal in its nature; which desires *supremely* the promotion of the greatest good of the universe, and desires the happiness of individual beings in proportion to the capacity of happiness which they are known or conceived to possess. It rejoices in happiness, wherever happiness exists; always prefers a greater good to a less; and is willing that the less good should be sacrificed, whenever it is necessary in order to secure the greater. It seldom,

* Ibid.

perhaps, makes the greatest good of the universe the direct object of desire, because it seldom makes this an object of thought; but, whenever this *is* contemplated, it becomes the object of *supreme* desire; and, whatever objects are contemplated together by the mind, the most important always preponderates. In the view of the enlightened christian, the glory of God and the greatest good of the universe, are identified; and he feels, that in desiring supremely that the will of God may be done, he virtually desires that the greatest good of the universe may be secured.

It is obvious, that a man in the exercise of the purest benevolence may make his *own* happiness an object of desire, since this benevolence prizes *every* object according to its real value. The *evidence* of pure benevolence, however, must be less in desiring one's own happiness or that of a friend, than in desiring the happiness of a stranger or an enemy; as it must be less in promoting the happiness of another where it can be done without any inconvenience to ourselves, than where a large sacrifice, without hope of remuneration, is required.

But there are feelings, different in their nature from those just described, which may, nevertheless, be denominated benevolent. Even in those who are destitute of christian benevolence, there are feelings of instinctive and social benevolence, in view of which emotions of moral approbation arise. There are various feelings of kindness in social intercourse, and various affections between those who are connected by the ties of consanguinity, which render the possessor more amiable in our view, and which may therefore be denominated virtuous.

The grand object of desire, is happiness. The difference between selfishness and benevolence is, that the former makes its own happiness the sole object of desire; and the latter desires also the happiness of others. The

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difference between christian benevolence and that which is of an inferior kind, is, that the former makes the general happiness the object of supreme desire, and feels such a desire of the happiness of individuals as will readily give place to the superior claims of an object of greater magnitude, whenever occasion requires; and the latter desires the happiness of individuals and of the community sincerely indeed, but with a desire of such a kind, as vanishes the moment their interest comes in competition with its own.

It is to be remarked, that happiness is far from being the sole direct object of desire. Although objects are valuable only for the happiness which they afford, yet we are so formed as to desire them, frequently, without thinking of that happiness. The objects of human desire are enumerated by Dr. Brown in the following manner: The desire of continued existence, of pleasure, of action, of society, of knowledge, of power, of the affection of others, of glory, of the happiness of others, and of evil to others. But although we may desire continued existence, action, society, knowledge, power, and the affection of others, without thinking of happiness as connected with the attainment of these objects, yet it was wholly for the sake of the happiness which they may afford, that our benevolent Creator formed us thus to desire them. Nor are any of these desires virtuous, except the desire of the happiness of ourselves or others. It is evident, therefore, that whenever any of these desires would lead us in a course that would diminish the general happiness, virtue would require us to relinquish the pursuit.

It sometimes happens, that virtuous feelings, such as compassion or filial affection, prompt to an action, which an enlightened mind sees to be inconsistent with the views of a more enlarged benevolence. In such a case, if the general tendency of the action is perceived by the indi-

vidual, he must feel it to be his duty to sacrifice the less object to the greater. As our Creator endued us with these inferior principles of action wholly for the sake of promoting the general welfare, it is evidently our duty to keep them in subordination to the views of general benevolence. In order to place this subject in a clear light, let us suppose that I have an opportunity to save the life of one out of two human beings, of whom the one is a parent or child, and the other unconnected with me by the ties of nature or affection, but obviously and decisively a more important member of society;—which of the two ought I to save? If we omit all consideration of any difference which there may be in the prospects of the two individuals in regard to a future state of existence, the question must be determined by a balancing of the probable temporal consequences of the action. If I save the stranger, and leave my parent or child to perish, it may produce a bad effect on all who are unable to conceive the real motives of my conduct; for, so far as my example has influence with such, the tendency of it is, to weaken, in them, the ties of natural affection. Now, this is an evil of no small magnitude. The private affections are of incalculable importance to the welfare of society. In all, who are destitute of a more exalted benevolence, they are not only the chief source of enjoyment, but the only preservative from a thousand crimes and sufferings. If, then, the sacrifice of my parent or child for the sake of a stranger, would be likely to weaken, to any considerable extent, the ties of filial or parental affection, this evil may more than counterbalance the superior value of the stranger's life. The consequences resulting to myself from each part of the alternative, are, perhaps, hardly worth mentioning. If I have made the sacrifice, not from any deficiency of natural affection, but merely from being actuated by a principle of a superior order, there is no

danger lest such an act should weaken, in myself, the ties of natural affection toward surviving relatives and friends. On the other hand, the pain which I must feel in having torn asunder one of these ties, will be compensated to me by the approbation of conscience for having performed an act of virtue so exalted.—On the whole, I undertake not to say, what decision ought to be formed in any particular case of this kind. The decision ought not, I think, to be always the same; but to differ according to varying circumstances. The subject was introduced for the sake of exhibiting more clearly the general principles, by which a man of an enlightened mind and of disinterested virtue, governs his conduct.

It seems proper, in this place, to make a few remarks on a question, which has usually been regarded as of primary importance in the theory of morals:

What is the Foundation of Moral Obligation?

It is somewhat difficult to ascertain the precise meaning of the phrase, 'Foundation of Moral Obligation.' What moral obligation *is*, has already been shown. To feel under obligation to perform an action, is to feel an emotion of approbation of the motives which would lead to the performance of the action, and of disapprobation of the motives which would hinder its performance. The question, What is the *foundation* of the obligation to perform the action? may mean either, Why do we feel those emotions of approbation and disapprobation? or, Why would those motives which conscience approves, lead to the performance of the action; and those which conscience disapproves, hinder its performance? The latter of these inquiries, is that which we have been pursuing. Our desires lead us to perform such actions, as will accomplish the object desired. Virtuous actions are such as are designed to accomplish those objects, in the desire of which virtue

consists. One object of virtuous desire, is happiness. Benevolence, therefore, leads us to perform such actions, as are promotive of happiness. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to remark, that benevolence, in desiring the production or increase of happiness, desires, of course, the removal or alleviation of suffering; and the latter is a direct object of desire, as well as the former.

Another object of virtuous desire, is moral approbation. If it were possible, however, for a man to be totally destitute of every other virtuous motive, and to act solely for the sake of gaining his own approbation and that of others, I think that his merit would be generally acknowledged to be very small. A desire of approbation and a dread of disapprobation, are rather an index of virtue, than virtue itself; and are probably, in fact, valued less for the degree of virtue which they are supposed to involve, than for the indication they afford of the habitual existence of other virtuous feelings.

The other question mentioned above, requires a few remarks;—'Why do we feel certain moral emotions, in view of certain moral feelings?'

To say, that we feel these emotions because we are so *constituted*, is only to say, that we feel them because we always do feel them, and because all men feel them. Why, then, are we so constituted by our Creator?—in other words, Why has he willed, that mankind should feel these emotions? The answer is, Because he desires the happiness of his creatures, and could in no other way make them so happy,—could in no other way make them so much to resemble himself, as by making them to feel, not merely virtuous desires and affections, but also an approbation of virtue and a disapprobation of vice.

CHAPTER III.

Degree of Virtue.

The degree of virtue in an action depends on the strength of virtuous feeling implied. The character of an individual is virtuous in proportion to the frequency and strength of his virtuous feelings. So far is plain. The only difficulty lies in judging of the frequency and strength of virtuous feelings by external actions. On this subject, I shall confine myself to some remarks on the manner in which the degree of virtue is affected by *temptation* and by *habit;* and also on the manner in which our *estimate* of the degree of virtue is affected by the result of an action, when this result is different from the intention of the actor.

1. The influence of *temptation* on the degree of virtue.

Temptation may either diminish or increase the degree of virtue. It may excite wrong feelings, and lead to a vicious action, in a case, in which, without the temptation, the feelings and the conduct would have been virtuous. In this case, we should err, if we regarded the particular act of vice as an index of the general character. But in another case, where a temptation is presented, there may have been such wrong feelings as would have led to the commission of the crime without the temptation; and in this case, we are liable to err by regarding the temptation as an extenuation of the guilt. Again, temptation may excite some wrong feelings in a virtuous breast, sufficient, not to prevail over the virtuous feelings indeed, but so to diminish their number and strength, as to render the degree of virtue in acting very small. In this case, a man has the credit of superior virtue, on account of his victory over temptation; and this

credit, though not due to him on account of the virtue involved in the victory itself, may yet be due when we consider this victory as an index of the habitual exercise of virtuous feelings. Again, the effort that is made to resist temptation, by the man of determined virtue, may give occasion to more numerous and more vigorous feelings of virtue, than would have arisen without the temptation. In like manner, the degree of virtue may be increased by the effort that is made to surmount any obstacles whatever to the performance of a virtuous action. These obstacles may properly be called a temptation, not, indeed, to perform a bad action, but to abstain from performing a good one. On the whole, yielding to temptation indicates a much less degree of vice in the character, than committing the same crime without temptation; and resisting temptation, especially performing a virtuous action notwithstanding a temptation to the contrary, or surmounting obstacles of any other kind, indicates a much greater degree of virtue in the character, than performing the same actions where there is no temptation to be resisted or obstacle to be surmounted;—though the indication is by no means infallible, since the degree of vice may be as great with temptation as without it, and the degree of virtue may be as great without temptations and obstacles as with them.

2. The influence of *habit* on the degree of virtue.

By habit, here, we are not to understand the habitual exercise of virtuous feelings, for the effect of this on the degree of virtue in the character, needs no illustration; but the habitual performance of virtuous actions. In the first place, we may presume, that the habit of virtuous action was originally formed by the habitual exercise of virtuous feelings. Here is an aggregate of virtue, that is not to be overlooked. But what I would chiefly inquire, is, what evidence the continued performance of the same habitual actions, affords of the continued exercise of vir-

tuous feelings, and of the frequency and strength of those feelings.

I think it must be admitted, that actions, to which we were at first prompted by virtuous feelings, are frequently, when they have become habitual, performed without the recurrence of those feelings. But I cannot believe, that where the habit of virtuous action continues, the habit of virtuous feeling can have entirely ceased. If it had, temptation would resume its force, the man would fall into vice, and his virtuous habits be broken off. Man cannot cease to be a moral agent. As soon as virtuous feelings cease to occupy the breast, those of the contrary nature will enter. Still, it appears, that as virtuous actions become habitual, and temptations lose their force by being continually and uniformly resisted, the virtuous feelings, which are connected with these habitual actions, may become *weaker* than they originally were. Most of those associations of ideas which involve temptation, having been dissolved, the weakness of the virtuous feelings does not necessarily expose the mind to the assault of temptation; and in case an assault is made, it being more unusual, the alarm is greater, and the slumbering virtues are at once aroused to vigilance and to action. To conclude, we may venture to say, that in a man who is confirmed in virtuous habits, the correspondent virtuous feelings are also habitual, though, perhaps, not perfectly uniform, nor always so vigorous as at first, or as some of his other virtuous feelings, excited by circumstances less habitual and familiar, now are; and that what is wanting in the strength of these habitual virtuous feelings, is made up by their greater frequency, and by the more uniform exclusion of those wrong feelings, which intruded more frequently and with greater force, while the habits of virtue were not yet fully confirmed.

3. There is another thing which affects, not the degree of virtue itself, but the *estimate* which we form of it. I allude to what Dr. Smith terms "the influence of fortune."* We are prone to commend or blame a man, rather according to the actual consequences of his actions, than according to the evidence which his actions afford of good or bad intentions. "The effect of the influence of fortune," says Dr. Smith, "is, first, to diminish our sense of the merit or demerit of those actions which arose from the most laudable or blamable intentions, when they fail of producing their proposed effects; and, secondly, to increase our sense of the merit or demerit of actions, beyond what is due to the motives or affections from which they proceed, when they accidentally give occasion either to extraordinary pleasure or pain." This error in judging of human conduct, is so common, and one of which so few are unapprised, that I forbear to offer any illustration. The frequency and extent of the error, are happily illustrated by Dr. Smith. I am inclined, however, to account for it in a manner different from his. I would ascribe it to *erroneous conceptions* of the *motives* from which an individual acts. The external actions of men are the only means we have of learning their motives. When an action fails of producing its intended effects, we find it difficult to conceive of the man as really intending the production of those effects. The customary evidence of his intentions is wanting; and though the evidence which is afforded may be in itself sufficient, yet we continually forget this; and hence our conceptions of his moral feelings are obscure and defective. In like manner, when an action is productive of more good or more harm than was intended, we find it difficult to avoid conceiving of the man as intending all the effects which actually follow. Being in the habit of regarding

*Theory of Moral Sentiments, Part II. Section 3.

all the effects of actions as comprised in the intention of the actor, when we see the effects which are actually produced, conceptions of the motives which usually lead to such effects, spontaneously arise; and we cannot easily check these conceptions, although we are aware that the case before us is an exception to the general rule. Besides, the excitement produced in our feelings by a view of the happy or unhappy consequences of the action, prepares our minds to entertain the more readily those conceptions which naturally arise. If the consequences are happy, the sympathy we feel with those who are made happy, disposes us to imagine their benefactor to be worthy of all the gratitude, which the production of so much happiness naturally inspires. If the consequences are unhappy, the pain which we feel, disposes us to ascribe, to the author of the mischief, intentions bad enough to produce all this evil. If, indeed, we know that *no* evil was intended in the one case, and no good in the other, our conceptions of good and ill desert are checked at once; but if we have evidence that *some* evil was intended in the one case, and *some good* in the other, the state of our mind disposes us to imagine the intentions to have been proportioned to the actual effects.

The views which have been taken in this chapter, and also the remarks of Dr. Brown on "the complexity of actions," quoted in a former chapter, may serve to show how very liable we are to err, in judging of the motives from which men act; and especially, in estimating the degree of merit or demerit involved in the performance of a particular action.

PRACTICAL ETHICS.

CHAPTER I.

The Rule of Duty.

The great object of virtuous desire, is the promotion of happiness. The various duties of virtue, are only various *means* of promoting this object. It is our *external actions* only, that can directly affect the happiness of others. Our *thoughts* and *feelings*, however, besides their direct influence on our own happiness, are the sources from which all our external actions proceed. In regard to our *thoughts*, therefore, we are under obligation, as far as they are produced or influenced by our moral feelings,—and they are thus produced and influenced in no small degree,—to control and direct them in that way, which we have reason to believe will be most likely to excite right feelings, which will guard most effectually against wrong feelings, and which will be most likely to increase our knowledge and skill in the art of doing good. When we consider how much our actions are influenced by the habits of thinking which we form, we cannot but perceive, that the proper regulation of the thoughts, is a duty of very great magnitude.

In regard to our *external conduct*, we are under obligation to perform, to the extent of our ability and opportunity, all those actions which we know or believe to have a tendency to promote the general happiness. When different actions are presented to our choice, of which we can do but one, we are under obligation to do that which appears to have the most useful tendency. When

we cannot judge with certainty what action *has* the most beneficial tendency, or cannot determine whether the tendency of an action be beneficial or the contrary, we are bound, after obtaining all the light we can, to act according to apparent probabilities. Frequently, however, the doubtful tendency of an action is a sufficient reason for dismissing it from our consideration;—the prospect of benefit, in case we should find the action to be a useful one, not being great enough, to make it expedient to spend that time in deliberating and inquiring about it, which we might spend in doing something else that we *know* to be useful. In case we apprehend that the doing of an action may be injurious, and that the abstaining from it may also be injurious, we are bound, "of the two evils to choose the least;" or, in other words, to pursue that course, where there is the least reason to apprehend evil, or where there is the least evil to be apprehended.

"In every question of conduct, where one side is doubtful, and the other side safe, we are bound to take the safe side. It is *prudent*, you allow, to take the safe side. But our observation means something more. We assert that the action, concerning which we doubt, whatever it may be in itself, or to another, would, in *us*, while this doubt remains upon our minds, be certainly sinful. The case is expressly so adjudged by St. Paul:* 'I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but *to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*—Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth; and he that doubteth is damned (*condemned*) if he eat,

* Romans, xiv. 14, 22, 23.

for whatsoever is not of faith, (i. e. not done with a full persuasion of its lawfulness,) is sin.' "*

An important inquiry now arises:

How are we to know what actions are most promotive of the general happiness?

Here I would observe, that the general happiness is only the aggregate of the happiness of individuals; so that we add to the general stock of happiness by contributing to the happiness of an individual, whenever we can do this without diminishing the happiness of any other individual. And, in most cases, no fear of this kind need be entertained.—But how shall we know what actions are most conducive to the happiness both of individuals and of the community?

1. *By the experience and observation of ourselves and others.*

We readily learn, by experience, what things are conducive to our present comfort and happiness; and we easily infer, that the same things will produce the same effect upon mankind in general. Said our Savior, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Where experience fails to afford us information, observation may frequently supply the defect. By observing how certain things affect particular individuals and men in general, we may learn, in many instances, how to promote the happiness of individuals and of society. But it is not a limited or temporary effect alone, that is to be considered. A certain action may be beneficial to one man and injurious to others; or it may afford a temporary gratification, but diminish the sum of happiness in the end. It hence becomes necessary, in regard to many actions, to have recourse to the experience and observation of others; and sometimes, of men who have lived in different ages and in different na-

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book I. Chap. 7.

tions of the world. It also happens, not unfrequently, that a certain action, when viewed by itself, appears to be conducive to happiness; but when it is considered, that this may lead to the formation of a bad *habit*, or may have an influence, by way of *example*, that shall lead to evil consequences, it becomes doubtful whether the present advantage is sufficient to overbalance the danger of future injury. In such cases, the combined experience and wisdom of mankind are peculiarly needed; and the result of that experience and wisdom becomes the most useful to individuals, by being expressed in GENERAL RULES OF *maxims* of conduct, which may be applied, without deliberation, to a great variety of particular cases.—But this subject is very happily introduced by Dr. Paley. After observing that "actions are to be estimated by their tendency," and that "it is the utility of any moral rule alone which constitutes the obligation of it," he proceeds thus:

"But to all this there seems a plain objection, viz. that many actions are useful, which no man in his senses will allow to be right. There are occasions, in which the hand of the assassin would be very useful. The present possessor of some great estate employs his influence and fortune to annoy, corrupt, or oppress all about him. His estate would devolve, by his death, to a successor of an opposite character. It is useful, therefore, to despatch such a one as soon as possible out of the way; as the neighborhood will exchange thereby a pernicious tyrant for a wise and generous benefactor. It might be useful to rob a miser, and give the money to the poor; as the money, no doubt, would produce more happiness, by being laid out in food and clothing for half a dozen distressed families, than by continuing locked up in a miser's chest. It may be useful to get possession of a place of preferment, or of a seat in parliament, by bribery or false swearing; as by means of them we may serve the

public more effectually than in our private station. What then shall we say ? Must we admit these actions to be right, which would be to justify assassination, plunder, and perjury ; or must we give up our principle, that the criterion of right is utility ?

" It is not necessary to do either. The true answer is this ; that these actions, after all, are not useful, and for that reason, and that alone, are not right. To see this point perfectly, it must be observed that the bad consequences of actions are twofold, *particular* and *general*. The particular bad consequence of an action is, the mischief which that single action directly and immediately occasions. The general bad consequence is, the violation of some necessary or useful *general rule*." Although, therefore, the particular consequences of an action may be good, yet the general consequences, which are of more importance, may be evil; so that the action, on the whole, may not be useful, but the contrary.

The evil of violating a general rule, consists in the danger of forming a *bad habit ;* in the liability of individuals to make an *erroneous estimate* of the consequences of the violation ; in the *loss of confidence* among men ; and in the *influence of example*.

If a person commits solitary acts of " assassination, plunder, and perjury," whenever he thinks they are useful, he will thus divest himself of the horror and detestation which he felt at those acts when committed for wicked purposes. He thus becomes prepared to commit the same acts in cases where their utility appears doubtful ; and finally, to commit them whenever his private interest or his passions prompt. It cannot be denied, I think, that such is the tendency of allowing one's self in occasional transgressions of a general rule. And the danger of such a result is increased by another consideration. If a man may violate a general rule, whenever, in his pri-

vate judgment, he thinks such a violation useful, it becomes necessary that he should deliberate in regard to every particular act that falls under a general rule, and make an estimate, before he acts, of the probable consequences both of observing and of violating the rule. This must not only occasion great delay in acting, and lead to a habit of hesitation and indecision in all one's conduct, but a man is more likely to be influenced by wrong motives, and to overlook the most weighty considerations, in the moment of acting, than in determining beforehand by what general rule he will be governed. More than this, few individuals are competent, if ever so impartial, to judge of the remote consequences of such an action ; so that it is safer to adhere to a general rule, which the experience and wisdom of mankind have established, than to violate it in a particular instance, for the sake of some good consequences that will flow from it, and, at the same time, run the risk of greater evil consequences that are not foreseen. The same consideration should deter individuals, not only from violating established general rules in particular emergencies, but also from presuming to form rules of conduct for themselves in opposition to those which the wisdom and experience of ages have prescribed.

I have mentioned the hesitation, indecision, and loss of time, which must arise from the rejection of general rules, and from making the consequences of every particular action the subject of particular calculation. It would, indeed, be a piece of madness, and perhaps utterly impracticable, to do this in regard to every individual action of a man's life ; but just so far as it is done to the neglect of those rules of conduct whose usefulness is generally acknowledged, in this proportion must the bad effects I have mentioned be produced. This indecision of character, and instability of conduct, are an evil of no

small magnitude. When it is understood that a man does not bind himself to the observance of general rules in his conduct, no one can know what to expect from him, and the confidence, even of his best friends, must be withdrawn. If we suppose the number of individuals who renounce the obligation of general rules, to be increased, so as to embrace any considerable proportion of mankind, the loss of confidence must become so great, as almost to produce a dissolution of civil society.

But perhaps the evil of violating a general rule appears the most obvious and striking, when we consider the influence of *example*. The person who tells a lie, or plunders the property of his neighbor, for the sake of doing good, affords a pretence to those who would commit the same acts from worse motives. He even countenances them in their conduct, as the motives of his own are not publicly known. In all such cases, therefore, the precept of the apostle ought to be regarded: "Abstain from all *appearance of evil*." The tendency of example is, to lead all others to act in the same manner. If, therefore, it would not be for the general good, that all others *should* act in the same manner, the example ought not to be set. It is evident, that a man ought not to act in a manner, in which it would not be beneficial for men generally to act *in the same circumstances*. But a peculiarity of circumstances is not always a sufficient reason for acting in a manner, in which it would be detrimental for men generally to act,—especially if the peculiarity consists in circumstances of minor importance and not publicly known. Men are influenced by example, especially if the example falls in with interest or inclination, without adverting to peculiar circumstances of minor importance, even if they *are* known to them. In estimating the influence of example, we should consider, not what influence the example ought to have, or in what manner other men ought to act, but what influence the example is

likely in fact to have, and in what manner depraved men may be led by it really to act.

But suppose that a general rule can be violated in a *secret* manner, so that the influence of *example* shall be avoided, what bad consequences are to be apprehended? In reply, I would remark, first, that no one who commits such an act in secret, can be certain that it will never be brought to light. And in case it is detected, the consequences may be worse than if there had been no attempt at concealment. In the second place, even if the influence of *example* is wholly avoided, the danger of a demoralizing influence on the person *himself*, remains. In the third place, such a person will probably, on some occasion or other, be under a necessity of expressing an opinion in regard to the duty of adhering invariably to general rules. If he expresses, or in any way betrays, his real sentiments, that a general rule may be violated for the sake of some particular good consequences, whenever it can be done with perfect secrecy, he will expose himself to the suspicion of having carried his principles into practice, and will remove the scruples of others who have an inclination to do the same; thus "setting up a general rule, of all others the least to be endured; namely, that secrecy, whenever secrecy is practicable, will justify any action."* On the other hand, if he contradicts his real sentiments, and advocates an invariable adherence to general rules, he will do violence to his own conscience, and lay a foundation for a habit of insincerity, deception, and falsehood, the most ruinous in its consequences.

There is one class of crimes, in relation to which the necessity of general rules and the evil tendency of violating them, are very apparent. I allude to those crimes

* Paley.

which are forbidden by human laws. "You cannot permit one action and forbid another, without showing a difference between them. Consequently, the same sort of actions must be generally permitted or generally forbidden. Where, therefore, the general permission of them would be pernicious, it becomes necessary to lay down and support the rule which generally forbids them.

"Thus, to return once more to the case of the assassin. The assassin knocked the rich villain on the head, because he thought him better out of the way than in it. If you allow this excuse in the present instance, you must allow it to all who act in the same manner, and from the same motive; that is, you must allow every man to kill any one he meets, whom he thinks noxious or useless; which, in the event, would be to commit every man's life and safety to the spleen, fury, and fanaticism of his neighbor;—a disposition of affairs which would soon fill the world with misery and confusion; and ere long put an end to human society, if not to the human species."*

Human government cannot exist without general rules; and these must, of necessity, be rigidly enforced. The violation of the civil law, for the sake of some particular good consequences, involves in it evil consequences of a two-fold kind. In the first place, there are the same general bad consequences as in the violation of any other general rule; and in the second place, there is the violation of an additional important general rule, namely, that the law of the land ought to be obeyed. The mischiefs of insubordination in government, and the pernicious influence of the example which is set by him who tramples upon the civil law, are so great, that the consequences would be fatal to society, were not the strong arm of power generally able to arrest the progress of the evil.

*Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book II. Chap. 7.

The injunction of St. Paul is in point: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers."

From the principles that we have been insisting upon, "a maxim may be explained, which is in every man's mouth, and in most men's without meaning, viz. 'not to do evil, that good may come:' that is, let us not violate a general rule, for the sake of any particular good consequence we may expect."*

The importance and duty of a rigid adherence to general rules, cannot be too deeply impressed on the minds of the young. The subject ought to be explained and inculcated by every parent and by every instructer. It is sometimes astonishing and painful to see how little regard is paid to general rules, even by men of education and of piety. I do not now allude to such crimes as breach of promise, lying, or theft; but to various things in the conduct, which are not capable of being classed under general terms, but which, if done by all in similar circumstances, would be improper and hurtful. Surely, there must be something defective in the education, or something faulty in the habits, of that man, who, being pious, can either inconsiderately or deliberately do things of this kind.—That such things are done, and done by such men, affords one proof among others, that those "moral sentiments" (as they are called) which arise from early education and from associations of ideas, and which operate without any consideration of utility, are not sufficient for the regulation of human conduct; and that there is need of the science of ethics, to teach and inculcate more enlightened and more perfect rules of duty. I am, indeed, of opinion, that those "moral sentiments" are themselves useful general rules, originally derived from experience and from a consideration of consequences; now impres-

* Ibid. Chap. viii.

sed on the minds of children without their being taught the reasons on which they were founded; and thus transmitted, like a sort of blind moral instincts, from generation to generation. I have, therefore, no fault to find with them. They are most of them good as far as they go. But some of them are defective; and all of them may be strengthened by explaining the reasons on which they are founded.

Such are the utility and necessity of general rules, that the Supreme Being has thought proper to give to some of the most important of them the sanction of his authority. Hence we may ascertain what actions have a useful tendency,

2. *By the commands of God, as contained in the scriptures.*

"This rule, however, proceeds upon the presumption that *God wishes the happiness of his creatures.*"* It may be proper, therefore, briefly to state the reasons upon which this presumption rests.

There is more happiness than misery in the world. Some may be inclined to dispute this position. But let almost any man, who thinks himself as unhappy as mankind in general, number his pleasant and his painful sensations for a few days or hours; or let him count the hours, which, while they are passing, he thinks better, and also those which he thinks worse, than non-existence; and then see whether the result is in favor of existence or of annihilation. Then let him look at the world around him, and judge whether the scale of happiness or of misery preponderates. "Throughout the whole of life," says Dr. Paley in an interesting chapter on "The Goodness of the Deity" in his "Natural Theology,"—"Throughout the whole of life, as it is diffused in nature, and as far as we

* Paley.

are acquainted with it, looking to the average of sensations, the plurality and the preponderancy is in favor of happiness by a vast excess. In our own species, in which perhaps the assertion may be more questionable than in any other, the prepollency of good over evil, of health, for example, and ease, over pain and distress, is evinced by the very notice which calamities excite. What inquiries does the sickness of our friends produce! What conversation their misfortunes! This shows that the common course of things is in favor of happiness; that happiness is the rule, misery the exception. Were the order reversed, our attention would be called to examples of health and competency, instead of disease and want."

"When God created the human species, either he wished their happiness, or he wished their misery, or he was indifferent and unconcerned about both.

If he had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment; or by placing us amidst objects so ill suited to our perceptions, as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted bitter; every thing we saw loathsome; every thing we touched a sting; every smell a stench; and every sound a discord.

If he had been indifferent about our happiness or misery, we must impute to *chance* both the capacity of our senses to receive pleasure, and the supply of external objects fitted to produce it."*—But what is "chance?" The only proper use of the word, is to denote the operation of unknown secondary causes. But secondary causes produce no effects which were not designed by the First

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book II. Chap. 5.

Cause. Therefore, if God had been indifferent about the happiness or misery of his creatures, if he had exercised no will or choice on the subject, neither happiness nor misery would ever have been experienced by them. It remains, then, that all the happiness which creatures enjoy, is to be traced to the divine benevolence. And since there is so much more happiness than misery, so much more pleasure than pain, in the world, we must conclude, that all the evils which do exist, are designed by God to be subservient, in some way or other, to the greatest possible happiness of the universe.

"The same argument may be proposed in different terms, thus: Contrivance proves design; and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with, are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil, no doubt, exists; but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache; their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it: or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance; but it is not the object of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of the sickle, that it is made to cut the reaper's fingers, though, from the construction of the instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often happens. But if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution, this engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews; this to dislocate the joints; this to break the bones; this to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very *objects* of the contrivance. Now nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose.

No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease ; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, this is to irritate; this to inflame; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys; this gland to secrete the humor which forms the gout: if by chance he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is, that it is useless; no one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment. Since, then, God has called forth his consummate wisdom to contrive and provide for our happiness, and the world appears to have been constituted with this design at first, so long as this constitution is upheld by him, we must in reason suppose the same design to continue."*

We conclude, therefore, that God wishes the happiness of his creatures; and that 'we may ascertain what actions have a useful tendency by his commands, as contained in the Holy Scriptures.'

There appear to be *two advantages*, chiefly, in having express divine commands and prohibitions in regard to our conduct. The *first* is, that general rules, which are of vital importance to mankind, may be enjoined by an all-wise Being, in an absolute and unqualified manner, so that individuals may have every doubt removed in regard to the duty of an invariable adherence to them. Admitting that the science of ethics is sufficient to remove every doubt of that kind; yet few men, comparatively, make a study of this science; and of those who do, many are not capable of taking comprehensive views of things, and perceiving the force of the arguments by which the duty of an invariable adherence to general rules is maintained. Of the utility of those things which God requires, no one can doubt; and it is of incalculable importance to the mass of the community, to have a rule

* Ibid.

of duty, so easily understood and of such undisputed authority. Besides, it is doubted, even by able writers on moral philosophy, 'whether any rule of morality ought to be so rigid as to bend to no exceptions.' The Bible, as it respects some rules of morality at least, affords a solution of this doubt. Suppose that an individual feels strongly urged, by peculiar circumstances, to commit theft. It appears to him that the advantages to be derived from the act, are greater than any bad consequences that can be apprehended to follow. He is sensible, that in most cases, theft is injurious and criminal; and he is aware, perhaps, that many wise men have inculcated the importance of general rules, and the dangerous tendency of violating them for the sake of any particular good consequences. But he regards human wisdom and experience as incompetent to prescribe universal and infallible laws. He remembers, too, that able writers on human duty admit, that there *may be some exceptions to every general rule*; and he thinks that the present case may justly be regarded as an exception to the rule which forbids the taking of another's property. On the whole, it appears sufficiently clear to him, that the immediate and certain advantages are more than a counterpoise to the danger of uncertain and remote bad consequences. But let the command of an omniscient Being now reach his ears;—and the scale turns at once. God cannot err. He sees the end from the beginning. He views actions and events in their remotest consequences; and can form a just estimate of all the consequences, good and evil, that can flow from any action. And He has said, "*Thou shalt not steal.*"

Take another instance. A case occurs, in which a man may save his life by telling a lie. He sees no harm that it can do to any one; so that the evil consequences that attend lying in general, are not now to be apprehend-

ed. The maxims of philosophers are inapplicable to the present case. The path of duty appears so plain, that all doubt is dispelled, and every scruple removed. But the Bible meets his eye. He there sees that God enjoins veracity and condemns falsehood in the most emphatical and unqualified manner;* nor does he find any proviso or exception in all the sacred code. He therefore feels constrained to acquiesce in the wisdom and authority of God. He concludes, that if it is for the general good, that his life should be rescued from the impending danger, God will provide some other way to effect it; and that, if no such provision is made, it is only because the general good requires that his life should now be taken away.

Here, then, we leave the subject. The commands and prohibitions of God are an infallible criterion of utility in human conduct; and we may be sure, that those things which he requires, have, on the whole, a beneficial tendency, even though some of them may appear otherwise to our finite understanding, and though we may sometimes be strongly inclined to make exceptions to his laws.

But there is a *second* advantage in having express divine commands and prohibitions in regard to our conduct. God is not only all-wise, but he is also almighty; and he has annexed the most awful penalty to the transgression of his law. The fear of future punishment, and the dread of the just displeasure of God, have a powerful influence to deter men from the commission of crimes, and to bind them to the performance of those external actions which promote the welfare of society. If all apprehension of a judgment to come were removed, how little influence, with most men, would a mere knowledge of right and wrong have, to keep them in the path of recti-

* See Lev. xix. 11; Ps. lviii. 3, cxix. 163; Isa. lxiii. 8; Joh. viii. 44, 55; Acts v. 1—11.

tude, when, even now, the most atrocious crimes are frequently committed by those who have not cast off a speculative belief in the retributions of eternity.

We will dismiss the subject of the present chapter with a few general remarks.

1. No exception whatever ought to be made, even to general rules of human origin, unless the exception be of such a nature, as to admit of a previous description, and to leave no doubt that the evil consequences of adhering to the general rule in cases of that kind, would be greater, than those of violating it. Such exceptions, being established by public consent, are free from the objections which lie against those that are made by individuals at a moment when both the will and the judgment are peculiarly liable to be biassed.

I have already, when speaking of the importance of an *invariable* adherence to general rules, observed, that some able writers on morality admit that there *may be exceptions* to *every* such rule. The following is the language of Dr. Paley on this subject: "Moral Philosophy cannot pronounce that any rule of morality is so rigid as to bend to no exceptions; nor, on the other hand, *can she comprise these exceptions within any previous description.* She confesses that the obligation of every law depends upon its ultimate utility; that, this utility having a finite and determinate value, situations may be feigned, and consequently may possibly arise, in which the general tendency is outweighed by the enormity of the particular mischief."*—The "*general tendency*" of this reasoning, is, *totally to abolish* all general rules whatever. It is directly repugnant to the reasoning of the same author when speaking of the necessity of general rules in hu-

* Mor. and Polit. Philos. Book VI. Chap. 12.

man government.* The reasoning there used may be retorted in all its force : " You cannot permit one" exception to a general rule " and forbid another, without showing a difference between them," and that, he acknowledges, cannot be done. " Consequently," such exceptions " must be generally permitted or generally forbidden. Since, therefore, the general permission of them would be pernicious, it becomes necessary to lay down and support the rule which generally forbids them." It appears to me that there is no general rule more important, than that which forbids the making of *exceptions* to general rules. If exceptions may be made, which cannot be comprised in any previous description, it must be left for individuals to judge, at the moment of acting, of the comparative magnitude of the particular and the general consequences. Now, the general consequence, although it may have a " finite," that is, not an *infinite*, " value," is almost certain to be *under*valued. While the particular consequence is near at hand and may be estimated with tolerable accuracy, the general consequence is remote, indefinite, unknown, and totally incapable of being estimated. Or rather, while the particular consequence, from its nearness, and its affecting, as it commonly does, the private interest of the individual, is almost certain to appear of greater importance than it really is, the general consequences, from their distance, and their affecting only the interest of others, are equally certain to appear of much less importance than they really are. In such circumstances, to leave individuals at liberty to violate a general rule, whenever the particular consequence shall appear to them to exceed the general, is to give up the obligation of general rules altogether. Nor ought writers on morality to use language like that quoted above,

* See p. 83.

unless they expect "situations" to "arise," in which "the enormity of the particular mischief" shall be sufficient to outweigh the utility, not only of the particular law in question, but of all general rules whatever.

2. The doctrine we have maintained, does not leave individuals at liberty to judge of the utility of particular actions by their own unassisted calculations. This has been made sufficiently evident. But there is a difficulty attending the subject, which it may be well to consider a moment. I have said that the dictates of conscience require us to consult the general good; and yet have objected to the violation of general rules, even when the individual *really thinks* that such a violation will be for the general good. How is this to be reconciled ?—I object to such a violation, not as wrong in the individual, but as hurtful in its tendency. A man ought, indeed, always to do what he sincerely thinks to be for the best; but it is to be lamented, that any one should think that to be for the best, which is not so. I am solicitous, not to make any one act in opposition to the dictates of conscience, but to make all think and see that it is for the best invariably to adhere to general rules;—so that such an adherence shall meet the approbation, and a departure from it, the disapprobation, of every man's conscience. What I maintain is, that no person can think it useful ever to violate a general rule, except through ignorance, or in consequence of having erroneous ideas on the subject. It is to remove such ignorance and to correct such errors, that I have been led to protract this chapter to its present length. Does any one say, that if he can do what he "ought," and thus meet the divine acceptance, it makes no difference whether his ideas are correct or erroneous? It makes a difference, however, whether a man possesses a temper of mind which could prompt such a remark, or whether he possesses a disposition to

inquire after truth and duty. The remark evinces a total disregard of the public welfare, and a supreme regard to private interest and personal happiness. The man who feels no solicitude to ascertain the tendency of his actions, who never inquires in what way he may be most useful to the world, may be assured that he will never meet the divine acceptance, until he acts from other motives than those by which he has been hitherto governed.

The doctrine that has been taught in this chapter, does not appear to be exposed to the objections which have justly been made to the theory of utility as it has been maintained by those writers who have excluded, either wholly or in a great measure, the obligation of general rules and of the divine commands.* That such a theory should furnish a pretence for "the perpetration of enormities," is easy to be conceived. Though we cannot say, that even that theory gave *countenance* to the commission of crimes, since it inculcated only actions of a *useful* tendency, and all crimes have a hurtful tendency. The fault lay either in the head or the heart of those who adopted the theory "as their whole code of morality." And I think we can have little doubt from which of the two sources the error chiefly proceeded. It is evident that those who "have availed themselves of the rule of general expediency as an apology for their deviations from the ordinary maxims of right and wrong," were not actuated by a sincere regard for the public welfare. "This utility," says Madame de Stael, "is seldom any thing more than a specious pretext, under which men disguise their selfish designs."† How many evils have

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*See Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind, Vol. II. pp. 386–395, and note (CC.)

†Cette utilité n' est presque jamais qu' un nom pompeux dont on revêt son intérêt personnel.— *De L' Allemagne, Tome III. p.* 183.

proceeded from a want of *judgment*, in acting by that rule, I am not able to say. I trust, however, that this source of error has been sufficiently guarded against in the theory of utility and the rules of duty which have been exhibited in the present chapter. After all, I am aware, that the theory is still liable to be perverted by men of a depraved disposition. But if it is good in itself, if it is "*useful in its tendency*," a liability to perversion is not a sufficient reason why it should be exploded. The best of things are liable to be perverted to the worst of purposes. The greatest enormities have been committed under the pretence of serving God and promoting religion. That the theory which estimates all virtues by the usefulness of their tendency, is *correct*, no one can deny. The very objections that are made against it, amount only to this, that it is hurtful, that is, not *useful*, in its tendency ;—thus *assuming its correctness* in the very act of condemning it.

The theory of utility is not alone in being objected against on account of its liability to perversion. Some of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel have been objected against on the same ground. But this objection, so far from being a reason for suppressing those doctrines, only shows the importance of exhibiting them the *more fully*, and explaining them the *more clearly*, so that they may be understood by all.

There is one way, in which children and people of small capacity, who cannot understand the nature and obligation of general rules, and indeed any person who happens to get an imperfect knowledge of the theory of utility, may be particularly liable to err. A person who has been accustomed to believe that there is something wrong in certain actions, falsehood and theft for instance, without knowing what that something is, attaches, of course, the idea of criminality to these actions in all cases what-

soever, and supposes the commission of them to be always offensive to God. The effect is the same, if he has received an impression that falsehood and theft are wrong in their own nature, so that no reason why they are wrong can be assigned. But if he is taught, or hears it said, that lying and stealing are to be avoided solely on account of their evil consequences, and that this is the only reason why they are forbidden by God, he is liable, in certain cases, where he can see no danger of any harm's arising, to conclude that he may lie or steal without any crime, and without incurring the divine displeasure. Let such a one be informed, that there is danger of evil consequences which he cannot foresee; that the public good requires that falsehood and theft should be absolutely and totally prohibited; that God, knowing this, has not left men at liberty to determine whether it may not sometimes be useful to violate his laws; and that the taking upon ourselves to do this, is highly presumptuous, and strongly indicative of a state of mind which is sure to meet the divine disapprobation. He that cannot feel the force of these considerations, ought not to study moral philosophy, or hear of the theory of utility. But as it respects the general tendency of this theory, if the best interests of the public cannot be promoted by imposing a restraint upon the selfish principles of our nature, and acting from enlarged views and benevolent motives, we must despair of seeing them promoted by human instrumentality.—This, however, brings me to observe,

3. That the doctrine of public expediency does not require individuals to neglect their own interest or that of their friends. Although "it is reasonable and right, that the private affections should, upon all occasions, yield to the more comprehensive," whenever and as far as they come in competition; yet it is usually in a very small degree, that they do come in competition. Although we

ought always to be ready and willing to sacrifice our own interest or that of our friends, whenever and as far as it may be necessary for the promotion of the public good; yet it is usually in a very small degree, that duty requires any one to make this sacrifice. A few are called to part with property and friends, and to endure privations and sufferings, for the sake of promoting the cause of human happiness. All are called to contribute a portion of their property for public and benevolent objects. But with these exceptions, a little reflection is sufficient to convince a person of common understanding, that the public welfare will be best secured, when every man discharges faithfully the duties of his particular station, and does all the good he can within his proper sphere. If all were wholly to neglect their own welfare, in order to seek that of their neighbors or of the public, nothing would be attended to as it ought, and nobody's welfare would be promoted. A regard to the general happiness, therefore, will lead every one to promote his own happiness and that of all around him, as the largest contribution he can make to the general stock. More than this, universal benevolence involves good will to individuals proportioned to our knowledge of their character, wants, and circumstances; so that we need not be afraid of setting too high a value upon our own happiness or that of our friends, provided we do not neglect our duties to the public, and are willing to give up our private interest whenever it interferes with that of the public. We ought, in forming our habits, and in fixing upon our course of life, to consider, chiefly, in what way we may be most useful to the world; and we ought also, occasionally, to consider whether our daily habits and the course we are pursuing, render us useful in the highest degree of which we are capable; but after having settled these points, there is no need of thinking of the public good and de-

liberating about it, at every step we take and every act we perform. Our "affections and actions," therefore, never need be "dissipated and lost, for want of a proper limited object," though we maintain a state of feeling which will prevent us from interfering with the interest of others, and prompt us to embrace opportunities for promoting the happiness of others; and though we are ready, at any time, if called to it, to relinquish schemes of private advantage, to act in a larger sphere, and to give our beneficence a wider range.

Some writers express many apprehensions, lest the extending of our benevolence to distant objects, should render us indifferent to those which are at home; and lest an attempt to regard all objects according to their comparative excellence and importance, should lead us gradually to look with coldness on all. If benevolence were of such a kind as to be exhausted by being exercised, then it would be well to be frugal of the treasure, and to expend it only on a few objects which we have the greatest opportunity directly to benefit by our efforts. If I have but one or two looks of kindness to spare in a day, it may be well to bestow them on my wife and my child in the morning, rather than "*reserve*" them for a stranger, however worthy, who may happen to call on me in the afternoon. But it is found, in fact, that the exercise of kind affections toward one object, predisposes us to the exercise of them toward another; and that, the more the heart is enlarged to feel the importance of the greatest objects, and the excellence of the noblest and the best, the more spontaneously do the affections flow forth toward *every* proper object that is presented. No, it is selfishness of heart and narrowness of mind, not disinterested benevolence and enlarged views, that dry up the channels of kindness, and cause the eye to look with coldness on every one except those from whom favors have been received or from whom they are hoped.

CHAPTER II.

Sources of Human Happiness.

The tendency of every virtue, and the grand object of the virtuous man, being, to promote human happiness, we proceed to inquire, what are the *sources* from which human happiness springs. This inquiry is necessary in order to enable us to promote, in a higher degree, our own happiness and that of our fellow men;—in other words, in order to give us a better knowledge of the *duties* which we owe to ourselves and to others. We may, indeed, as has been already remarked, learn what things are conducive to happiness, by human experience and observation, and by the divine commands. But it may be well to consider the sources of happiness a little more particularly, lest we should err in our estimate of their comparative value, and lest some of them should be entirely overlooked. In enumerating some of the various sources of human happiness, we may name,

1. The *moderate gratification* of the *senses.*

The pleasures arising from this source, may be divided into two classes; such as are merely animal, and such as are more refined. It is in regard to the former, chiefly, that there is need of restraint; and in these, excessive indulgence defeats its own end, as well as violates the rules of virtue. Dr. Paley remarks, that "these pleasures continue but a little while at a time; that they lose their relish by repetition; and that an eagerness for them takes away the relish from all others. As far as I have been able," continues he, "to observe that part of mankind, whose professed pursuit is pleasure, and who are withheld in the pursuit by no restraints of fortune, or scruples of conscience, I have commonly remarked, in them, a restless and inextinguishable passion for variety;

a great part of their time to be vacant, and so much of it irksome; and that, with whatever eagerness and expectation they set out, they become, by degrees, fastidious in their choice of pleasure, languid in the enjoyment, yet miserable under the want of it."*

In regard to the pleasures of the senses in general, Dr. Brown has the following remarks: "The pleasures of the senses are not to be rejected by us as unworthy of man. In themselves, as *mere pleasures*, they are *good;* and if they left the same ardor of generous enterprise, or of patient self-command,—if they did not occupy time, which should have been employed in higher offices,—and if, in their influence on the future capacity of *mere enjoyment*, they did not tend to lessen or prevent happiness which would otherwise have been enjoyed, or to occasion pain which otherwise would not have arisen, and which is equivalent, or more than equivalent to the temporary happiness afforded,—it would, in these circumstances, I will admit, be impossible for man to be too much a sensualist; since pleasure, which in itself is good, is evil, only when its consequences are evil.

He who has lavished on us so many means of delight, as to make it impossible for us, in the ordinary circumstances of life, not to be sensitively happy in some greater or less degree, has not made nature so full of beauty that we should not admire it. He has not poured fragrance and music around us, and strewed with flowers the very turf on which we tread, that our heart may not rejoice as we move along—that we may walk through this world of loveliness with the same dull eye and indifferent soul, with which we should have traversed unvaried scenes, without a color, or an odor, or a song."†

* Paley's Mor. Philos. Book I. Chap. 6.

† Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 99.

2. *Moderation* in our *views* and *wishes*, is a source of happiness.

While extravagant desires and expectations only prepare us to feel more sensibly the bitterness of disappointment, the opposite state of mind renders disappointments a small evil, and thus leaves us free to enjoy, with a proper relish, the happiness which may arise from various unexpected sources.

One of the most frequent mistakes in regard to happiness, is to expect to find it in greatness, rank, or elevated station; that is, in gaining a superiority over those who are now our equals, and rising to eminence and distinction in the world. On this subject, Dr. Paley has the following judicious remarks: "No superiority yields any satisfaction, save that which we possess or obtain over those with whom we immediately compare ourselves. The shepherd perceives no pleasure in his superiority over his dog, nor the king in his superiority over the shepherd. Superiority, where there is no competition, is seldom contemplated. But if the same shepherd can run or wrestle better than the peasants of his village; and if the king possesses a more extensive territory, a more powerful fleet or army, than any prince in Europe, the parties feel an actual satisfaction in their superiority. The conclusion that follows from hence is, that the pleasures of ambition, which are supposed to be peculiar to high stations, are in reality common to all conditions.

But whether the pursuits of ambition be ever wise, whether they contribute more to the happiness or misery of the pursuers, is a different question; and a question concerning which we may be allowed to entertain great doubt. The pleasure of success is exquisite; so also is the anxiety of the pursuit, and the pain of disappointment;—and what is the worst part of the account, the pleasure is short-lived. We soon cease to

look back upon those whom we have left behind; new contests are engaged in, new prospects unfold themselves; a succession of struggles is kept up, while there is a rival left within the compass of our views and profession; and when here is none, the pleasure with the pursuit is at an end."*

3. Another source of happiness is found in "the *exercise* of our *faculties*, either of body or mind, in the pursuit of some engaging end.

Hence those pleasures are most valuable, which are most productive of activity in the pursuit. Employment is every thing. The more significant, however, our employments are, the better; but *any* employment, which is innocent, is better than none."†

The pursuits of ambition have this, indeed, to recommend them, that they are productive of incessant activity; but this advantage is outweighed by considerations of an opposite kind. If it were alone sufficient to recommend a pursuit, that it affords scope to continual and persevering activity, the pursuit of the *miser* might claim a distinguished place among the sources of human happiness. In order that a pursuit may be truly promotive of happiness, it must be such as can be engaged in without corrupting the heart or disturbing the tranquillity of the mind. The pursuit of knowledge, enjoys this advantage in a high degree. But to form and execute schemes for relieving the miseries and augmenting the happiness of mankind, or to co-operate in schemes of benevolence formed by others, not only gives the widest scope to activity, but at the same time opens other sources of pleasure, more pure and exalted, than the mere exercise of the faculties can ever afford. The christian philanthropist is engaged in a pursuit, in which the most animating objects are present to his view, in which he has a sure

* Moral Philosophy, Book I. Chap. 6. † Ibid.

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prospect of success, and in which he may exert all his faculties both of body and mind.

It is a common mistake to imagine, that happiness may be found in "an exemption from labor, care, and business; such a state being usually attended, not with ease, but with depression of spirits, a tastelessness in all our ideas, imaginary anxieties, and the whole train of hypochondriacal affections. For which reason, the expectations of those, who quit the world, and their stations in it, for solitude and repose, are seldom answered by the effect."*

4. Happiness depends much upon the *habits* which one forms, and upon keeping those habits under due control.

Care should be taken to guard against the formation of such habits as do not allow of a deviation, without bringing uneasiness and pain. "The luxurious receive no greater pleasure from their dainties, than the peasant does from his bread and cheese; but the peasant, whenever he goes abroad, finds a feast; whereas, the epicure must be well entertained, to escape disgust." 'Those who spend every day in amusement, and those who spend every day in manual labor, find, perhaps, very little difference in the degree of satisfaction which they derive, immediately, from the two employments; but then, whatever suspends the occupation of the former, distresses them; but to the latter, every interruption is a refreshment.'†

There should also be such a *variety* in the habits which are formed, that the suspension or privation of one occupation or pleasure, shall not leave a person without resources. For this purpose, a taste for reading, and a mind furnished with materials for reflection, are well adapted; as books are always at hand, and as no earthly change can deprive a man of those means of occupation

* Ibid. † Ibid.

and those sources of enjoyment, which he has within himself. To such a man, occasional retirement and solitude bring both improvement and pleasure; while, to him who has not these resources, and "who has long been accustomed to a crowd, or continual succession of company, retirement and solitude come clothed with melancholy,"* and are regarded with aversion and dread.

Again, the habits should be kept under due control. The habits which are formed, may be all harmless in themselves, and there may be a sufficient variety of them; yet they may all become settled and fixed in a certain system or order, so that no one of them can be moved out of its place without causing uneasiness and pain. In this case, many habits become, as it were, incorporated into *one*,—like the different members and parts of an organized body. For instance, a person may form a habit of retiring and rising, of eating, reading, and walking, at certain hours; of having some particular kinds of food at certain meals, or on certain days of the week; of sitting in a certain chair and in a certain part of the room,—with other circumstances too trivial to be enumerated,—so that a change in any of these respects, shall make him uneasy, impatient, and unhappy. It is, indeed, important, that we should make a distribution of our time, in order to its proper improvement. A systematic arrangement of one's business, and regular hours of eating, sleeping, exercise, &c., are desirable; but the evil to be guarded against is, the extending of this habit to many trivial circumstances, and becoming so attached to all our habits, that we cannot patiently bear the least modification or interruption of any of them, when necessity, or some superior duty, requires.

5. Among the sources of happiness, *health* may well be enumerated.

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* Ibid.

"In the idea of health," says Dr. Paley, "I would include, not only freedom from bodily distempers, but also that alacrity of mind, which we call good spirits; and which may properly enough be included in our notion of health, as depending commonly upon the same causes, and yielding to the same management, as our bodily constitution. Health, in this sense, is of such importance, that no pains, expense, self-denial, or restraint, to which we subject ourselves for the sake of it, is too much. Whether it require us to relinquish lucrative situations, to abstain from favorite indulgencies, to control intemperate passions, or undergo tedious regimens; whatever difficulties it lays us under, a man, who" acts from a sense of duty, or who even "pursues his own happiness rationally and resolutely, will be content to submit."*

6. Another source of happiness, is the *habit of looking at things on the bright side.*

This source of happiness, being, in a great measure, a mere habit, arising from the state of the health, cheerfulness of mind, occasional efforts of the will, and other causes, might have been introduced under the two preceding heads. The importance of the subject, however, is such as to give it a claim to a separate consideration.

"How few events," says Dr. Brown, "are productive only of advantage or disadvantage! By far the greater number are productive of both;—of advantage, which, if it existed alone, would excite gladness; of disadvantage, which, if it existed alone, would excite regret; and of which, as existing together, the resulting emotion is different, according to the preponderance of the opposing causes of regret or gladness,—that is to say, according as more or fewer images of regret or gladness spontaneously arise to our mind, or according as we examine and analyze, more or less fully, the one or the other of these

* Ibid.

sources of mingled joy and sorrow. There are many advantages of what is apparently evil, that cannot be known to us, unless we reflect on consequences which are not immediately apparent; many evils of what is apparently profitable, that may be discovered, in like manner, but discovered only after reflection. We cannot change events, indeed, in many instances; but in all of these, the aspect of events, at least, may be changed, as our attention is more or less turned to the consequences that may result from them. To wish, is, in this case, almost to produce what we wish. Our very desire of tracing the consequences that are favorable to our happiness, will be followed by the suggestion of these, rather than of others, in the same manner as our other desires are always followed by the suggestion of images accordant with them."*

"When an occurrence may be productive of good and evil, the good may arise to us, because our general frame of mind is accordant with wishes, and therefore with conceptions, of good; or the evil only may arise to that gloomy spirit, which does not find good, merely because it does not seek to find it."†

"Even when the same event is thus viewed by two different minds,—and the same consequences, in every other respect, arise to both minds,—how important a difference must there be, in the general resulting emotion, according as the two minds are more or less accustomed to view all the events of nature, as a part of a great design, of which the Author is the benevolent willer of happiness, or of the means of happiness! The mere difference of the habit, in this respect, is to the individuals almost the same thing, as if the events themselves had been in their own absolute nature diversified.

* Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 64. † Ibid.

The same events, therefore, in external circumstances exactly the same, may be productive, to the mind, of emotions that are very different, according to its constitutional diversities, or acquired habits, or even according to slight accidents of the day or of the hour. We may rejoice, when others would grieve, or grieve, when others would rejoice, according as circumstances arise to our reflection, different from those which would occur to them. Nor is the influence necessarily less powerful on our views of the future, than on our views of the past. We desire often, in like manner, what is evil for us upon the whole, by thinking of some attendant good; as we fear what is good, by thinking only of some attendant evil."*

"It is not on the nature of the mere event, then, that the gladness or regret which it excites wholly depends, but in part, also, on the habits and discernment of the mind which considers it; and we are thus, in a great measure, creators of our own happiness,—not in the actions merely which seem more strictly to depend on our *will*, but in those foreign events which might have seemed at first to be absolutely independent of us."†

7. Another source of happiness, is found in "the exercise of the *social affections*.

Those persons commonly possess good spirits," says Dr. Paley, "who have about them many objects of affection and endearment, as wife, children, kindred, friends. Of the same nature with the indulgence of our domestic affections, and equally refreshing to the spirits, is the pleasure which results from acts of bounty and beneficence, exercised either in giving money, or in imparting to those who want it the assistance of our skill and profession."‡

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* Ibid. † Ibid.

‡ Moral Philos. Book I. Chap. 6.

3. Another source of happiness, is found in the exercise of *pious affections.*

If the exercise of the social affections is a source of happiness, much more is the exercise of those affections which characterize the children of God. These, when exercised toward friends and neighbors, mingle with the social affections, and purify, enlarge, and exalt them. Christian affections have the advantage of those that are merely social, in that they are more noble in their nature, and more enlarged in their object. They extend to strangers and to enemies, as well as to acquaintances and friends. The highest object of christian regard, is the Author of our being. A pious resignation to his will, and an entire confidence in the rectitude of his government, are a never failing source of consolation; and a supreme delight in his character, is productive of the purest and most exalted happiness which a creature can enjoy. It is not, then, too much to say, that among all the sources of human happiness, the greatest, as well as the most lasting, is the exercise of pious affections.

CHAPTER III.

General Means of Promoting Human Happiness.

1. *Example and Habit.*

The powerful influence of example, arises from the imitative nature of man. In the education of children, parents may do much more, by the example they set before them, to benefit or injure them, than they can by the best or the worst instructions they can give them. And in regard to mankind in general around us, we probably benefit or injure them more by our example, than in any other way. The importance which is to be attached

to example, will be apparent, if we consider, that "mankind act more from habit than reflection," and that, probably, most habits have their origin in the influence of example.

1. "Mankind act more from habit than reflection.

Man is a bundle of habits. There is not a quality or function, either of body or mind, which does not feel the influence of this great law of animated nature. It is on few only and great occasions, that men deliberate at all; on fewer still, that they institute any thing like a regular inquiry into the moral rectitude or depravity of what they are about to do. We are for the most part determined at once, and by an impulse which is the effect of pre-established habits. And this constitution seems well adapted to the exigencies of human life, and to the imbecility of our moral principle. In the current occasions and rapid opportunities of life, there is often little leisure for reflection; and were there more, a man, who has to reason about his duty, when the temptation to transgress it is upon him, is almost sure to reason himself into an error."*

Habits are imperceptible in their beginning; and are formed in so very gradual a manner, that they frequently become confirmed before the individual is aware. Sometimes a person is sensible that he is in danger of forming a bad habit; but, feeling reluctant to relinquish it just yet, he thinks, that as he can, by a little resolution, break it off at any time, he will indulge in it a little longer. Fatal mistake! Such reasoning is a proof, that the habit has already become confirmed, and that his case is very alarming. The only way to be secure against the dominion of bad habits, and all the evil consequences to which they lead, is to guard against the first approaches of them,

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book I. Chap. 7.

and to break off from them with determined resolution, as soon as their influence begins to be felt *

2. It is probable that most habits have their origin in the influence of example.

The power and extent of this influence, and the propensity of mankind to settle down in any habit that happens to have been commenced, are to be traced, chiefly, to that principle of the mind, termed the association, or suggestion, of ideas. The subject is very happily illustrated by Dr. Brown:

"What we have seen done in one situation," he observes, "is recalled to us by the very feeling of this situation, when we are placed in it; and, as it arises to us thus more readily, and is sometimes, perhaps, the only mode of conduct which arises clearly to our mind, we proceed on it without further reflection, and act in a certain manner, because others have acted in a certain manner, and because we have seen them act, or heard of their action. It is evident, that, in resolving to act in a certain manner, on any occasion, we must have had a previous conception of the manner in which the action may be performed; and that we may, therefore, often prefer one mode of action, from the advantages which it seems to present, when it would not have been preferred in competition with other modes of action, still more advantageous, but not conceived at the time. The wise, indeed, on this very account, even when they see good that may flow from one mode of conduct, pause to consider various possibilities, and appreciate the differences of the *good* and the *better;* but how few are the wise; and how much more numerous they, who, when any immediate *good* presents itself, do not wait to consider whether a *better* may not be found. The first conceptions that

* See an interesting chapter on "Custom and Habit" in Kames's "Elements of Criticism."

arise, are the conceptions which regulate half their conduct; and these first conceptions, when the circumstances of the case are similar, are, by the natural influence of association, the conceptions either of what they have themselves done before, or of what others were observed to do, in those similar circumstances. It is impossible to will any particular action, without having previously conceived that particular action; and the various consequences of various modes of conduct, have seldom entered into the contemplation of the multitude. They see what others do; and their thought has scarcely wandered beyond what is commonly before their eyes, or what is the subject of common discourse. As soon, therefore, as similar circumstances recur, the image recurs of what has been thus familiar to them; and it recurs more strongly and vividly, because its influence is not lessened by that of any other accompanying image. They act, therefore, as others have acted, not so much from a feeling of respect for general sentiment, as from mere ignorance, and the absence of any other conception, that might have given a different momentary impulse. They see only one path; and they move on, accordingly, in that only path which their dim and narrow glance is capable of perceiving."*

I will close this subject with two rules, which are worthy of attention:

1. "Many things are to be done, and abstained from, solely for the sake of habit."† An act which has a tendency to form or strengthen a good habit, ought to be done, though, from that particular act, no other benefit may arise; and an act, which has a tendency to weaken a good habit, or to form or strengthen a bad one, ought to be abstained from, though no other harm may arise from it. It is to be remembered, that besides all the other ef-

* Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 85. † Paley.

fects of our habits, these very habits are, in most instances, continually operating, by way of example, to generate similar habits in those around us.

2. "Avoid all appearance of evil." As far as the influence of example is concerned, the appearance of evil has the same bad tendency with evil itself.

II. *Diffusion of Knowledge and Virtue.*

"In loving all human kind, and wishing their happiness," says Dr. Brown, "it is impossible that the benevolent should not love also the diffusion of knowledge and virtue to human kind,—since to wish permanent happiness, without these, would be almost to wish for warmth without heat, or colors without light."* Of the tendency of virtue to promote happiness, nothing need be said. Of the tendency of knowledge to promote happiness, I will say a few words. In the first place, the general diffusion of knowledge dries up or diminishes many sources of unhappiness. The evils which arise from that narrowness of mind, that illiberality, and those numerous prejudices, which are the usual attendants of ignorance, cannot be described, and can be conceived only by those by whom they have been witnessed. These prejudices, with the thousand superstitious notions by which persons deprived of the advantages of education are usually characterized, often render them exceedingly uncomfortable both to themselves and to others. Perhaps a habit of slander may be traced to a want of mental cultivation more frequently than to any other cause. On the contrary, a cultivated and well informed mind makes a man more happy in himself, and more agreeable to all around him. By the general diffusion of knowledge in a community, the social affections, on which so much of the happiness of life depends, are greatly promoted.

* Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 86.

What, then, are the means of diffusing knowledge and virtue? The influence of example in the diffusion of virtue, has already been mentioned. For the diffusion of knowledge, those, who possess information, may do much, by rendering their daily conversation instructive to all with whom they are connected or with whom they have intercourse. Why should a man's domestics and neighbors hear so many idle and useless words from his lips, when he might so easily say things which would inform, enlighten, and improve them? But it is the education of children and youth, that affords the greatest scope for the diffusion of knowledge and virtue. No one has a more favorable opportunity to make those around him wiser and better, than the parent and the instructer. How important, then, that parents and instructers should possess, themselves, that wisdom and virtue which are necessary to qualify them to enlighten and form the minds of the young, and guide their inexperienced steps. As the mother has usually the greatest influence in forming the habits of young children, and the best opportunity to cultivate their opening faculties, it is of the first importance, that she should be qualified for this office by possessing, herself, an enlightened and a cultivated mind, and by being skilled in the science of education. It is truly to be lamented, that this subject receives so little attention,—that females, to whom it is so important, are nevertheless so seldom instructed in either intellectual or moral philosophy. And almost equally lamentable is it, that instructers of schools are so frequently unqualified for the interesting duties which they undertake to discharge. Under the care of many instructers in common schools, children form such habits of study and reading, and receive such impressions, as are absolutely worse than total ignorance. Much better is it, not to have been taught at all, than to have been taught in the defective and injudi-

cious manner frequently practised. If, then, parents wish the improvement of their children, if they wish their money not to be worse than thrown away, let them look well to the qualifications of the instructers they employ. By raising the qualifications of instructers in common schools, and giving females a more solid education, the best foundation is laid for the wisdom and virtue of the rising generation, and, of course, for the permanent welfare of the nation to which we belong.

But in wishing "the diffusion of knowledge and virtue to human kind," the benevolent man looks beyond the limits of the land in which he dwells. He remembers that there are other lands which are trodden by human feet. He remembers that his fellow men in distant regions of the globe, need the same knowledge and virtue to make them happy, which are essential to his own happiness. He remembers that most of them are destitute of these means of happiness to a degree, of which it is difficult to form a conception in a land of science and civilization. And he rejoices in being furnished with opportunities to do something to instruct, enlighten, and bless them. These opportunities are presented to every one at the present day, when so many plans are formed, so many efforts made, and so many facilities afforded, for diffusing, through the earth, the benefits of education and the light of the Gospel.

III. *Civil Government, Crimes and Punishments.*

Good laws, faithfully executed, are highly conducive to human happiness. Laws promote the peace and welfare of society, by regulating the commercial and pecuniary intercourse of individuals, but chiefly by laying a restraint upon vice and crime, and affording a security to life, liberty, and property. "Civil liberty," says Dr. Paley, "is the not being restrained by any law, but what conduces in a greater degree to the public welfare;

by which it is intimated, 1. That restraint itself is an evil; 2. That this evil ought to be overbalanced by some public advantage; 3. That the proof of this advantage lies upon the legislature; 4. That the law's being found to produce no sensible good effects, is a sufficient reason for repealing it, as adverse and injurious to the rights of a free citizen, without demanding specific evidence of its bad effects. Hence also we are enabled to apprehend the distinction between *personal* and *civil* liberty. A citizen of the freest republic in the world, may be imprisoned for his crimes; and though his personal freedom be restrained by bolts and fetters, so long as his confinement is the effect of a beneficial public law, his civil liberty is not invaded."*

"The proper end of human punishment is not the satisfaction of justice, but the prevention of crimes. By the satisfaction of justice, I mean the retribution of so much pain for so much guilt; which is the dispensation we expect at the hand of God, and which we are accustomed to consider as the order of things that perfect justice dictates and requires.†" "Crimes are not by any government punished in proportion to their guilt, but in proportion to the difficulty and the necessity of preventing them. Punishment ought not to be employed, much less rendered severe, when the crime can be prevented by any other means. The facility with which any species of crimes is perpetrated, has been generally deemed a reason for aggravating the punishment. Thus, sheep-stealing, horse-stealing, the stealing of cloth from tenters or bleaching-grounds, by our laws,‡ subject the offenders to sentence of death; not that these crimes are in their nature more heinous than many simple felonies which are punished by imprisonment or transportation,

*Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy, Book VI. Chap. 5.
†Ibid. Chap. 9. ‡The Laws of England.

but because the property, being more exposed, requires the terror of capital punishment to protect it. The difficulty of discovery is a circumstance to be included in the same consideration. By how much, therefore, the detection of an offender is more rare and uncertain, by so much the more severe must be the punishment when he is detected.

There are two methods of administering penal justice. The first method assigns capital punishments to few offences, and inflicts it invariably. The second method assigns capital punishments to many kinds of offences, but inflicts it only upon a few examples of each kind. The latter of these two methods has been long adopted in this country, where, of those who receive sentence of death, scarcely one in ten is executed. If judgment of death were reserved for one or two species of crimes only, which would probably be the case if that judgment was intended to be executed without exception, crimes might occur of the most dangerous example, and accompanied with circumstances of heinous aggravation, which did not fall within *any* description of offences that the laws had made capital, and which consequently could not receive the punishment their own malignity and the public safety required. What is worse, it would be known, beforehand, that such crimes might be committed without danger to the offender's life. On the other hand, if, to reach these possible cases, the whole class of offences to which they belong be subjected to pains of death, and no power of remitting this severity remain anywhere, the execution of the laws will become more sanguinary than the public compassion would endure, or than is necessary to the general security.

The prerogative of pardon is properly reserved to the chief magistrate. The power of suspending the laws is a privilege of too high a nature to be committed to many hands, or to those of any inferior officer in the state.

Aggravations which ought to guide the magistrate in the selection of objects of condign punishment, are principally these three,—repetition, cruelty, combination. With respect to the last circumstance, it may be observed, that when thieves and robbers are once collected into gangs, their violence becomes more formidable, the confederates more desperate, and the difficulty of defending the public against their depredations much greater, than in the case of solitary adventurers. In crimes, however, which are perpetrated by a multitude, or by a gang, it is proper to separate, in the punishment, the ring-leader from his followers, the principal from his accomplices, and even the person who struck the blow, broke the lock, or first entered the house, from those who joined him in the felony; not so much on account of any distinction in the guilt of the offenders, as for the sake of casting an obstacle in the way of such confederacies by rendering it difficult for the confederates to settle who shall begin the attack, or to find a man among their number willing to expose himself to greater danger than his associates.

The frequency of capital executions in this country, owes its necessity to three causes;—much liberty, great cities, and the want of a punishment short of death possessing a sufficient degree of terror. The liberties of a free people, and still more the jealousy with which these liberties are watched, and by which they are preserved, permit not those precautions and restraints, that inspection, scrutiny, and control, which are exercised with success in arbitrary governments.—Great cities multiply crimes by presenting easier opportunities and more incentives to libertinism, which in low life is commonly the introductory stage to other enormities; by collecting thieves and robbers into the same neighborhood, which enables them to form communications and confederacies, that increase their art and courage, as well as strength

and wickedness; but principally by the refuge they afford to villany, in the means of concealment, and of subsisting in secrecy, which crowded towns supply to men of every description. These temptations and facilities can only be counteracted by adding to the number of capital punishments.—But a third cause, which increases the frequency of capital executions in England, is a defect of the laws, in not being provided with any other punishment than that of death, sufficiently terrible to keep offenders in awe. Transportation, which is the sentence second in the order of severity, appears to me to answer the purpose of example very imperfectly; not only because exile is in reality a slight punishment to those who have neither property, nor friends, nor reputation, nor regular means of subsistence at home, and because their situation becomes little worse by their crime, than it was before they committed it; but because the punishment, whatever it be, is unobserved and unknown.

The end of punishment is two-fold,—*amendment* and *example*. In the first of these, the *reformation* of criminals, little has ever been effected, and little, I fear, is practicable. From every species of punishment that has hitherto been devised, from imprisonment and exile, from pain and infamy, malefactors return more hardened in their crimes, and more instructed. Of the reforming punishments which have not yet been tried, none promises so much success as that of *solitary* imprisonment, or the confinement of criminals in separate apartments. This improvement augments the terror of the punishment; secludes the criminal from the society of his fellow prisoners, in which society the worse are sure to corrupt the better; and is calculated to raise up in him reflections on the folly of his choice, and to dispose his mind to such bitter and continued penitence, as may produce a lasting alteration in the principles of his conduct.

As aversion to labor is the cause from which half of the vices of low life deduce their origin and continuance, punishments ought to be contrived with a view to the conquering of this disposition. Two opposite expedients have been recommended for this purpose; the one, solitary confinement, with hard labor; the other, solitary confinement, with nothing to do. Both expedients seek the same end,—to reconcile the idle to a life of industry. The former hopes to effect this by making labor habitual; the latter, by making idleness insupportable: and the preference of one method to the other depends upon the question, whether a man is more likely to betake himself, of his own accord, to work, who has been accustomed to employment, or who has been distressed by the want of it. If labor be exacted, I would leave the whole, or a portion, of the earnings to the prisoner's use, and I would debar him from any other provision or supply; that his subsistence, however coarse or penurious, may be proportioned to his diligence, and that he may taste the advantage of industry together with the toil. I would go further; I would measure the confinement, not by the duration of time, but by quantity of work, in order both to excite industry, and to render it more voluntary.

Torture is applied either to obtain confessions of guilt, or to exasperate or prolong the pains of death. The question by torture appears to be equivocal in its effects; for, since extremity of pain, and not any feeling of remorse in the mind, produces those effects, an innocent man may sink under the torment, as well as he who is guilty. The almost irresistible desire of relief may draw from one sufferer false accusations of himself or others, as it may sometimes extract the truth out of another. This ambiguity renders the use of torture, as a means of procuring information in criminal proceedings, liable to the risk of grievous and irreparable injus-

tice;—for which reason, though recommended by ancient and general example, it has been properly exploded from the mild and cautious system of penal jurisprudence established in this country.

Barbarous spectacles of human agony are justly found fault with, as tending to harden and deprave the public feelings, and to destroy that sympathy with which the sufferings of our fellow creatures ought always be seen; or, if no effect of this kind follow from them, they counteract in some measure their own design, by sinking men's abhorrence of the crime in their commiseration of the criminal.

The *certainty* of punishment is of more consequence than the severity. Criminals do not so much flatter themselves with the lenity of the sentence, as with the hope of escaping.—There are two popular maxims, which seem to have a considerable influence in producing injudicious acquittals. One is, 'That circumstantial evidence falls short of positive proof.' This assertion, in the unqualified sense in which it is applied, is not true. A concurrence of well-authenticated circumstances composes a stronger ground of assurance, than positive testimony, unconfirmed by circumstances, usually affords. Circumstances cannot lie. The conclusion also which results from them, though deduced by only probable inference, is commonly more to be relied upon, than the veracity of an unsupported solitary witness.

The other maxim is this, 'That it is better that ten guilty persons escape, than that one innocent man should suffer.' If by saying it is *better*, be meant that it is more for the public advantage, the proposition, I think, cannot be maintained. The security of civil life, which is essential to the value and the enjoyment of every blessing it contains, and the interruption of which is followed by universal misery and confusion, is protected chiefly by

the dread of punishment. The misfortune of an individual, (for such may the sufferings, or even the death, of an innocent person be called, when they are occasioned by no evil intention,) cannot be placed in competition with this object. He who falls by a mistaken sentence, may be considered as falling for his country; while he suffers under the operation of those rules, by the general effect and tendency of which the welfare of the community is maintained and upheld."*

CHAPTER IV.

On Promoting the Happiness of our Inferiors.

"There are three principal methods of promoting the happiness of our inferiors:

1. By the treatment of our domestics and dependents.
2. By professional assistance.
3. By pecuniary bounty."†

I. *The treatment of our domestics and dependents.*

"Whatever uneasiness we occasion to our domestics, which neither promotes our service, nor answers the just ends of punishment, is manifestly wrong; were it only on the general principle of diminishing the sum of human happiness.

By which rule we are forbidden,

1. To enjoin unnecessary labor or confinement, from the mere love and wantonness of domination;

2. To insult our servants by harsh, scornful, or opprobrious language;

3. To refuse them any harmless pleasure:

* Paley's Mor. and Polit. Philos. Book VI. Chap. 9.

† Paley's Moral Philos. Book III. Part II. Chap. 1.

And, by the same principle, are also forbidden causeless or immoderate anger, habitual peevishness, and groundless suspicions."*

"The foregoing prohibitions extend to the treatment of SLAVES.—Slavery may be defined, 'an obligation to labor for the benefit of the master, without the contract or consent of the servant.'"†

The evils of slavery are so obvious and so well known, as hardly to need description. "The natives of Africa are excited to war and mutual depredation, for the sake of supplying their contracts, or furnishing the market with slaves. With this the wickedness begins. The slaves, torn away from parents, wives, children, from their friends and companions, their fields and flocks, their home and country, are transported to America, with no other accommodation on shipboard than what is provided for brutes. This is the second stage of cruelty; from which the miserable exiles are delivered, only to be placed, and that for life, in subjection to a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical that ever were tolerated upon the face of the earth: and from all that can be learned by the accounts of the people upon the spot, the inordinate authority which the plantation laws confer upon the slave-holder, is exercised with rigor and brutality.

But *necessity* is pretended; the name under which every enormity is attempted to be justified. And, after all, what is the necessity? It has never been proved that the land could not be cultivated by hired servants. It is said that it could not be cultivated with quite the same convenience and cheapness, as by the labor of slaves; by which means, a pound of sugar, which the planter now

* Ibid. Chap. 2. † Ibid. Chap. 3.

sells for sixpence, could not be afforded under sixpence half-penny ;—and this is the *necessity* !"*

That the blacks, by the system of slavery, suffer more than the whites gain, is a proposition so evident, that he who disputes it, hardly deserves to be refuted,—unless it were by being chained, and subjected to the lash of a task-master. Therefore, as human happiness is diminished by the system of slavery, it is unlawful and ought to be abolished. Dr. Paley, however, proposes no definite plan for this purpose. He says, " The emancipation of slaves should be gradual; and be carried on by provisions of law, and under the protection of civil government." I would rather say, Let all the slaves, who wish it, be at once delivered from the hands of their masters. Let those who choose to remove beyond the bounds of the United States, be either transported to Africa, or permitted to go elsewhere, under such restrictions as the wisdom of the national legislature may impose. And of those who choose to stay, let all under a certain age (say 15) be put into schools supported at the public expense, till they are qualified to take care of themselves and make good members of society; and let all above that age be employed in as profitable a manner as may be, under overseers appointed by government, who shall treat them with humanity and kindness. These may do enough to support themselves, to pay the expense of overseeing them, and perhaps to contribute something toward the support of the schools. As to the masters, they ought to receive a reasonable compensation for the loss of property which they may sustain in having their slaves taken from them. Whatever the expense of all this might be, it ought to be borne by the nation. Who that has the least spark of philanthropy in his bosom, would be reluctant to pay his share of a tax, which was to accomplish so hu-

* Ibid.

mane and so noble an object? The rights of injured Africa have long enough been trampled upon. The blood of her sable sons has long enough called for vengeance on the heads of guilty white men. It is time that these wrongs were redressed; and some expiation made, for the tortures that have been inflicted, and the blood that has been shed. The plan of *colonization*, which has been set in operation by christian enterprise, and which is patronised by our national government, is a good thing as far as it goes; but it seems to be too slow a process, in a case, where the evil is so great, and the call of duty so loud. The *least* that our government ought to do, is immediately to deliver all the *children* of the slaves from the yoke of bondage, and place them in a situation, where they may become qualified to hold a respectable rank, as men and as citizens, as rational and immortal beings.

"II. *Professional Assistance.* This kind of beneficence is chiefly to be expected from members of the legislature, magistrates, medical, legal, and sacerdotal professions.

The care of the poor ought to be the principal object of all laws; for this plain reason, that the rich are able to take care of themselves.

Of all private professions, that of medicine puts it in a man's power to do the most good at the least expense. Health, which is precious to all, is to the poor invaluable; and their complaints, as agues, rheumatisms, &c. are often such as yield to medicine. And, with respect to the expense, drugs at first hand cost little, and advice costs nothing, where it is only bestowed upon those who could not afford to pay for it.

The rights of the poor are not so important or intricate, as their contentions are violent and ruinous. A Lawyer or Attorney, of tolerable knowledge in his pro-

fession, has commonly judgment enough to adjust these disputes, with all the effect, and without the expense, of a law-suit."*

III. *Pecuniary Bounty.*

1. *The obligation to bestow relief upon the poor.*

It is our duty to bestow relief upon the poor, because a portion of our property will be a greater benefit to them, than it could be to us, and the sum of human happiness will thus be increased. "The christian scriptures are more copious and explicit upon this duty, than upon almost any other.—It does not appear, that before the times of christianity, an infirmary, hospital, or public charity of any kind, existed in the world; whereas most countries in Christendom have long abounded with these institutions.

2. *The manner of bestowing bounty; or the different kinds of charity.*

There are three kinds of charity which prefer a claim to attention.

The first, and one of the best, is, to give stated and considerable sums, by way of pension or annuity, to individuals or families, with whose behavior and distress we ourselves are acquainted. It is a recommendation of this kind of charity, that pensions and annuities, which are paid regularly, and can be expected at the time, are the only way by which we can prevent one part of a poor man's sufferings,—the *dread* of want.

A second method of doing good, which is in every one's power who has the money to spare, is by subscription to public charities. Public charities admit of this argument in their favor, that your money goes farther towards attaining the end for which it is given, than it can do by any private and separate beneficence.

* Ibid. Chap. 4.

The last, and, compared with the former, the lowest exertion of benevolence, is the relief of beggars. Nevertheless, we are, by no means, to reject, indiscriminately, all who implore our alms in this way. Some may perish by such a conduct. Men are sometimes overtaken by distress, for which all other relief would come too late. Besides which, resolutions of this kind compel us to offer such violence to our humanity, as may go near, in a little while, to suffocate the principle itself; which is a very serious consideration."*

There are other ways of relieving the poor, and promoting their happiness, which are as important as the giving of money, food, or clothing. They may frequently be furnished with *employment*, and thus not only be enabled to obtain a supply for their present wants, but also be led into a habit of *industry*. Those who employ laborers, would do well to keep this subject in view; and to consult, not merely their own interest, but also the relief and comfort of the neighboring poor.—But there is another species of charity, which affords a prospect of doing, in the end, still greater good; and that is, the making provision for the *education of the children of the poor*. By furnishing them with the means of literary, moral, and religious improvement; we may put them in a way to become qualified to take care of themselves, and to be a blessing, instead of a burden, to the public.

"3. *The pretences by which men excuse themselves from giving to the poor.*

1. 'That they have nothing to spare,' that is, nothing for which they have not provided some other use; never reflecting whether it be in their *power*, or that it is their *duty*, to retrench their expenses, and contract their plan, 'that they may have to give to them that need.'"

* Ibid. Chap. 5.

2. 'That they have families of their own, and that charity begins at home.' If, by giving, they would injure their own families more than they would benefit the poor, the plea is a good one.

3. 'That they pay the poor rates.' Very well; and if all the poor and distressed are in this way comfortably provided for, they have no farther claim upon our compassion and charity.

"4. 'That the poor do not suffer so much as we imagine: that education and habit have reconciled them to the evils of their condition, and make them easy under it.' Habit can never reconcile human nature to the extremities of cold, hunger, and thirst, any more than it can reconcile the hand to the touch of a red-hot iron: besides, the question is not, how unhappy any one is, but how much more happy we can make him.

5. 'That these people, give them what you will, will will never thank you, or think of you for it.' In the first place, this is not true: in the second place, it was not for the sake of their thanks that you relieved them."*

I will close this chapter with some extracts from Dr. Brown "On the Duties of Benevolence;"† and I flatter myself, that, though he does not confine his remarks to the promotion of the happiness of our *inferiors*, though some ideas already advanced may be repeated, and though the extracts occupy several pages, it will not be thought, by the reader of moral sensibility, that in making them, I need apology, either for digression, repetition, or prolixity.

"The benevolent spirit, as its object is the happiness of all who are capable of feeling happiness, is as universal in its efforts, as the miseries which are capable of being relieved, or the enjoyments which it is possible to extend to a single human being, within the reach of its efforts, or

* Ibid. † Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 86.

almost of its wishes. When we speak of benefactions, indeed, we think only of one species of good action; and *charity* itself, so comprehensive in its etymological meaning, is used as if it were nearly synonymous with the mere opening of the purse. But 'it is not money only which the unfortunate need, and they are but sluggards in well doing,' as Rosseau strikingly expresses the character of this indolent benevolence, 'who know to do good only when they have a purse in their hand.' Consolations, counsels, cares, friendship, protection, are so many resources which pity leaves us for the assistance of the indigent, even though wealth should be wanting."

"If, indeed, there be in the heart those genuine wishes of diffusive good, which are never long absent from the heart of the virtuous, there will not long be wanting occasions of exertion. It will not be easy for an eye, that has been accustomed to the search of objects of generous regard, to look around without the discovery of something which may be remedied, or something which may be improved; and in relieving some misery, or producing or spreading some happiness, the good man will already have effected his delightful purpose, before others would even have imagined that there was any good to be done."

"The benevolent man will be eager to relieve every form of *personal* suffering. Public institutions arise, by his zeal, for receiving the sick, who have no home, or a home which it is almost sickness to inhabit, and for restoring them in health to those active employments of which they would otherwise have been incapable. In the humblest ranks of life, when no other aid can be given by the generous poor, than that which their attendance and sympathy administer, this aid they never hesitate to afford. When their own toils of the day are over, they often give the hours of a night, that is to be termi-

nated in a renewed call to their fatiguing occupations,—not to the repose which their exhausted strength might seem to demand,—but to a watchful anxiety around the bed of some feverish sufferer, who is scarcely sufficiently conscious of what is around him to thank them for their care, and whose look of squalid wretchedness seems to be only death begun, and the infection of death to all who gaze upon it. The same benevolence, which prompts to the succor of the *infirm*, prompts to the succor also of the *indigent*. Though charity is not *mere* pecuniary aid, pecuniary aid, when such aid is needed, is still one of the most useful, because one of the most extensive in its application, of all the services of charity. Nor is it valuable only for the temporary relief which it affords to sufferings that could not otherwise be relieved. It has a higher and more comprehensive office. It brings together those, whose union seems necessary for general happiness, and almost for explaining the purposes of heaven in the present system of things. There are every where the rich, who have means of comfort which they know not how to *enjoy*, and scarcely how to *waste*;—and everywhere some, who are poor without guilt on their part, or at least rather guilty because they are poor, than poor because they are guilty. All which seems necessary for the comfort of both, is, that they should be brought together. Benevolence effects this union. It carries the rich to the cottage, or to the very hovels of the poor;—it allows the poor admission into the palaces of the rich;—and both become richer in the only true sense of the word, because to both there is an accession of happiness. The wealthy obtain the pleasure of doing good, and of knowing that there are hearts which bless them;—the indigent obtain the relief of urgent necessities, and the pleasure of loving a generous benefactor.

Such are the delightful influences of positive benevolence, in their relation to the personal sufferings, and to the pecuniary wants, of those, who, if they have no property to be assailed by injustice, have at least necessities, the disregard of which is equal in moral delinquency to injustice itself. In its relation to the *affections of those around*, who are connected with each other by various ties of regard, benevolence is not less powerful, as a producer, or fosterer of good. Wherever there are causes of future jealousy, among those who love each other at present, it delights in dispelling the elements of the cloud, when the cloud itself, that has not yet begun to darken, scarcely can be said to have arisen. If suspicions have already gathered in the breast of any one, who thinks, but thinks falsely, that he has been injured; it is quick, with all the ready logic of kindness, to show that the suspicions are without a cause.—If it find not *suspicion* only, but dissention that has burst out, in all the violence of mutual acrimony, it appears in its divine character of a *peacemaker*, and, almost by the influence of its mere presence, the hatred disappears and the love returns—as if it were as little possible, that discord should continue where *it* is, as that the mists and gloom of night should not disappear, at the mere presence of that sun which shines upon them.

"The virtuous man," it has been beautifully said, "proceeds without constraint in the path of his duty. His steps are free; his gait is easy; he has the *graces* of virtue. He moves along in benevolence, and he sees arising in others, the benevolence which is in him. Of all our virtuous emotions, those of kind regard are the most readily imitated. To feel them is to inspire them; to see them is to partake them. Are they in your heart? —they are in your looks, in your manners, in your discourse. Your presence reconciles enemies; and hatred

which cannot penetrate to your heart, cannot even dwell around you."*

If benevolence is eager to preserve the affection of those who love each other, it cannot fail to be careful of their *character*, on which so much of affection depends. The whispers of insidious slanders may come to it as they pass,—with a secrecy, which has nothing in it of real secrecy, but mere lowness of tone,—from voice to voice in eager publication; but if there be no other voice to bear them farther, they will cease and perish, when it is benevolence which has heard.

The power which nature has given us over the trains of thought and emotion, which we may raise more or less directly, in the minds of others, the benevolent man will employ as an instrument of his generous wishes, not as an instrument of cruelty. It will be his care to awake, in the mind of every one who approaches him, the most delightful feelings which he can awaken, consistently with the permanent virtue and happiness of him whom he addresses. He will not flatter, therefore, and speak of faults as if they were excellencies, for this would be to give a little momentary pleasure at the expense of the virtuous happiness of years. But without flattery, he will produce more pleasure, even for the time, than flattery itself could give:—in the interest which he seems to feel, he will show that genuine sincerity, which impresses with irresistible belief, and of which the confidence is more gratifying to the virtue,—I had almost said to the very vanity of man,—than the doubtful praises to which the heart, though it may love to hear them, is incapable of yielding itself.

Benevolence, in this amiable form, of course, excludes all haughtiness. The great, however elevated, descend,

* St. Lambert, Ouev. Phil. Tome III. p. 179.

under its gentle influence, to meet the happiness and the grateful affection of those who are beneath them; and in descending to happiness and gratitude,—which themselves have produced, they do not feel that they are descending. Whatever be the scene of its efforts or wishes, to do good is to the heart always to *rise*, and the height of its elevation is, therefore, always in proportion to the quantity of good which it has effected, or which, at least, it has had the wish of effecting.

Politeness,—which is, when ranks are equal, what affability is, when the more distinguished mingle with the less distinguished—is the natural effect of that benevolence which regards always with sympathetic complacency, and is fearful of disturbing, even by the slightest momentary uneasiness, the serenity of others. A breach of attention in any of the common offices of civility, to which the arbitrary usages of social life have attached importance, even when nothing more is intended, is still a neglect, and neglect itself is an insult; it is the immediate cause of a pain which no human being is entitled, where there has been no offence, to give to any other human being. Politeness then,—the social virtue that foresees and provides against every unpleasant feeling that may arise in the breasts around, as if it were some quick-sighted and guardian Power, intent only on general happiness,—is something far more dignified in its nature, than the cold courtesies which pass current under that name, the mere knowledge of fashionable manners, and an exact adherence to them. It is, in its most essential respects, what may be possessed by those, who have little of the varying vocabulary, and varying usages of the season. The knowledge of these is, indeed, necessary to such as mingle in the circles which require them; but they are necessary only as the new fashion of the coat or splendid robe, which leaves him or her who wears it, the

same human being, in every respect, as before; and are not more a part of either, than the ticket of admission, which opens to their ready entrance, the splendid apartment, from which the humble are excluded. The true politeness of the heart, is something which cannot be given by those who minister to mere decoration. It is the moral *grace* of life, if I may venture so to term it,—the *grace* of *the mind*, and what the world count graces, are little more than graces of the body.

Such is benevolence in the various forms in which it may be instrumental to happiness,—and, in being thus instrumental to the happiness of others, it has truly a source of happiness within itself. It may not feel indeed, *all* the enjoyment which it wishes to diffuse—for its wishes are unlimited—but it feels an enjoyment, that is as wide as all the happiness which it sees around it, or the still greater and wider happiness of which it anticipates the existence. The very failure of a benevolent wish only *breaks* its delight, without destroying it; for when one wish of good has failed, it has still other wishes of equal or greater good that arise, and occupy and bless it as before.

In considering the various ways in which benevolence may be active, we have seen how extensive it may be as a feeling of the heart. If wealth, indeed, were necessary, there would be few who could enjoy it, or, at least, who could enjoy it largely. But pecuniary aid, as we have seen, is only one of many forms of being useful To correct some error, moral or intellectual,—to counsel those who are in doubt, and who in such circumstances, require instruction, as the indigent require alms,—even though nothing more were in our power, to show an interest in the welfare of the happy, and a sincere commiseration of those who are in sorrow,—in those, and in innumerable other ways, the benevolent, however scanty may be their means of conferring, what alone the

world calls benefactions, are not benevolent only, but beneficent; as truly beneficent, or far more so, as those who squander in loose prodigalities, to the deserving and undeserving, the sufferers from their own thoughtless dissipation, or the sufferers from the injustice and dissipation of others, *almost as much* as they loosely squander on a few hours of their own sensual appetites.

Even in pecuniary liberalities, benevolence does not merely produce good, but it knows well, or it learns to know, the greatest amount of good which its liberalities can produce. To be the cause of less happiness or comfort, than might be diffused at the same cost, is almost a species of the same vice which withholds aid from those who require it. The benevolent, therefore, are magnificent in their bounty, because they are economical even in bounty itself. Their heart is quick to perceive sources of relief where others no not see them; and the whole result of happiness produced by them, seems often to have arisen from a superb munificence which few could command, when it may, perhaps, have proceeded only from humble means, which the possessor of similar means, without similar benevolence, would think scarcely more than necessary for his own strict necessaries.'"*

It is by its inattention to the *little* wants of man that ostentation distinguishes itself from charity; and a sagacious observer needs no other test, in the silent disdain or eager reverence of his heart, to separate the seeming benevolence, which seeks the applauding voices of crowds, from the real benevolence, which seeks only to be the spreader of happiness or consolation. It is impossible for the most ostentatious producer of the widest

* "*Necessary* for his own strict *necessaries.*" So reads the only edition of Brown's Lectures which I have seen, -that published at Andover, 1822. Ought it not to be, '*sufficient* for his own strict necessaries'? or, 'necessary for his own strict *necessities*'?

amount of good, with all his largesses, and with all his hypocrisy, to be *consistent* in his acts of seeming kindness; because, to be consistent, he must have that real kindness, which sees, what the cold simulator of benevolence is incapable of seeing, and does, therefore, what such a cold dissembler is incapable even of imagining."

CHAPTER V.

Resentment, Anger, and Revenge.

The different and opposite opinions, that are expressed by different persons, respecting the *lawfulness* of *resentment* and *anger*, are, probably, in many instances, nothing more than a disagreement in the use of words, without any difference of sentiment.* As to *revenge*, the meaning of the term appears to be better established; and I know of no law, except that of "Honor," by which the passion is authorized.

Anger,—as far as I can judge of the ordinary acceptation of the term,—*is a desire that another may suffer pain, on account of an injury he has done, or an affront he has offered.* This is distinct from a desire that the other may be reformed, or that he may be punished for the sake of being reformed, or that the injury or loss which we have sustained may be repaired. A desire that another may be punished for the sake of being reformed, is a benevolent desire, which has the virtue, happiness, and usefulness of the other as its object, and regrets the necessity of inflicting punishment in order to attain that object.

* See p. 39.

A desire that another may be punished for the sake of deterring others from committing the same crime, is also a benevolent desire, and has the public welfare for its object. But anger is a *malevolent* desire, which feels a gratification arising directly from the pain that the other suffers, and has the infliction of pain or evil as its direct and ultimate object. Anger may be mingled with other feelings; but just so far and so long as it has a place in the breast, this is its nature. A desire to obtain reparation for an injury, has respect merely to one's own interest, and may be accompanied by anger, or may not.

Revenge is the malicious inflicting of pain upon the person who has injured or offended us. If the pain is inflicted from malicious motives, it is revenge, even though it go no further than the just ends of punishment or reparation may require. "There cannot be much difficulty," says Dr. Paley, "in distinguishing whether we occasion pain to another with a view only to the ends of punishment, or from revenge; for in the one case we proceed with reluctance, in the other with pleasure."* —The word 'revenge,' as in the passage just quoted, is sometimes used to denote the *passion*, which impels to acts of retaliation. Taken in this sense, it seems to differ from anger only in degree. When anger rises high, or continues long, so as to lead a person to meditate acts of retaliation, it is then called revenge.

As to *resentment*, it seems not to differ from anger, except in being a more sudden rising of the passion, and of shorter duration. Perhaps there is also this difference, that resentment is wholly personal and selfish, while anger and revenge may be excited on account of another. In this latter case, however, Dr. Brown gives to the emotion, and perhaps more correctly, the name of *indignation*.

*Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III. Part II. Chap. 7.

It appears, then, that resentment, anger, and revenge, being all of the same nature,—and that a malevolent nature,—are all of them *criminal*, "in every degree, under all forms, and upon every occasion."—But it may be proper now to consider some passages of scripture, which have been thought to prove that anger is sometimes *innocent*.

1. "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts."* If the Lord Jesus Christ, "who knew no sin," had feelings of anger, surely anger cannot always be sinful.—I reply, that the word is here used in a different sense from that in which it is generally used at the present day. Its meaning is explained by the clause that follows: "*being grieved* for the hardness of their hearts." If those who hold that anger is sometimes innocent, mean *such* anger as our blessed Savior felt, when he was grieved at the impenitence and wickedness of the Jews, I have no controversy with them.—A similar remark may be made upon those passages, in which the anger or wrath of God is spoken of. The term, when thus used, denotes a disapprobation of sin, and a disposition to punish the wicked;—but a disapprobation, which is consistent with perfect benevolence toward the sinner; and a disposition to punish, for the sake, not of inflicting pain on the individual, but of promoting the happiness of the universe.

2. "Whosoever is angry with his brother *without a cause*, shall be in danger of the judgment; that is, "worthy to be punished by the judges."† This passage seems to imply, that anger, when there *is* a cause for it, is innocent.—But, in the first place, Christ is here speaking of a *human* judicature; and it is unsafe to conclude, that nothing will be condemned at the bar of God, for which

* Mark, iii. 5. † Matt. v. 22.

it is not proper that a man should be arraigned at a human tribunal.—In the next place, Christ is stating different *grades of guilt ;* and we are not authorized to take it for granted, that he begins at the *lowest possible.* He says, that unprovoked anger is worthy of a *certain punishment, which he specifies ;* but he does not say, nor can we infer, that anger which arises from provocation, is worthy of *no* punishment. All that we can infer is, that such anger usually involves a *lower* degree of guilt, and deserves a *less* punishment.—Origen, Tertullian, Jerome, and some others of the Fathers, considered the word εικη, "without a cause," to be an interpolation ; and it seems not an improbable supposition, that the word was originally written on the margin as a gloss, and afterwards,—as has happened in other instances,—crept into the text. Griesbach and Rosenmüller, however, consider the received reading as genuine.

3. "Be ye angry and sin not."* That is, '*When* ye are angry,' or '*Though* ye be angry, sin not ;' for it can hardly be supposed, that anger is here commanded as a duty. The word 'sin,' as here used, appears to refer to the *external act ;* as in Matt. xviii. 15 ; Luke, xvii. 3, 4 ; "If thy brother sin (ἁμαρτησῃ) against thee."† Taking the word 'sin' in the sense in which it is used in these and other passages, and supplying the words 'against any one,' the meaning will be, "When ye are angry, do not injure any one ;" or, "suffer not your anger to impel you to acts of revenge." Or, without supplying anything, the word 'sin' may denote such outward acts in general, as are prompted by angry passions. This interpretation seems to receive some countenance from the following verse, if we translate it—as it may well be translated—according to the opinion of Schleusner,

* Eph. iv. 26. † See also Gen, xlii. 22 ; Judges, xi. 27 ; 1 Sam. xix. 4.

"Neither give occasion to the slanderer." That the apostle does not mean to represent it as innocent to be "angry," appears from his utterly forbidding anger only a few lines below: "Let *all bitterness, and wrath, and anger*, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

There is another view of the passage under consideration, which may, perhaps, be preferred by some lovers of biblical criticism. This passage is quoted, in the words of the Septuagint Version, from Ps. iv. 4; "Stand in awe, and sin not." The Hebrew verb, which is rendered "Stand in awe," literally denotes *agitation;* and is hence used to denote *any passion or emotion* which agitates the breast. It is frequently applied to *fear*, in the Bible, and with equal propriety as to *anger*. Our translators, therefore, have not departed from the original in their translation of Ps. iv. 4; and it appears from the context, that their translation is judicious and correct. Now, as far as the judgment and skill of the authors of the Septuagint can be depended upon, as coinciding with the opinion of our translators, the Greek verb, which they have used in Ps. iv. 4, and which St. Paul has quoted in Eph. iv. 26, is not confined to the passion of anger, but is also used to denote that *agitation* in the feelings, which may be occasioned by fear, or by other causes. A man's feelings may be wounded and agitated by unkindness, or by injuries and affronts, without his feeling any resentment, or desire of revenge, toward the injurious person. Thus, the meaning of Eph. iv. 26, will be; "When your feelings are hurt, and your breast agitated, by unkind treatment, suffer not any sinful passion to

* See also Col. iii. 8; and Ps. xxxvii. 8.

be excited, such as resentment, anger, or revenge; and lest this should be the case, calm the agitation of your breast, and heal the wound in your feelings, as soon as possible; let not the day close, before composure and peace are restored to your mind."

This interpretation rests on the supposition, that St. Paul has used the Greek verb, in Eph. iv. 26, in the same sense as the authors of the Septuagint Version have done in Ps. iv. 4; and that they understood the Hebrew verb, in that passage, in the same sense as our translators have done. Perhaps the interpretation also receives some countenance from Mark, iii. 5; but it must be acknowledged that it is opposed by the ordinary meaning of the word 'anger' in the New Testament, and especially in Eph. iv. 31. Whether we adopt this interpretation, or that which was first proposed, St. Paul says nothing which implies the innocence of such anger as prompts to revenge, or as is inconsistent with exercising, at the same time, benevolent feelings toward the person who has injured us.

Other arguments, beside those derived from scripture, have been used in justification of anger. It has been said, that anger is very *useful*, tending to repel injury and to strike evil-doers with terror. We might admit this, without admitting the conclusion that anger is justifiable. Anger is not shown to be virtuous or innocent, merely by showing that it is promotive of the public good. He, in the volume of whose word it is written, "The wrath of man shall praise thee," is able to overrule for good the blackest crimes which have ever been perpetrated. But from the circumstance that a thing is made subservient to the production of good, it does not follow that it is good in itself. It may not be difficult to show "the wisdom of God in the permission of sin;" but it is a strange kind of

moral reasoning, which would infer, that because *God* is *wise*, *sin* is a *virtue*.

But we may be allowed to doubt, whether anger *is* useful, as it respects the present state of existence. It is, indeed, desirable that injury should be repelled, and that he who tramples on the rights and invades the happiness of others, should suffer that punishment which may put an end to his own career of wickedness, and deter from an imitation of his example. But is there no principle in human nature, capable of accomplishing this, but malevolence, which delights in the very sufferings of its object? When the traveller is attacked by the midnight robber, is there nothing but a desire to take revenge on the assailant, that can nerve his arm, and make him prompt and intrepid in defending his property and life? Let us suppose the attack to be made by a ferocious beast, instead of a human foe. Must he imagine the brutal invader to act with a *criminal* design, and thus become fired with a spirit of retaliation, before he can exert all his strength in repelling the attack? Or, to make the case still plainer, let us suppose a man to be exposed to imminent danger from some violence of the elements or from the impulse of inanimate matter. Can he not struggle with the wind or the water,—can he not oppose his arm to the rock or falling tree, that is about to crush him with its weight, and exert every bodily power that God has given him, unless he first imagines that he is attacked by a rational foe, who wickedly and maliciously seeks his life? The same principle of self-preservation, which operates in these cases, appears capable of answering the purpose required equally well, when the attack is made by a human agent,—although unaccompanied by a desire of inflicting evil on the aggressor.

But there is a case, to which the preceding remarks do not apply. After the injury is done, what principle,

but that of retaliation, is sufficiently active and unfeeling to bring the offender to justice? I reply, a sense of future evil to be apprehended from the same source, together with a patriotic regard to the public welfare. The man, who has been injured in his person or property, must be sensible, that to suffer the villain who has injured him to escape with impunity, will but invite him to a repetition of the injury, and encourage others, of like disposition, to imitate his example. Such a man, too, though uninfluenced by resentment, must have a more adequate conception, than others in general can have, of the pernicious tendency of such crimes as it respects the public welfare. Every man, whether he possesses disinterested benevolence of the purest kind or not, desires the welfare of his own town, and province, and country. And there are few men, of common virtue, who would not exert themselves,—for the sake of the public good, in which themselves have a share,—to bring to justice those who transgress the civil law in instances much less atrocious than an attack upon the person or property, were it not for the odium and censure to be incurred,—from some whose interest it is that the law should not be rigorously enforced,—by taking the lead in that, in which, it will be said, it was not their business to intermeddle. The majority, I trust, is large, who, were it not for the fear of such odium and censure, would not suffer the laws to be violated, as they are, by sabbath-breaking, profaneness, and the unlicensed retail of spirituous liquors. Now, where a man has received a personal injury, he has not only a more distinct and adequate conception of the evil which himself and the public are liable to suffer from the future perpetration of similar crimes, but he can proceed to prosecute the offender without affording any plausible pretext for the tongue of calumny to utter its insinuations and reproaches.

It appears, then, that anger is not necessary for the safety or welfare of human society. How unhappy its effects often are, is too well known to need illustration.

I have used the term 'anger' to denote a malevolent feeling,—a feeling which "prompts to revenge," because I believe this to be its general acceptation. I am aware, however, that there are some, who would use the word, occasionally at least, in a good sense, namely, to denote a *strong* disapprobation,—an emotion of disapprobation, perhaps, which produces some degree of agitation in the breast. But the occasional use of words in a good sense, which are generally used in a bad sense, or the use of words in a good sense by a few individuals, while they are understood in a bad sense by men in general, is productive of very great evils.* Neither does the practice of ascribing anger to God, in the sacred writings, appear to be a sufficient reason for using the same language to denote a virtuous disapprobation in men. When such language is applied to God, there is no danger of its being misunderstood by those who have any correct ideas of the divine character. In God, it *must* mean a holy disapprobation of sin. But in man, there are other feelings, far from being virtuous, which may be, and frequently are, denoted by it. Add to this, that, excepting one or two passages, of doubtful interpretation, anger in men is uniformly condemned in the Bible. The language of inspiration, therefore, furnishes an argument against using the term 'anger' in a good sense in relation to men.

Of the criminality of a spirit of revenge in the sight of God, we may form an idea, by the stress that is laid, in the Bible, upon the duty of *forgiveness*. "Christ, who estimated virtues by their solid utility," says Dr. Paley, "and not by their fashion or popularity, prefers this of

*See remarks on the terms 'Emulation' and 'Ambition,' Chap. VII.

the forgiveness of injuries to every other. He enjoins it oftener; with more earnestness; under a greater variety of forms; and with this weighty and peculiar circumstance, that the forgiveness of others is the condition upon which alone we are to expect, or even ask, from God, forgiveness for ourselves. And this preference is justified by the superior importance of the virtue itself. The feuds and animosities in families and between neighbors, which disturb the intercourse of human life, and collectively compose half the misery of it, have their foundation in the want of a forgiving temper; and can never cease, but by the exercise of this virtue, on one side, or on both."*

The following passages of scripture may suffice to show, what conduct and feelings are allowed toward an enemy, and what are forbidden: "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again."—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."—"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him: so likewise shall my heavenly Father do also to you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."—"Put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."—"Be patient toward all men; see that none render evil for evil to any man."—"Avenge not your-

* Moral Philos. Book III. Part II. Chap. 8.

selves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

CHAPTER VI.

Duelling.

"A DUEL is a single combat, at a time and place appointed, in consequence of a challenge. It must be premeditated, otherwise it is called a *rencounter*.

The origin of the duel is to be sought in the superstitious customs of the Scandinavians and other northern nations. Among all such nations, courage seems to have been the ruling principle. This principle, impatient of the forms of law, impelled them to avenge their own wrongs at the point of the sword; and whoever declined to do so, was branded with the appellation of cowardice, and on that account looked upon as infamous. The practice was also intimately connected with their notions of religion. The single combat was viewed as a direct appeal to heaven; and he on whose side victory declared, was believed to have the juster cause.

This custom, originating in a period of ignorance and superstition, has maintained its ground amidst all the improvements of society. This circumstance is very much owing to the laws, which have been passed against it, not being carried into effect.

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* Ex. xxiii. 4; Matt. v. 44; vi. 14, 15; xviii. 34, 35; Col. iii. 12, 13; Thess. v. 14, 15; Rom. xii. 19—21.

The object which the duellist proposes, is altogether of a personal nature, being either to gratify some passion, which every good man ought to restrain, or to avoid the imputation of cowardice, of which, perhaps, he was never suspected. His object, therefore, is selfish; and the means by which he attains this object are contrary to law, reason, and religion. He takes the laws, indeed, in his own hand, and acts as judge in his own cause. On account of some unguarded word, or some trifling offence, he wantonly risks his own life, and involves, perhaps, in wretchedness, a wife and family who depend upon him for subsistence. Religion enjoins forgiveness of injuries; —the duellist thinks only of revenge. Religion recommends patience and forbearance;—the duellist declares, that he who does not resent his own wrongs, is not fit to live in society. Humility is a fundamental principle of the christian religion;—duelling is supported and nourished by pride: for honor, in the fashionable sense of the word, is nothing else than pride modified by certain rules.

Hence this practice has ever been reprobated by all wise and good men. The Duc de Sully, one of the first generals of his own or any other age, has transmitted to posterity his testimony against it, in the following pointed language: "That," said he, "which arms us against our friends or countrymen, in contempt of all laws, as well divine as human, is but a brutal fierceness, madness, and real pusillanimity."*

Duelling is a crime, which partakes of the guilt both of murder and of suicide. "Wherever human life is deliberately taken away, otherwise than by public authority, there is murder."† Therefore, just so great a probability as there is, that he who gives or accepts a challenge, will take the life of his opponent, just so much of the guilt of murder does he contract. And in the same de-

*New Edinburgh Encyclopedia. †Paley.

gree is he guilty of suicide, because he, in the same degree, deliberately exposes his own life. Both these combined, appear to make a sum of guilt as great as that of deliberate murder. It seems probable, that the instances in which both parties fall, are as numerous as those in which neither does; so that the number of those who are killed in duels, is as great as the number of duels fought; and therefore, in any particular duel, there is a chance, which is equivalent to a certainty that one of the parties will be killed. If this should be thought to be going beyond the truth, it is to be taken into the account, that where the one party is killed, the other is often severely wounded; that this is often the fate of both parties, where neither of them is killed; that while he who is murdered by a common assassin, dies without disgrace or guilt, he who falls in a duel, covers his ashes with ignominy; that the *example* set by the duellist, is more contagious, and therefore more pernicious, than that set by a common assassin; and that the distress which is brought upon the family and friends of the party that falls, is greater than in the case of ordinary murder. It is little or no extenuation of the crime of duelling, that "a law of honor has annexed the imputation of cowardice to patience under an affront, and challenges are given and accepted with no other design, than to prevent or wipe off this suspicion."* Though the duellist be not always, or be seldom, actuated by malice against his adversary; yet the contempt which he casts upon God, and the infidel presumption with which he hastens to the retributions of eternity, appear to be even greater than in him who commits murder from motives of malice and revenge. Most emphatically may it be said of the duellist, "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE HIS EYES."

* Paley's Moral Philos. Book III. Part II. Chap. 9.

CHAPTER VII.

Emulation and Ambition.

I. *Definition of Terms.*

The meaning of the terms ' emulation' and ' ambition,' appears to be still more undefined and unsettled, than that of ' resentment' and ' anger.' Our first object, therefore, will be to point out, as clearly and distinctly as possible, the sense in which these terms will be used in the present chapter.

1. *Emulation*,—as far as I can judge of the most common meaning of the word,—*is a desire to excel, for the sake of the gratification which arises from being superior to others.* This gratification includes both the pleasure of reflecting on our own superiority, and also that of seeing and thinking that this superiority is known to our companions, or to the world. The votary of emulation loves to look down upon others; and the greater is the number which he sees below him, of those who were once his equals or superiors, the more exquisite is the gratification which he feels. He is willing that others should stand high, if he can stand still higher; but if he must stand low, he wishes that they should stand still lower. This principle of action seems sometimes to become so strong, as to swallow up all others. Of this, a striking instance is afforded in the language which Milton ascribes to Satan:

" Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven."

He who is actuated by the principle of emulation, usually chooses to obtain a superiority to others by elevating himself, rather than by depressing them; and that for two reasons: First, because he will in this way become superior, not only to his immediate competitors, but also to others at a greater distance, and will thus hold a

more elevated station in the view of the world; and secondly, because he will gain more admiration and applause, if he raises himself by fair means, than if he retards or sinks others in order to get above them.

2. The word '*ambition*' is frequently synonymous with 'emulation'; but it is also frequently used in senses in which 'emulation' is not. This latter term is confined, chiefly, in its application, to children and youth; while 'ambition' is used to denote the operation of the same principle in men, especially those who signalize themselves in a political or military capacity. Emulation has respect, chiefly, to rivals that are near at hand: ambition seeks a superiority which has no limits. Emulation seeks to excel, chiefly, in things which are of a personal nature; as in bodily strength and agility, or in mental attainments and powers. Ambition, beside seeking to exceed others in the same endowments exercised on a larger scale, also seeks to exceed them in grandeur, wealth, power, and fame. The *principle*, in all these cases, is the same. It is a desire of superiority for the sake of the gratification and the personal advantages which it affords.

The word 'ambition' is also sometimes used to denote merely an *earnest desire*, without any reference to rivalship or competition. Thus, a child who studies alone, is sometimes said to be 'ambitious' to learn, meaning merely that he is very fond of his studies, and very desirous to acquire knowledge. Thus, a man sometimes says, that it is his 'highest ambition' to please another and to gain his approbation, meaning merely, in the language of hyperbole, that he has a *very strong desire* to please him. In this sense, ambition is totally distinct from emulation. I am not certain, however, that this use of the word is found in any good writer. In the present chapter, I shall use the terms 'emulation' and 'ambition' as denoting the same principle.

II. The nature and tendency of emulation, may be further illustrated by considering *the connection which this principle has with some others.*

1. It is intimately connected with *pride* and *vanity.* Pride is "the thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think." Emulation, by leading a person to think frequently of his own attainments and excellencies, produces and cherishes pride. Vanity is "a desire of admiration"; and this is an essential ingredient in emulation. The votary of emulation usually receives his chief pleasure from being admired and commended. Here and there an individual may rest satisfied with a proud consciousness of superiority; but there are few, who would derive any great satisfaction from being superior to others, unless their superiority were known and noticed.

2. Emulation is intimately connected with *envy* and *hatred.* "Plato makes emulation the daughter of envy;"* but I would rather say she is the *mother* of envy, since it appears to be a desire to possess the superiority and the advantages which we see another possess, that leads us to envy him that superiority, and those advantages. Envy appears not to be a simple principle; but to be compounded of a desire to deprive another of some good which he possesses, because we do not possess the same ourselves; and a hatred of that other, because he enjoys something which we do not. The connection between emulation and envy, therefore, is that of cause and effect. Emulation, if unsuccessful, always produces envy; and of course, always produces hatred, that being an essential ingredient in envy. Sometimes the envy that is produced by unsuccessful competition, is small in degree and transient in duration, being overcome by other principles; and sometimes it rises into anger and revenge, or

*Buck's Theological Dictionary.

settles into inveterate hatred and malice. Any one who has employed the principle of emulation in the education of children, must have had opportunity to notice these unhappy effects.

III. I now proceed *to distinguish emulation from some other principles*, which are virtuous, or at least innocent, and with which it has been sometimes confounded.

1. Emulation is distinct from a desire to make great attainments in knowledge and virtue. A man may desire knowledge, and labor assiduously in acquiring it, because he loves it; because every new idea which the mind acquires, is a source of pleasure, and because he derives a satisfaction from the exercise of his mental faculties in acquiring ideas, and in afterwards recollecting and comparing them. All this is innocent. Again, he may desire and seek knowledge for the sake of becoming more useful in the world,—of promoting the happiness of others in a greater degree. This is a virtuous motive. In the same manner, a man may desire any endowment whatever, either of mind or body, not because it will render him superior to others, but because it is valuable in itself, and may promote his own or the public good.

2. Emulation is distinct from a comparison of ourselves with others for the sake of judging more correctly what progress we have made in knowledge and improvement. If emulation exists, a comparison of ourselves with others is sure to fan the flame; and if it does not yet exist, such a comparison is very liable to enkindle it. But this comparison is not emulation itself; and *may* be made without exciting it. Suppose that a youth is pursuing his studies, actuated by a desire to do good. He observes that he makes a greater progress than his fellow students. This gives him pleasure, not because

he excels them, but because his prospect of being useful in the world is brightened. If, however, he knows, that their object in obtaining knowledge is the same as his, and reflects that their inferiority to himself in talents and proficiency will render them less useful than they might otherwise be, this reflection will give him more pain, than he will derive pleasure from the prospect of his own superior usefulness. After all, a frequent comparison of our own talents and attainments with those of others, is a dangerous experiment; and a disposition frequently to make such a comparison, so far from being consistent with upright intentions, is an almost certain indication of a spirit of emulation. It may be necessary that a person should compare his own capacity and qualifications with those of others, in considering the question in what station or calling he may probably be most useful in society; but after he has determined this question, a comparison of himself with others, in those respects which are liable to excite emulation or envy, should be, as much as possible, avoided.

3. Emulation is distinct from a desire to do much good in the world. Distinguished activity in doing good, on however large a scale, or in however conspicuous a station, may spring from the purest benevolence, and is therefore no indication of a spirit of emulation, or of an ambitious disposition. A man who thus distinguishes himself, is not to be called ambitious, unless he appears fond of being known to be eminently useful, and gives evidence of a love of fame and applause.

4. Emulation is distinct from a desire to *imitate* the virtuous deeds of others, and to *resemble* them in virtuous traits of character. Virtue appears more amiable, when it is exhibited in a living character, and when its happy fruits are actually seen, than it can when viewed in the abstract. Whoever loves virtue, therefore, will feel a

stronger desire to possess and practise it, in proportion as his perception of its excellence is more distinct and lively.*—A desire to resemble and imitate the wise and good, is easily distinguished from emulation, because it involves no desire of superiority. This virtuous desire is in one instance, however, spoken of in scripture under the name of emulation: "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them that are my flesh, and may save some of them."† Here, to "provoke to emulation" means, to 'excite to imitation.' Paul's object was, to 'excite' his own nation, the Jews, to 'imitate' the Gentiles in believing in Christ and obtaining salvation. It seems rather unfortunate that our translators should have made choice of the word 'emulation' in this passage, as it is not generally used in this sense at the present day, and as they have used the word in a bad sense in the only other instance in which it occurs in the Bible. See Gal. v. 20, where "emulations" are classed with "hatred, variance, wrath, strife, envyings, murders," &c. Here emulation appears in its proper company.

5. Emulation is distinct from the desire of having a good name, and enjoying the approbation of wise and good men. A good name is to be desired for the sake of increasing our influence and our usefulness in the world. The approbation of the judicious and virtuous, is to be desired for the same reason, and also because it assures us of the friendly regard of those whose approbation we enjoy. There is an innocent and a lively pleasure in being beloved by those whom we love; and some degree of this pleasure is felt when we learn that we have gained the approbation of good men, even though no personal acquaintance subsist between us and them.

* This subject is happily illustrated by Lord Kames, in his Elements of Criticism. See Vol. I. p. 55, on the "Sympathetic Emotion of Virtue."

† Rom. xi. 14.

This is a totally distinct thing from the love of praise, and the desire of admiration and applause. By a 'love of praise,' I mean a desire of commendation for the sake of the gratification it affords to vanity and pride. If the pleasure which I feel when another says something which shows that he has a high opinion of me, arises from the idea that the good qualities which he ascribes to me will render me more useful, or from the evidence which he gives of personal regard for me, this is not a love of praise; but if it arises from being exalted in my own estimation, or from thinking myself superior to others, it is a love of praise, and a spirit of emulation.

IV. We will next consider *the influence of emulation on the public welfare.*

1. Since emulation is a selfish principle, and inconsistent with a benevolent spirit, we might conclude, without any farther examination, that it cannot have a beneficial tendency. The encouragement of emulation cannot fail to strengthen all the selfish principles of our nature. Its connection with pride and vanity, envy and hatred, has been already shown. That all the selfish and malevolent principles have a hurtful tendency, needs not to be proved. Perhaps there is no one of them that has more appearance of affording an *innocent* gratification, than *vanity*. A few remarks may serve to show the real nature and tendency of this passion. The vain person judges of his own character by the praises and flatteries of others. He looks not into his own heart, nor consults the decisions of conscience, which is the only safe method of obtaining self-knowledge. "He loves the praise of men more than the praise of God." If he judged of his character by the proper standard, the opinion of others would have no effect to raise him in his own estimation. Now, this frequent contemplation of his own excellen-

cies, makes him blind to the excellencies of others, and indifferent to their welfare and happiness; and this erroneous estimate of his own character, unfits him for filling his proper station in society, unfits him for usefulness, and for the company of any except his flatterers. But he cannot avoid mingling with the world, and having intercourse with many who will not manifest that high opinion of his excellencies, which he considers as his due. Hence sentiments of aversion, and perhaps of malice and revenge, arise in his breast.—Such are the fruits of vanity, apparently the most harmless of all the selfish principles. It is sufficiently evident, then, that emulation, which is one of the strongest of these principles, and which "strengthens all the rest," must have a pernicious influence on the public welfare.

2. Emulation has, in some respects, an unfavorable influence on the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of the mind. In order that a student may *understand* and *remember* what he learns, he must love learning for its own sake. And he that studies diligently, because he derives pleasure from studying, will not, while studying, think of any other motive. The constant pleasure he derives from the exercise of his mental faculties and the acquisition of new ideas, is a stimulus, that makes him diligent and persevering, that leads him to understand thoroughly whatever he studies, and that impresses indelibly on his memory whatever he learns. But emulation affords a motive, and proposes a pleasure, wholly different from this. This pleasure is the reward to which he looks *forward* as the fruit of his application. Just so far, then, as the mind dwells on this object, it is withdrawn from its present employment. And just so far as the desire of excelling others has a place in the breast, it excludes the love of study for its own sake. If the scholar, while studying, is constantly calculating

how far he has got, and how far he can get, and anticipating a triumph over his rivals, or fearing that they will triumph over him, it is next to an impossibility that he should get his lesson well, or should remember it long. His object is, to get such a *quantity*, to go over so many *pages;* and if he can recite it so as to satisfy the instructer at the time, it is all he cares for. He exercises his *memory* merely, while studying, with very little or no improvement of his judgment or discrimination. He recites the lesson at the stated hour, and then applies himself again to make farther attainments of the same kind, thinking nothing more of the former lesson, and totally indifferent whether he ever thinks of it again. I do not mean, that this is precisely the case with every student, who is influenced by the principle of emulation. In schools and other literary institutions, where the students are critically examined, quarterly or annually, upon what they have been over, the evil is in some measure counteracted. And there are some instructers who require their pupils to recite their lessons, not so much verbatim, as in a manner which shall give evidence that they *understand* them,—which is a powerful antidote to the influence of emulation. But neither these, nor any means that can be used, will wholly obviate the unfavorable influence of emulation on the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of the mind. Besides, those instructers who encourage emulation in their pupils, are generally deterred from requiring them to understand what they learn, because they perceive that it diminishes the *quantity* of their lessons, damps their ardor, and checks the rapidity of their course toward the goal of ambition. And though we admit, that the stimulus which emulation affords, may really accelerate the progress of some individuals in knowledge and in mental improvement, yet it is thought that in a majority of cases, the proficiency of the scholar

is rather retarded than accelerated by this principle. This will be the more evident, when we consider, that the successful votaries of emulation must be comparatively few. The rapid progress, the high spirits, the triumphant exultation, of these few, and the distinctions and honors bestowed upon them, operate as a discouragement to the many, who are left behind in the race. While the forward are too much elated, the slow despond. The use of emulation as a stimulus to literary and scientific improvement, would be more plausible, if all, or most, could have a hope of success in the contest for superiority; though, even then, the considerations which have been suggested, might render it doubtful whether the progress in real knowledge and in real mental improvement, would be accelerated.

3. Emulation has a dangerous influence on the character of men when they come to act on the theatre of the world. Few, I think, will deny the proposition, that the ambitious and aspiring are dangerous members of society. Those, whose supreme object is personal aggrandizement, will, without hesitation, sacrifice any interest, however great, that comes in competition with their own. They will trample on the rights of others, whenever they interfere with their ambitious views. The destructive consequences of ambition in statesmen and warriors, are so well known, and have so often been the theme of declamation, that it is needless to dwell on the subject here. Let it be remembered, that this same ambition, which has so often trampled on the rights of mankind, which has reduced millions of freemen to the condition of slaves, which has shed so much blood, and sacrificed so many lives, is only the principle of emulation acting upon a larger scale. The child, in whose breast this principle is cherished, is preparing, if circumstances should afford him the oppor-

tunity, to be numbered among the scourges of mankind. Happily, few have the opportunity of seeking an immortality of fame in this way. The principles of government and of liberty are so well understood, and civil institutions are so firmly established, that the principle of ambition finds itself restrained, and there is little reason to apprehend that the "love of glory" will again produce scenes of carnage, or that the examples of former heroes and conquerors will ever be successfully imitated.—But is no evil to be apprehended from a principle which possesses such a tendency? Some of the vices that are connected with this principle, have been already brought into view. "It produces pride and vanity, envy, hatred, and slander. It is opposed to real nobleness, and independence, and decision of character. With him that eagerly covets praise, fame is virtue, and ignominy vice. The sense of duty is destroyed by an inordinate love of an empty glory."* And though emulation is a stimulus to exertion at school and at college, yet it is probable, that in most cases, this effect is afterwards reversed. "The *unsuccessful* votaries of emulation are always discouraged *at the* time, and, in some instances, *ruined and dispirited* for life;"† and few of her successful votaries *continue* to receive those distinctions and honors which they received at school or college; and when the artificial stimulus ceases, exertion will also cease.

V. It may be proper briefly to mention some of the *means by which emulation is usually excited and encouraged.* This is done,

1. By making comparisons between one individual and another. It is a common practice with instructers to call

* See an excellent essay on "Ambition," in the Christian Observer, for August, 1818. † Ibid.

a particular scholar that he learns better than another, calling the other by name; or that there are only so many in the school that learn as well as he. On the other hand, a dull scholar is sometimes told how much better this or that schoolmate studies and learns than *he* does. The influence of such remarks, both upon those to whom they are addressed and upon others by whom they are heard, is obvious. But the most powerful means of exciting emulation, is,

2. By marks of distinction and honor. These are, in common schools, the having a "head" to every class; the giving to those who keep at the head a certain length of time, "certificates" of approbation, or insignia of honor to be carried home, perhaps suspended from the neck; and publicly bestowing rewards on the individuals who have distinguished themselves. The effect of these marks of distinction and honor is greatly increased by the commendations which are bestowed on those who obtain them, and the cold neglect, and sometimes censure, suffered by those who do not. The child who holds the precedence in his class, is generally praised, flattered, and caressed, by his parents and others, on account of it. And to make the matter still worse, these honors and caresses are usually obtained, not by superior assiduity, but merely by being able to learn with greater facility.

In academies and colleges, the same systematic excitement of the principle of emulation, is effected by means of medals and premiums, and especially by the "grades" of honor and the assignment of "parts" on public occasions. The powerful influence of these things is well known, if not by the superior improvement of the students, at least by the contentions and commotions which are in this way produced. It is probable that the greater part of the frequent, and sometimes serious, dis-

turbances, which have arisen among students at college, and between them and their instructers, have been owing to this cause.—But perhaps this is a digression. It may serve, however, to show the *efficacy* of the means which are employed in literary institutions to excite a spirit of emulation.

3. The principle of emulation is strengthened by classical studies. Among the books which are denominated classical, there is, perhaps, not one, ancient or modern, in which this principle is condemned or discountenanced. On the contrary, wherever opportunity is afforded, the author or his hero, breathes a spirit of emulation and of ambition, which the student easily and unconsciously imbibes.—But instead of saying more on this subject, I choose rather to refer to a writer, who has done much for the cause of religion and of human improvement. See Foster's Essays, Essay IV. Letters 5 and 6, "On the Unchristian Tendency of Classical Literature."

VI. I now proceed to mention some *means which may be employed to stimulate the student without the aid of emulation.*

The view that has been taken of the subject, shows, that if youth *can* be sufficiently stimulated in their studies without the aid of emulation, such a thing is very desirable. To give a detail of the means by which this object may be effected, would require a treatise on education, and would be out of place in a system of moral philosophy. Brevity, therefore, will be consulted in the remarks that follow.

1. The importance of knowledge and mental improvement as qualifications for respectability, usefulness, and happiness in future life, is a consideration that may have much influence with students who are capable of reflection. I do not mean that it can afford any stimulus while

the scholar is actually engaged in studying;—it would then, like motives of emulation, only serve to divert the mind;—but it may contribute, sometimes, to *prepare* the mind for study, and it may induce the scholar to spend more *hours* in studying than he otherwise would.

2. A desire to gain the approbation of the instructer, of parents, and friends, is a more powerful motive of the same kind. It ought not to be thought of while the scholar is actually studying; but it may induce him to be more economical of his time, may associate some pleasing ideas with the thought of taking up the book to get a lesson, and, in the intervals of study, when the mind is wearied, may produce an excitement which will prepare it for renewed application. Some caution, however, is necessary, in regard to the manner in which the approbation of instructers, parents, and friends, is to be expressed. Praise should be sparingly bestowed on children. If it is lavished on them, it becomes cheap, and loses its effect. As to telling them that they have done better than others, that is out of the question. But they may be told that they have done *well*, or that they have done better than they have been *accustomed* to do. They may also be told, when the case requires it, that they have done *ill*, not so well as they *might*, or not so well as *usual*. For the most part, however, the countenance of the instructer will express sufficient praise or censure, without the aid of words. If he loves to teach, and to see his scholars do well, they will readily perceive his feelings, and the liveliest emotions will be excited in their breasts. The pleasure which a good scholar feels when he sees the smile of approbation, is innocent,—so long as the principle of emulation is excluded. There is need of caution, lest the smile of approbation should be so bestowed as to betray partiality toward individuals; but I am not aware that there is

much danger of exciting a spirit of emulation, merely by comparing a scholar with *himself*, by telling him that he has recited this lesson better or worse than he did the last. The desire which a child feels to please his instructer, and the pleasure he feels when he perceives that he does please him, are innocent, while they spring from esteem and affection. It is the pleasure of being beloved by those whom we love, and of contributing to their happiness. And an instructer, who is beloved by his pupils, and who loves to see them increasing in knowledge, has little need to fear that they will not be diligent in their studies.

3. But a love of learning for its own sake, is the most powerful stimulus which a student can feel, to assist his progress in real knowledge and improvement. This is a motive, that will not only draw him from amusement or other employments to his studies, but will operate powerfully, while he is studying, to produce intense application and unwearied perseverance. The scholar, who derives a lively pleasure from the acquisition of new ideas, and the exercise of his mental powers, will be far more likely to understand thoroughly whatever he learns; will find the new ideas he has acquired, frequently revolving in his mind afterwards, from day to day; and will retain them in his memory, ready for use whenever occasion may require.

'But how shall this love of learning for its own sake, be produced in scholars who are destitute of it, or who have even an aversion to their books?'—I feel little hesitation in asserting, that no such scholar ever existed, until he had been brought to feel this indifference or aversion by injudicious treatment on the part of parents or instructers. Perhaps the truth of this assertion will be doubted by those who have not attended to the manner in which associations of ideas and feelings are formed. Such are

requested to suspend their opinion, till they have studied the philosophy of the human mind and the science of education.* In the mean time, it may be well for them to act on the *supposition* that my sentiment is correct. What I would maintain, is, that if *parents* and *instructers* love knowledge for its own sake, and always *speak* of study as a privilege and a source of pleasure, children will be *prepossessed* in favor of it before they begin; and that if they at school receive easy lessons, and such as they can understand, if the lessons are explained to them in language adapted to their capacity, and if such questions are asked as will bring other faculties of the mind, as well as memory, into exercise, they will find study to be pleasant, as they anticipated. The human mind is so constituted, that the voluntary exercise of its faculties, and the acquisition and comparison of ideas, are sources of pleasure, independent of every other consideration; and this pleasure will always be felt, except when the mind is called away, reluctantly, from some more pleasing employment, to attend to new ideas,—or when those ideas are presented to it in such a manner or under such circumstances, as to be connected with other ideas of a disagreeable nature,—or when it is fatigued with too intense or too long application. If parents and instructers *expect* that study will be a disagreeable task to children, they will inevitably do and say things, which will produce associations in the minds of the children, that will prepossess them against study, and thus render it indeed disagreeable. But if they expect it to be pleasant to them, this expectation will lead them to present the subject to them in a light which will prepare them to find it so.—In a case where children have already formed unfavorable associations, or where parents and others counteract the

*See, for instance, Hamilton and Edgeworth on Education, and Stewart on the Mind.

impression which the instructer wishes to make, he may, by well directed efforts, notwithstanding these discouragements, generally meet with such a degree of success, as will confirm his conviction of the correctness of his theory, and enable him to see how much might be effected, if the obstacles, with which he struggles, were removed.

In order to make improvements in the method of teaching, or to adopt those improvements when made by others, an acquaintance with intellectual philosophy seems indispensable. The ideas which are acquired by the human mind, may be divided into two classes; those which have a relation to something which is already familiar to the mind, and those which have not. Ideas of the latter kind are acquired in learning the alphabet, and in learning to read words which have either no meaning, or none that is perceived by the child. In doing this, he acquires merely insulated ideas of characters presented to the eye, or of sounds addressed to the ear. The pleasure, however, which is felt in acquiring such ideas, may be very great, in consequence of the novelty of those characters and sounds, and the strong curiosity which a young child possesses. But afterwards, when he has learned to read with some fluency, and reads what he does not understand, he acquires no new ideas; and the chief source of pleasure which he finds, is in exercising his skill in pronouncing correctly the words that meet his eye. This exercise of skill, too, will soon become familiar; and, the charm of novelty being gone, the child, if he continues to read what he does not understand, will inevitably lose the interest which he felt in his book. The only way, therefore, to avoid this result, is to have the child, as soon as he begins to read words arranged in sentences, read such sentences as he can understand. If the verbal signs suggest to him the things which are signified, and especially if he finds new ideas, or new combinations of ideas,

upon subjects that are already familiar to his mind, the charm of novelty will be revived, and the book will continue to be a source of undiminished pleasure. And the greater previous interest he felt in those subjects with which these new ideas are connected, the greater pleasure will the acquisition of the new ideas afford. Hence, it is an object of primary importance, in teaching children and youth, to have them read only such things as they can understand, either by their own reflections, or by the aid of the teacher's explanations; and, in presenting new subjects or new ideas to their minds, to do it in such a manner, that they shall perceive some relations between these and ideas that were before familiar to them; and, if possible, in such a manner, that these relations shall be suited to interest and please them.

When I insist that the child ought to understand everything which he reads, I do not mean, that he must be able to answer *every question* that can be asked respecting the words and sentences which he reads, for of this the most learned adult is not capable; nor even that those words and sentences shall suggest to him *all the ideas* with which they were connected in the mind of the author; but, that he shall perceive the *most important* ideas intended to be conveyed by every word and by every sentence. And this comprehends much more than an ability to *define* every word according to the dictionary. It comprehends a perception of the principal relations which subsist between the different parts of a sentence, between the different parts of a paragraph or chapter, and between the ideas conveyed by the author and those previously acquired by the child.

In order to teach in perfect consistency with these principles, a system of school books, modelled on a new plan would be necessary; and we may venture to predict, that the progress of improvement in education will in time lead to the formation and adoption of such a system; but

the instructer, who understands the subject, may do much, as it is, by way of approximation to a perfect method of teaching.

The method of *Pestalozzi* appears to be very much such a one as I have anticipated. Let this be universally adopted in the instruction and government of schools, and teachers will have little occasion to complain of aversion, indifference, or dulness in their pupils. I would fain transcribe the interesting account of Pestalozzi's school, given by Madame de Stael in her "Germany;" but I suspect that I have already digressed sufficiently from the topics which directly belong to the general subject of this volume. "It is a remarkable cirumstance," says she, "that neither punishment nor reward is necessary to excite his pupils in their labors. This is, perhaps, the first instance, in which a school of one hundred and fifty children has succeeded without having recourse to the principles of emulation and of fear. How many bad feelings are spared, when every emotion of jealousy and disappointed ambition is removed from the heart; and when the child sees not, in his companions, rivals, nor in his teacher, a judge!...There, the object is, not to excel, not to succeed in a competition for superiority, but to make a progress, to advance toward an end at which they all aim with equal integrity and simplicity of intention."*

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*Une chose remarquable, c'est que la punition ni la récompense ne sont point nécessaires pour les exciter dans leurs travaux. C'est peut-être la premiere fois qu' une école de cent cinquante enfans va sans le ressort de l'émulation et de la crainte. Combien de mauvais sentimens sont épargnés à l'homme, quand on éloigne de son cœur la jalousie et l'humiliation, quand il ne voit point dans ses camarades des rivaux, ni dans ses maîtres des juges!....Il ne s'agit pas là de succès, mais de progrès vers un but auquel tous tendent avec une même bonne foi.—*De L'Allemagne, Tome I. Chap.* 19.

VII. *Concluding remarks.*

1. *Emulation*, in every degree and in every form, *is criminal*, and ought never to have a place in the breast. This is evident from what has already been said; but the importance of the subject will justify us in bringing it more distinctly into view.

Emulation is a selfish principle; and is inconsistent with the exercise of pure and universal benevolence. If it were an innocent or a benevolent principle, a failure of success in striving to excel, would not produce envy and hatred. It is right to desire and seek our own happiness; but it is not right to do this with feelings which can prevent us from rejoicing in the happiness of others, even when they are more successful and more happy than ourselves. That emulation is inconsistent with benevolence, is a proposition which is capable of demonstration. Suppose that a man occupies a certain station, in respect to talents, knowledge, reputation, and usefulness. To see others inferior to him in these respects, gives a pleasure, which ceases as soon as they are raised to an equality with him, and is converted into pain as soon as they are raised above him,—although his own station, all the while, remains the same. The pleasure arises from seeing others destitute of a good which he enjoys; ceases as soon as the same blessings which he enjoys are enjoyed by them; and is succeeded by envy and hatred, as soon as additional blessings are bestowed upon them,—although his own talents, knowledge, reputation, and usefulness, are as great as ever they were. Now it is evident, that the feelings produced by a benevolent spirit, are just the reverse of all this, at every step of the progress. The benevolent man feels his happiness diminished on seeing others deprived of blessings which he enjoys; rejoices, when he sees the same blessings bestowed upon them; and rejoices still more, when he sees their happiness and usefulness still more increased.

2. Since the words 'emulation,' and 'ambition,' in the sense in which they are commonly used, denote a principle of action which is unlawful and criminal, they ought not to be used in other and different senses. To use the same word sometimes in a bad and sometimes in a good sense, has a dangerous tendency. On account of the imperfection of language, indeed, this cannot always be avoided; but so far as it *can* be avoided, it *should* be. If the more virtuous part of the community use certain words in a good sense which others use in a bad sense, the opinion of the former will be considered as countenancing the criminal sentiments and practices of the latter. The frequent recurrence of such phrases as "noble emulation," "laudable pride," is an outrage on propriety of language, and has a most pernicious tendency. Admitting that those who use them *mean well;* yet many, who hear or read them, will understand them in a sense which will tend to corrupt their moral principles. This way of using words, may be considered as a species of bad example. It wears the "appearance of evil." It makes a man appear to be the advocate of vice. And even if the good man is understood as he means, when he commends something which is really laudable, under the name of emulation, ambition, or pride; yet those who seek a cloak for their sins, will pervert this language in order to justify themselves, and will rejoice in the opportunity of indulging the most unhallowed passions under these specious names. "It is no small thing," says Madame de Stael, "for men to have plausible language which they may use in favor of their conduct. They employ it, at first, to deceive others; and they end by deceiving themselves."* I therefore, as a friend to the

* C'est beaucoup pour les hommes d'avoir des phrases à dire en faveur de leur conduite: ils s'en servent d'abord pour tromper les autres, et finissent par se tromper euxmêmes.—*De L'Allemagne, Tome III. p.* 206.

cause of virtue, protest against the terms 'emulation' and 'ambition' ever being used to express any thing which is laudable or innocent.

3. Since emulation is criminal, it ought not to be encouraged, but discountenanced, in children and youth. It is said, 'that as scholars who are not pious, have no better principles of action, we must make use of such principles as they have; and that a spirit of emulation will exist among them, whether it is encouraged or not.'—I admit, that scholars who are not pious, and even those who are, are actuated in a greater or less degree by wrong motives in pursuing their studies; but it is one thing for them to be actuated by wrong motives in studying, and another for instructers directly to *influence* them, and expressly to *encourage* them, to act from such motives.—I admit, too, that the principle of emulation cannot be wholly eradicated from the breasts of the young. It is just as natural as human depravity; and perhaps it is as impossible wholly to prevent it from being excited in a school, as to make all the scholars perfectly holy. But this, so far from being a reason why it should be encouraged and strengthened, is the very reason why we should be solicitous to restrain its operation, and guard against its excitement.

But it is said 'that scholars who are not pious, have no better principles of action, and they must be excited, in some way, to diligence and assiduity in their studies.'—Whether they have *better* principles of action or not, they certainly have those that are *not so bad.* The desire to promote their own future respectability and happiness, and the desire to please their instructers and parents, are not so bad principles of action. They are not necessarily criminal at all; and if sometimes so, are less so, and less dangerous, than motives of emulation. The love of learning for its own sake, is not so bad a principle

of action. This is a most powerful stimulus; and not being of a moral nature, is of course an innocent motive. Here are principles of action, amply sufficient to stimulate every scholar in his studies without the aid of emulation.—But this is denied, and it is said 'that scholars, without the impulse of emulation, will sink into a state of apathy and inaction.' Those who think thus, are requested to make a fair experiment. When they have done this, if they still think that the principles of action which I have recommended are not sufficient, that scholars would make much greater progress if excited by emulation, and even that their progress must be very small without this excitement, I will then request them to tell me how much *intellectual improvement* we must put into the scale to weigh against the *moral evil* of emulation, with its attendant train, vanity and pride, envy, hatred, and slander. The following is the language of Cowper on this subject. He is speaking of public schools:

"A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestioned, though the jewel be but glass—
That, with a world, not often over-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;
Or rather a gross compound,—justly tried,—
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—
Contributes most, perhaps, to enhance their fame;
And *Emulation* is its specious name.
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;
The prize of beauty, in a woman's eyes,
Not brighter, than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns:
Each vainly magnifies his own success;
Resents his fellow's; wishes it were less;
Exults in his miscarriage, if he fail;
Deems his reward too great, if he prevail.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force:
It pricks the genius forward in its course;
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth;

> And, felt alike by each, advances both.
> But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
> The end, though plausible, not worth the means
> Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
> Against a heart depraved and temper hurt;
> Hurt, too, perhaps, for life; for early wrong,
> Done to the nobler part, affects it long;—
> And you are stanch indeed in learning's cause,
> If you can crown a discipline, that draws
> Such mischiefs after it, with much applause."

Here, then, I rest my argument. It is not necessary to prove that emulation has an unfavorable influence on the acquisition of knowledge and on intellectual improvement. We may admit, not only that industry is promoted, but that the mental powers are excited into more vigorous action, and the pupil's progress in science and literature accelerated. What is all this, when set by the side of "a heart depraved and temper hurt"? To christian parents and christian instructers, I make my appeal. I have little hope of influencing those who despise the virtues of the heart. But to you, ye followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, I look for co-operation in opposing a principle which is inimical to the genius of christianity. You remember the lessons of *humility* which Christ repeatedly inculcated on his primitive disciples,—especially whenever they manifested a spirit of emulation or of ambition. You remember that he uniformly reproved an aspiring disposition, and taught them that humility is an indispensable qualification for admission into the kingdom of heaven. You will therefore consider the improvement of the moral and religious character as an object of infinitely "greater importance than the attainment of any, or even of all, the intellectual accomplishments; nor will you wish your children to pluck of the tree of knowledge, like our first parents, at the suggestion of a fiend!*"

* Miss Hamilton.

The following paragraphs, on the subject of the present chapter, are extracted from Babington's "Treatise on Practical Education," originally published in the Christian Observer.*

"The parent must hold out examples to his child in such a way as not to excite *emulation*. To imitate an example is one thing; to rival any person, and endeavor to obtain a superiority over him, is another. It is very true, as is maintained by the defenders of emulation, that it is impossible to make a progress towards excellence without outstripping others. But surely there is a great difference between this being a mere consequence of exertions arising from other motives, and a zeal to attain this object being itself a motive for exertion. Every one must see, that the effects produced on the mind in the two cases, will be extremely dissimilar. Emulation is a desire of surpassing others, for the sake of superiority, and is a very powerful motive to exertion. As such, it is employed in most public schools; but in none, I believe, ancient or modern, has it been so fully and systematicaly brought into action, as in the schools of Dr. Bell and Mr. Lancaster. Whatever may be the merits of the schools of either of those gentlemen in other respects, in this they appear to me to commit such an offence against christian morals, that no merits could atone for it. I cannot but think emulation an unhallowed principle of action;—as scarcely, if at all, to be disjoined from jealousy and envy, from pride and contention;—incompatible with loving our neighbor as ourselves;—and a principle of such potency, as to be likely to engross the mind, and turn it habitually and violently from the motives which it should be the great business of education to cherish and render predominant, namely, a sense

* See the Christian Observer for Nov. 1813.

of duty, and gratitude and love to God. Instead of enlarging on this subject, I beg leave to refer the reader to Mr. Gisborne's remarks upon it, in his "Duties of Women." If emulation is an unhallowed motive, it cannot innocently be employed, whatever good effects may be expected from it. We must not do evil that good may come. But if any Christians should deem it not absolutely unhallowed, few will deny, I think, that it is questionable and dangerous. Even then, in this more favorable view of emulation, ought it to be used, except it can be shown to be necessary for the infusion of vigor into the youthful mind, and for securing a respectable progress in literature? I can say, from experience, that it is not necessary for the attainment of those ends. In a numerous family, with which I am well acquainted, emulation has been carefully and successfully excluded, and yet the acquirements of the different children have been very satisfactory. I can bear the same testimony with respect to a large Sunday School, with which I have been connected for many years. I have often heard of *virtuous* emulation; but can emulation ever be so characterized in a Christian sense? Whether it may, in that loose sense of virtue which those adopt who take the worldly principle of honor for their rule, I will not stop to inquire.

But it is not sufficient not to excite and employ emulation on plan and system, as a stimulus in education: great care ought to be taken to exclude it. And great care will be necessary; for it will be continually ready to show itself; and if not checked, it will attain strength, strike its roots deep in the heart, and produce bitter fruits, which, in the eyes of a Christian, will be ill compensated by the extraordinary vigor and energy it will give to scholastic studies. When examples are held out for *imitation*, (a very different thing, be it always remem-

bered, from *emulation*,) or as warnings, the child must be made sensible that its state, in the sight of God, is rendered neither better nor worse by the virtues or the faults of others, except as far as they may have influenced, or may have failed to influence, its own conduct;—that it ought to love its neighbor as itself, and to rejoice in every advance made by another in what is good, and to lament over all his faults and defects, without one selfish thought being suffered to check the joy or the concern;—that it ought, therefore, to wish all its companions all success in their common studies, with the same sincerity with which it wishes for its own success, and to be affected by their faults and failures in the same manner it would by its own. It should be made sensible, that in proportion as it may give way to feelings the reverse of these, its "eye will be evil because others are good;" and it will act in opposition to the injunction, "Mind not every one his own things, but every one also the things of others," and to a whole host of scriptural precepts and examples. These things must be inculcated, not by lectures in general terms, but by applying such views to all the little incidents which call for them as they successively arise. The child must also be made sensible how much better it is for himself that his companions should be eminent for laudable attainments and good qualities; for that in proportion to their excellence in these respects, they will be useful and estimable companions, and ought to be objects of his affection. All little boasts of having done better that this or that brother or sister, and every disposition to disappointment when they succeed best, should be checked, and the lesson of "*rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and of weeping with them that weep*," very diligently inculcated."

CHAPTER VIII.

Litigation.

"'If it be *possible*, live peaceably with all men;' which precept," says Dr. Paley, "contains an indirect confession that this is not always possible.

On the one hand, Christianity excludes all vindictive motives, and all frivolous causes of prosecution; so that where the injury is small, where no good purpose of public example is answered, where forbearance is not likely to invite a repetition of the injury, or where the expense of an action becomes a punishment too severe for the offence; there the christian is withheld by the authority of his religion from going to law.

On the other hand, a law-suit is inconsistent with no rule of the gospel, when it is instituted,

1. For the establishing of some important right.

2. For the procuring of a compensation for some considerable damage.

3. For the preventing of future injury.

But, since it is supposed to be undertaken simply with a view to the ends of justice and safety, the prosecutor of the action is bound to confine himself to the cheapest process which will accomplish these ends, as well as to consent to any peaceable expedient for the same purpose; as to *a reference*, in which the arbitrators can do, what the law cannot, divide the damage, when the fault is mutual; or to *a compounding of the dispute*, by accepting a compensation in the gross, without entering into articles and items, which it is often very difficult to adjust separately.

As to the rest, the duty of the contending parties may be expressed in the following directions:

Not by appeals to prolong a suit against your own conviction.

Not to undertake or defend a suit against a poor adversary, or render it more dilatory or expensive than necessary, with a hope of intimidating or wearying him out by the expense.

Not to influence *evidence* by authority or expectation.

Nor to stifle any in your possession, although it make against you.

Hitherto we have treated of civil actions. In criminal prosecutions, the private injury should be forgotten, and the prosecutor proceed with the same temper and the same motives, as the magistrate; the one being a necessary minister of justice as well as the other, and both bound to direct their conduct by a dispassionate care of the public welfare.

In whatever degree the punishment of an offender is conducive, or his escape dangerous, to the interest of the community, in the same degree is the party against whom the crime was committed bound to prosecute, because such prosecutions must in their nature originate from the sufferer. Therefore, great public crimes, as robberies, forgeries, and the like, ought not to be spared, from an apprehension of trouble or expense in carrying on the prosecution, from false shame, or misplaced compassion.

The character of an *informer* is undeservedly odious. But where any public advantage is likely to be attained by informations, or other activity in promoting the execution of the laws, a good man will despise a prejudice founded in no just reason, or will acquit himself of the imputation of interested designs, by giving away his share of the penalty."*

* Paley's Moral Philos. Book III. Part II. Chap. 10.

CHAPTER IX.

Gratitude.

The merit of gratitude, as the term is generally used, appears to be overrated. If I mistake not, gratitude is generally regarded as relating merely to the reception of benefits, without taking into view the character, or the motives, of the benefactor. Hence it is thought that gratitude is due for favors received, although we know that they were bestowed from bad motives. Hence, too, it is thought, that we are bound by gratitude to speak well of one who has obliged us, although we know his character to be bad, and although, were it not for the obligations of gratitude, we should feel it our duty to warn others against him as a dangerous man. And to this purpose is an adage, which I have sometimes heard from the mouth of the vulgar, "Always speak well of a bridge that carries you well over." What! if you know that it is liable to precipitate the next passenger into the gulf beneath? We ought to speak of things as they are,—as far as we speak of them at all. Nor are we bound, by gratitude, to speak any better of a man, than we ought, with the same knowledge of his character, to have spoken of him without that obligation. Neither are we bound, by gratitude, to esteem or love a man any more, than we ought, with the same knowledge of his character, to have esteemed and loved him without receiving any favor from him. But the favors he bestows on us, may give us a better knowledge of his character, than we had before. They may afford new evidence of his liberality and benevolence; and may serve as mementoes to lead the mind frequently to contemplate those amiable qualities which prompted their bestowment. And this is the distinguishing feature of true gratitude.

It is a sentiment which differs in degree only, not in kind, from what is felt toward every man who is known to possess a benevolent disposition. If I see this benevolence exercised in bestowing benefits upon my fellow creatures, the sentiment ought to rise nearly, and sometimes quite, as high, as if those benefits were bestowed on myself. The only difference is, that I have a better opportunity to learn the full value of the benefits which I receive myself; and these benefits, remaining with me, serve to remind me, from time to time, of the benevolence to which I owe them. It is thus, that by being personally obliged, I obtain more distinct and lively views, a more frequent recollection, and a more lasting remembrance, of the amiable qualities of my benefactor. All gratitude which is of any other kind, or which has any other basis, is spurious and selfish;—is the sentiment which our Savior had in view when he said, "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same."* It would seem not very difficult to distinguish between these two kinds of gratitude. In the one case, I love a benefactor for his *favors merely;* in the other, I love him solely for that *benevolence* which prompted him to bestow favors on me. Or rather, in the one case, I love him solely because he appears to *love me;* in the other, I love him because he manifests a disposition to do good wherever he has an opportunity.

Perhaps selfish gratitude, frequent as it is, is not much more so, than selfish beneficence. Favors are often bestowed merely to subserve one's own interest. It is not unfrequent "to take advantage of that ascendency, which the conferring of benefits justly creates, to draw or drive

* Luke vi. 32, 33.

those whom we have obliged, into mean or dishonest compliances." "This argues a total destitution both of delicacy and generosity, as well as of moral probity." It is hardly necessary to add, "that gratitude can never lay a man under obligation to do what is wrong; and that it is no ingratitude, to refuse to do what we cannot reconcile to any apprehensions of our duty."*

Lest what has been said should be so interpreted by some as to weaken the obligations of gratitude, I would observe, that even selfish gratitude, though not entitled to the appellation of a virtue, is often promotive of the happiness of society; while ingratitude is universally odious, and serves "to check and discourage voluntary beneficence." I ought to make a grateful return for the favors I have received, because I thus show that I value and love that benevolent disposition which has been manifested by the bestowment of those favors; and because the same benefactor, and all who witness my gratitude, will be more likely to bestow favors on others. For the same reason, I ought, at every opportunity, to show my sense of the kindness of a beneficent man, although his favors have not been bestowed on myself. In estimating the evil of real or apparent ingratitude, we must consider, not how little it would check the beneficence of men who were actuated by pure benevolence, but in how great a degree it is likely to produce this effect on those who are influenced, in bestowing favors, by so large a share of selfishness as most men possess: I may sometimes think it my duty to neglect a benefactor for the sake of doing a greater good in some other way. In such a case, the evil effects of apparent ingratitude may be, in part at least, prevented, by making known the motives from which I act, and the considerations that impel me to run the risk of appearing ungrateful.

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*Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III. Part II. Chap. II.

CHAPTER X.

Slander.

"Slander," says Dr. Paley, "may be distinguished into two kinds; *malicious* slander, and *inconsiderate* slander.

Malicious slander, is the relating of either truth or falsehood, for the purpose of creating misery. I acknowledge that the truth or falsehood of what is related, varies the degree of guilt considerably; and that slander, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, signifies the circulation of mischievous *falsehoods:* but truth may be made instrumental to the success of malicious designs as well as falsehood; and if the end be bad, the means cannot be innocent.

To infuse suspicions, to kindle or continue disputes, to avert the favor and esteem of benefactors from their dependents, to render some one whom we dislike contemptible or obnoxious in the public opinion, are all offices of slander; of which the guilt must be measured by the intensity and extent of the misery produced. The disguises under which slander is conveyed, whether in a whisper, with injunctions of secrecy, by way of caution, or with affected reluctance, are all so many aggravations of the offence, as they indicate more deliberation and design.

Information communicated for the real purpose of warning, or cautioning, is not slander.

The guilt of *inconsiderate* slander consists in the want of that regard to the consequences of our conduct, which a just affection for human happiness, and concern for our duty, would not have failed to produce in us. And it is no answer to this crimination to say, that we entertained no evil *design*."*

* Paley's Mor. Philos. Book III. Part II. Chap. 12.

Inconsiderate slander appears to proceed chiefly from two motives. First, many people slander others, merely because they think it exhibits their own character to better advantage. They wish the faults of their neighbors to serve as a cloak for their own, and also, by way of contrast, to render their virtues the more conspicuous. It is probable that most slanderers feel a secret pride in thinking that they are free—when they happen to be so—from the vices which they censure in others.

In the second place, it seems likely that some, especially persons of a loquacious turn, slander their neighbors merely for the sake of having something to talk about. Having formed a habit of loquacity, and being at a loss for topics of conversation, they have recourse to that prolific theme, which is never exhausted. It is lamentable indeed, that the education of any should be so neglected, that they should ever find themselves reduced to the unhappy alternative of either saying nothing or slandering their neighbors. Such slander as this, almost innocent as it may appear at first view, shows not only a destitution of mental furniture, but of sober reflection and virtuous principles.

CHAPTER XI.

Of Rights.

"Right and obligation," says Dr. Paley, "are reciprocal; that is, wherever there is a right in one person, there is a corresponding obligation upon others. If one man has a 'right' to an estate, others are under 'obligation' to abstain from it; if parents have a 'right' to reverence from their children, children are under 'obliga-

tion' to reverence their parents; and so in all other instances."*

"*The Division of Rights.* Rights are natural or adventitious, alienable or unalienable, perfect or imperfect.

1. Rights are *natural* or *adventitious.* Natural rights are such as would belong to a man, although there subsisted in the world no civil government whatever. Adventitious rights are such as would not. Natural rights are, a man's right to his life, limbs, and liberty; his right to the produce of his personal labor; to the use, in common with others, of air, light, water. Adventitious rights are, the right of a king over his subjects; a right to elect or appoint magistrates, to impose taxes, &c. And here it will be asked how adventitious rights are created; or, which is the same thing, how any new rights can accrue from the establishment of civil society. For the solution of this difficulty, we must return to our first principles. Many things are *useful* in civil society, and are, for that reason, right, which, without the establishment of civil society, would not have been so.

2. Rights are *alienable* or *unalienable.*" An alienable right is one which can be transferred to another person. An unalienable right is one which cannot. "The right we have to most of those things which we call property, as houses, lands, money, is alienable." The right of a prince over his people, and the right of every man to his life and liberty, are unalienable. The right to civil liberty is unalienable, because this liberty is necessary in order to the discharge of the duties which we owe to God and our fellow men. No man has a right to do anything which would be likely to destroy or diminish his usefulness in the world. An unconditional surrender of one's self as a slave, is a crime of the same kind, as the depriving of one's self, voluntarily, of limbs, or health, or reason.

* Paley's Moral Philos. Book II. Chap. 9.

"3. Rights are *perfect* or *imperfect*. Perfect rights may be asserted by force, or, what in civil society comes into the place of private force, by course of law. Imperfect rights may not. Perfect rights are, a man's right to his life, person, house; for, if these be attacked, he may repel the attack by instant violence, or punish the aggressor by law; also, a man's right to his estate, and to all ordinary articles of property; for, if they be injuriously taken from him, he may compel the author of the injury to make restitution or satisfaction. The following are examples of imperfect rights: A poor neighbor has a right to relief; yet, if it be refused him, he must not extort it. A benefactor has a right to returns of gratitude from the person he has obliged; yet, if he meet with none, he must acquiesce. Children have a right to affection and education from their parents; and parents, on their part, to duty and reverence from their children; yet, if these rights be on either side withheld, there is no compulsion by which they can be enforced.

It may be at first view difficult to apprehend how a person should have a right to a thing, and yet have no right to use the means necessary to obtain it. This difficulty, like most others in morality, is resolvable into the necessity of general rules. By reason of the indeterminateness, either of the object or of the circumstances of the right, the permission of force in this case would, in its consequence, lead to the permission of force in other cases, where there existed no right at all. A poor man has a right to relief from the rich; but the mode, season, and quantum of that relief, who shall contribute to it, or how much, are not ascertained. Yet these points must be ascertained, before a claim to relief can be prosecuted by force. For, to allow the poor to ascertain them for themselves, would be to expose property to so many of these claims, that it would lose its val-

ue, or rather its nature, that is, cease indeed to be property. The same observation holds of all other cases of imperfect rights; not to mention, that in the instances of gratitude, affection, reverence, and the like, force is excluded by the very idea of the duty, which must be voluntary, or cannot exist at all."*

It may be well just to remark, that when we denominate a certain class of rights 'imperfect,' it is not implied, that a less degree of guilt is involved in the violation of the obligation which these rights impose. Indeed, imperfect rights are so only in a legal, not a moral sense. "There is as little an imperfect right in any moral sense," says Dr. Brown, "as there is in logic an imperfect truth or falsehood."

"*The General Rights of Mankind.* These are,

1. A right to the fruits or vegetable produce of the earth.

2. A right to the flesh of animals. This is a very different claim from the former. Some excuse seems necessary for the pain and loss which we occasion to brutes, by restraining them of their liberty, mutilating their bodies, and, at last, putting an end to their lives (which we suppose to be the whole of their existence,) for our pleasure or convenience. It seems difficult to defend this right by any argument which the light and order of nature afford; and that we are indebted for it to the permission recorded in scripture—Gen. ix. 1–3.

Since it is God's intention, that the productions of the earth should be applied to the sustentation of human life, all waste and misapplication of these productions, are contrary to the divine intention and will, and therefore wrong; such as the expending of human food on superfluous dogs or horses; and the reducing of the quantity, in

* Paley's Moral Philos. Book II. Chap. 10.

order to alter the quality, and to alter it generally for the worse; as in the distillation of spirits from bread-corn, the boiling down of solid meat for sauces, essences, &c. This seems to be the lesson which our Savior inculcates, when he bids his disciples "gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." And it opens indeed a new field of duty. It has not as yet entered into the minds of mankind, to reflect that it is a *duty*, to add what we can to the common stock of provision, by extracting out of our estates the most they will yield; or that it is any sin to neglect this.

From the same intention of God Almighty, we also deduce another conclusion, namely, 'that nothing ought to be made exclusive property, which can be conveniently enjoyed in common.' Upon this principle may be determined the question, whether the exclusive right of navigating particular seas, or a control over the navigation of these seas, can be claimed, consistently with the law of nature, by any nation? What is necessary for each nation's safety we allow; as their own bays, creeks, and harbors, the sea contiguous to, that is, within cannon shot, or three leagues of their coast: and upon this principle of safety (if upon any principle) must be defended, the claim of the Venetian state to the Adriatic, of Denmark to the Baltic sea, and of Great Britain to the seas which invest the island. But, when Spain asserts a right to the Pacific ocean, or Portugal to the Indian seas, or when any nation extends its pretensions much beyond the limits of its own territories, they erect a claim which interferes with the benevolent designs of Providence, and which no human authority can justify.

3. Another right, which may be called a general right, as it is incidental to every man who is in a situation to claim it, is the right of extreme necessity: by which is meant, a right to use or destroy another's property,

when it is necessary for our own preservation to do so; as a right to take, without or against the owner's leave, the first food, clothes, or shelter we meet with, when we are in danger of perishing through want of them; a right to throw goods overboard, to save the ship; or to pull down a house, in order to stop the progress of a fire; and a few other instances of the same kind. These are the few cases, where the particular consequence exceeds the general consequence; where the remote mischief resulting from the violation of the general rule, is overbalanced by the immediate advantage. Restitution, however, is due, when in our power; because the laws of property are to be adhered to, so far as consists with safety; and because restitution, which is one of those laws, supposes the danger to be over."*

CHAPTER XII.

Of Property.

"The principal advantages of the institution of property, are the following:

1. It increases the produce of the earth.

The earth, in climates like ours, produces little without cultivation; and none would be found willing to cultivate the ground, if others were to be admitted to an equal share of the produce. The same is true of flocks and herds of tame animals.

2. It preserves the produce of the earth to maturity.

We may judge what would be the effects of a community of right to the productions of the earth, from the

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book II. Chap. 11.

trifling specimens which we see of it at present." Cherries, plums, pears, or peaches, that grow in the highway, "are seldom of much advantage to any body, because people do not wait for the proper season of reaping them. Corn, if any were sown, would never ripen; lambs and calves would never grow up to sheep and cows, because the first person that met them would reflect, that he had better take them as they are, than leave them for another.

3. It prevents contests.

War and waste, tumult and confusion, must be unavoidable and eternal, where there is not enough for all, and where there are no rules to adjust the division.

4. It improves the conveniency of living.

This it does two ways. It enables mankind to divide themselves into distinct professions; which is impossible, unless a man can exchange the productions of his own art for what he wants from others; and exchange implies property. Much of the advantages of civilized over savage life depends upon this. When a man is from necessity his own tailor, tentmaker, carpenter, cook, huntsman, and fisherman, it is not probable that he will be expert at any of his callings. Hence the rude habitations, furniture, clothing, and implements of savages; and the tedious length of time which all their operations require.

It likewise encourages those arts, by which the accommodations of human life are supplied, by appropriating to the artist the benefit of his discoveries and improvements; without which appropriation, ingenuity will never be exerted with effect."*

The institution of property is founded on expediency. It is for the benefit of society, that property should be

* Paley's Mor. Philosophy, Book III. Part. I. Chap. 2.

established. But there is one kind of property, namely, property in *land*, which cannot be established, without leaving it to *the law of the country* to regulate the division. Of our right to this kind of property, therefore, the civil law is the immediate foundation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Promises.

"I. *From whence the obligation to perform promises arises.*

The obligation to perform promises may be deduced from the necessity of such a conduct to the well-being, or the existence, indeed, of human society. Men act from expectation. Expectation is in most cases determined by the assurances and engagements which we receive from others. If no dependence could be placed upon these assurances, it would be impossible to know what judgment to form of many future events, or how to regulate our conduct with respect to them. Confidence therefore in promises is essential to the intercourse of human life; because, without it, the greatest part of our conduct would proceed upon chance.

II. *In what sense promises are to be interpreted.*

Where the terms of promise admit of more senses than one, the promise is to be performed *in that sense in which the promiser apprehended at the time that the promisee received it.*

It is not the sense in which the promiser actually intended it, that always governs the interpretation of an equivocal promise; because, at that rate, you might excite expectation, which you never meant, nor would be obliged, to satisfy. Much less is it the sense, in which

the promisee actually received the promise; for, according to that rule, you might be drawn into engagements which you never designed to undertake. It must therefore be the sense (for there is no other remaining) in which the promiser believed that the promisee accepted his promise.

This will not differ from the actual intention of the promiser, where the promise is given without collusion or reserve; but we put the rule in the above form, to exclude evasion in cases in which the popular meaning of a phrase, and the strict grammatical signification of the words, differ; or, in general, wherever the promiser attempts to make his escape through some ambiguity in the expression which he used.

Temures promised the garrison of Sebastia, that, if they would surrender, *no blood should be shed.* The garrison surrendered; and Temures buried them all alive. Now Temures fulfilled the promise in one sense, and in the sense too in which he intended it at the time; but not in the sense in which the garrison of Sebastia actually received it, nor in the sense in which Temures himself knew that the garrison received it: which last sense, according to our rule, was the sense in which he was in conscience bound to perform it.

From the account we have given of the obligation of promises, it is evident, that this obligation depends upon the *expectations* which we knowingly and voluntarily excite. Consequently, any action or conduct towards another, which we are sensible excites expectations in that other, is as much a promise, and creates as strict an obligation, as the most express assurances. This is the foundation of *tacit promises.*

You may either simply declare your present intention, or you may accompany your declaration with an engagement to abide by it, which constitutes a complete promise.

In the first case, the duty is satisfied, if you were *sincere* at the time, that is, if you entertained at the time the intention you expressed, however soon, or for whatever reason, you afterwards change it. In the latter case, you have parted with the liberty of changing. All this is plain ; but it must be observed, that most of those forms of speech, which, strictly taken, amount to no more than declarations of present intention, do yet, in the usual way of understanding them, excite the expectation, and therefore carry with them the force of absolute promises. If you choose, therefore, to make known your present intention, and yet to reserve to yourself the liberty of changing it, you must guard your expressions by an additional clause, as " I intend *at present—if I do not alter*"—or the like. And after all, as there can be no reason for communicating your intention, but to excite some degree of expectation or other, a wanton change of an intention which is once disclosed, always disappoints somebody ; and is always, for that reason, wrong."

The expression of a present *resolution* or *determination*, if there is no design to excite expectation, is to be considered in the same light as the expression of a present intention; only, the stronger is the language used, the greater need there is of caution, lest expectation should be excited and some one disappointed, or lest there should be a want of decision in our character.

In the interpretation of promises, *circumstances* are to be included, as well as the *principal* thing promised. One of the most important of these is *time*. A man is as much under obligation to do a thing at the time at which he promised to do it, or at which he supposed it was understood that he should do it, as he is to do it at all. Many, however, who have not formed a general habit of *punctuality*, are very negligent in this respect. They do not consider, that the business of others will not always bear

to be *out of time and out of place*, so well as their own. Some make a practice of being an hour, or half an hour behind hand in everything. They are as invariably and as systematically too late, as if it were a capital crime to do a thing when it should be done. We can hardly expect such men to be punctual in any particular instance, until their general practice is reformed. In order to effect such a reformation, let them be made to see the pernicious tendency of a habit of negligence and procrastination, both as it respects their own interest and that of their neighbors; and let them be made to feel, that a want of punctuality in fulfilling engagements, is actually a breach of promise, and a sin against God.

"III. *In what cases promises are not binding.*

1. Promises are not binding, where the performance is *impossible*. But observe, that the promiser is guilty of a fraud, and is justly answerable in an equivalent, if he is secretly aware of the impossibility, at the time of making the promise. When the promiser himself occasions the impossibility, it is neither more nor less than a direct breach of promise; as when a soldier maims, or a servant disables himself, to get rid of his engagements.

2. Promises are not binding, where the performance is *unlawful*.

There are two cases of this; one, where the unlawfulness is known to the parties at the time of making the promise; in which case they are not obliged to perform what the promise requires, because they were under a prior obligation to the contrary. The other case is, where the unlawfulness did not exist, or was not known, at the time of making the promise. The lawfulness, therefore, becomes a *condition* of the promise; which condition failing, the obligation ceases." If the promiser is aware of the unlawfulness of a promise, at the time of making it, and the promisee is not, the former is just-

ly answerable in an equivalent, as in the case of promises of which the performance is impossible.

"I would recommend, to young persons especially, a caution, from the neglect of which many involve themselves in embarrassment and disgrace; and that is, never to give a promise, which may interfere in the event with their duty; for, if it do so interfere, their duty must be discharged, though at the expense of their promise, and not unusually of their good name.

It is the *performance* being unlawful, and not any unlawfulness in the subject or motive of the promise, which destroys its validity: therefore the reward of any crime, after the crime is committed, ought, if promised, to be paid. For the sin and mischief, by this supposition, are over; and will be neither more nor less for the performance of the promise. In like manner, a promise does not lose its obligation merely because it proceeded from an unlawful motive.

A promise cannot be deemed unlawful, where it produces, when performed, no effect, beyond what would have taken place had the promise never been made. And this is the single case, in which the obligation of a promise will justify a conduct, which, unless it had been promised, would be unjust. A captive may lawfully recover his liberty, by a promise of neutrality; for his conqueror takes nothing by the promise, which he might not have secured by his death or confinement; and neutrality would be innocent in him although criminal in another. It is manifest, however, that promises which come into the place of coercion, can extend no farther than to passive compliances; for coercion itself could compel no more. Upon the same principle, promises of secrecy ought not to be violated, although the public would derive advantage from the discovery. Such promises contain no unlawfulness in them, to destroy their

obligation; for, as the information would not have been imparted upon any other condition, the public lose nothing by the promise, which they would have gained without it.

3. Promises are not binding, where they *contradict a former promise.* Because the performance is then unlawful; which resolves this case into the last.

4. Promises are not binding *before acceptance.* Where the promise is beneficial, however, if notice be given, acceptance may be presumed.

5. Promises are not binding, which are *released by the promisee.*

6. *Erroneous* promises are not binding in certain cases; as,

1. Where the error proceeds from the mistake or misrepresentation of the promisee.

Because a promise evidently supposes the truth of the account, which the promisee relates in order to obtain it. A beggar solicits your charity by a story of the most pitiable distress—you promise to relieve him, if he will call again—in the interval you discover his story to be made up of lies—this discovery, no doubt, releases you from your promise. One wants your service, describes the business or office for which he would engage you—you promise to undertake it—when you come to enter upon it, you find the profits less, the labor more, or some material circumstance different from the account he gave you.—In such case you are not bound by your promise.

2. When the promise is understood by the promisee to proceed upon a certain supposition, or when the promiser apprehended it to be so understood, and that supposition turns out to be false; then the promise is not binding.

This intricate rule will be best explained by an example. A father receives an account from abroad of the

death of his only son,—soon after which he promises his fortune to his nephew.—The account turns out to be false.—The father, we say, is released from his promise; not merely because he never would have made it, had he known the truth of the case,—for that alone will not do;—but because the nephew also himself understood the promise to proceed upon the supposition of his cousin's death; or at least his uncle thought he so understood it; and could not think otherwise. The promise proceeded upon this supposition in the promiser's own apprehension, and, as he believed, in the apprehension of both parties; and this belief of his is the precise circumstance which sets him free. The foundation of the rule is plainly this; a man is bound only to satisfy the expectation which he intended to excite; whatever condition, therefore, he intended to subject that expectation to, becomes an essential condition of the promise.

Errors, which come not within this description, do not annul the obligation of a promise. A father promises a certain fortune with his daughter; but his circumstances turn out, upon examination, worse than he was aware of. Here the promise was erroneous, but will nevertheless be obligatory.

It has long been controverted among moralists, whether promises are binding, which are extorted by violence or fear. The obligation of all promises results, we have seen, from the necessity or the use of that confidence which mankind repose in them. The question, therefore, whether these promises are binding, will depend upon this, whether mankind, upon the whole, are benefitted by the confidence placed in such promises. A highwayman attacks you,—and being disappointed of his booty, threatens or prepares to murder you; you promise, with many solemn asseverations, that if he will spare

your life, he shall find a purse of money left for him, at a place appointed; upon the faith of this promise, he forbears from farther violence. Now your life was saved by the confidence reposed in a promise extorted by fear; and the lives of many others may be saved by the same. This is a good consequence. On the other hand, confidence in promises like these greatly facilitates the perpetration of robberies. They may be made the instruments of almost unlimited extortion. This is a bad consequence; and in the question between the importance of these opposite consequences, resides the doubt concerning the obligation of such promises.

Vows are promises to God. The obligation cannot be made out upon the same principle as that of other promises. The violation of them, nevertheless, implies a want of reverence to the Supreme Being; which is enough to make it sinful.

There appears no command or encouragement in the Christian Scriptures to make vows; much less any authority to break through them when they are made. The rules we have laid down concerning promises, are applicable to vows."*

The student may be requested to solve the following questions, stating, in each case, the reasons of his decision.

1. Was Jephthah's vow binding, taken in the sense in which that transaction is commonly understood? See Judges, xi. 30—40.

2. Was Herod's promise to his daughter-in-law binding? Matt. xiv.

3. A man, in the life time of his wife, pays his addresses, and promises marriage, to another woman. His wife dying, the woman demands the performance of the promise. Is he bound to perform it?

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III. Part I. Chap. 5.

4. "I have promised to bestow a sum of money upon some good and respectable purpose. In the interval between the promise and my fulfilling it, a greater and nobler purpose offers itself, which calls with an imperious voice for my co-operation. Which ought I to prefer?"—*Godwin.*

5. It is a common saying, that "a bad promise is better broke than kept." What is the tendency of this maxim? In what sense is it correct? and in what incorrect?

CHAPTER XIV.

Contracts.

"A contract is a mutual promise. The obligation, therefore, of contracts; the sense in which they are to be interpreted; and the cases where they are not binding, will be the same as of promises.

From the principle established in the last chapter, 'that the obligation of promises is to be measured by the expectation which the promiser any-how voluntarily and knowingly excites,' results a rule, which governs the construction of all contracts, and is capable, from its simplicity, of being applied with great ease and certainty, viz. That,

Whatever is expected by one side, and known to be so expected by the other, is to be deemed a part or condition of the contract."*

I. "*Contracts of Sale.* The rule of justice which needs with the most anxiety to be inculcated in the making of bargains, is, that the seller is bound in conscience

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III. Part I. Chap. 6.

to disclose the faults of what he offers for sale. Among other methods of proving this, one may be the following.

I suppose it will be allowed, that to advance a direct falsehood in recommendation of our wares, by ascribing to them some quality which we know that they have not, is dishonest. Now compare with this the designed concealment of some fault, which we know that they have. The motives and the effects of actions are the only points of comparison, in which their moral quality can differ; but the motives in these two cases are the same, viz. to procure a higher price than we expect otherwise to obtain: the effect, that is, the prejudice to the buyer, is also the same; for he finds himself equally out of pocket by his bargain, whether the commodity, when he gets home with it, turn out worse than he had supposed, by the want of some quality which he expected, or the discovery of some fault which he did not expect. If, therefore, actions are the same, as to all moral purposes, which proceed from the same motives, and produce the same effects, it is making a distinction without a difference, to esteem it a *cheat* to magnify beyond the truth the virtues of what we have to sell, but none to conceal its faults.

It adds to the value of this kind of honesty, that the faults of many things are of a nature not to be known by any, but by the persons who have used them: so that the buyer has no security from imposition, but in the ingenuousness and integrity of the seller.

To this of concealing the faults of what we want to put off, may be referred the practice of passing bad money. This practice we sometimes hear defended by a vulgar excuse, that we have taken the money for good, and must therefore get rid of it. Which excuse is much the same as if one, who had been robbed upon the highway, should allege that he had a right to reimburse himself out of the pocket of the first traveller he met; the

justice of which reasoning the traveller possibly might not comprehend.

If the thing sold be damaged, or perish, between the sale and the delivery, ought the buyer to bear the loss, or the seller? This will depend upon the particular construction of the contract. If the seller, either expressly, or by implication, or by custom, engage to *deliver* the goods; as if I buy a set of china, and the china-man ask me to what place he shall bring or send them, and they be broken in the conveyance, the seller must abide by the loss. If the thing sold remain with the seller, at the instance or for the convenience of the buyer, then the buyer undertakes the risk; as if I buy a horse, and mention, that I will send for it on such a day, which is in effect desiring that it may continue with the seller till I do send for it, then, whatever misfortune befalls the horse in the mean time, must be at my cost.

And here, once for all, I would observe, that innumerable questions of this sort are determined solely by *custom;* not that custom possesses any proper authority to alter or ascertain the nature of right and wrong; but because the contracting parties are presumed to include in their stipulation, all the conditions which custom has annexed to contracts of the same sort; and when the usage is notorious, and no exception made to it, this presumption is generally agreeable to the fact."*

II. "*Contracts of Hazard.* In speculations in trade, or in the stocks, if I exercise my judgment upon the general aspect and posture of public affairs, and deal with a person who conducts himself by the same sort of judgment, the contract has all the equality in it which is necessary! but if I have access to secrets of state at home, or private advice of some decisive measure or event abroad, I can-

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III. Part I. Chap. 7.

not avail myself of these advantages with justice, because they are excluded by the contract, which proceeded upon the supposition. that I had no such advantage.

In insurances, in which the underwriter computes his risk entirely from the account given by the person insured, it is absolutely necessary to the justice and validity of the contract, that this account be exact and complete."*

III. "*Contracts of Lending Inconsumable Property.* When the identical loan is to be returned, as a book, a horse, a harpsichord, it is called *inconsumable*, in opposition to corn, wine, money, and those things which perish, or are parted with in the use, and can therefore only be restored in kind.

The questions under this head are few and simple. The first is, if the thing lent be lost or damaged, who ought to bear the loss or damage? If it be damaged by the use, or by accident in the use, for which it was lent, the lender ought to bear it; as if I hire a job coach, the wear, tear, and soiling of the coach, must belong to the lender; or a horse to go a particular journey, and in going the proposed journey, the horse die, or he be lamed, the loss must be the lender's: on the contrary, if the damage be occasioned by the fault of the borrower, or by accident in some use for which it was not lent, then the borrower must make it good.

The two cases are distinguished by this circumstance, that in one case, the owner foresees the damage or risk, and therefore consents to undertake it; in the other case, he does not.

It is possible that an estate or a house may, during the term of a lease, be so increased or diminished in its value, as to become worth much more, or much less, than the rent agreed to be paid for it. In some of which cas-

* Ibid. Chap. 8.

es it may be doubted, to whom, of natural right, the advantage or disadvantage belongs. The rule of justice seems to be this: If the alteration might be *expected* by the parties, the hirer must take the consequences; if it could not, the owner."*

IV. "*Contracts concerning the Lending of Money.*—The rate of interest has in most countries been regulated by law. The policy of these regulations is to check the power of accumulating wealth, without industry; and to give encouragement to trade, by enabling adventurers in it to borrow money at a moderate price; and of late years, to enable the state to borrow the subject's money itself.

Compound interest, though forbidden by the law of England, is agreeable enough to natural equity; for interest detained after it is due, becomes, to all intents and purposes, part of the sum lent.

Whoever borrows money, is bound in conscience to repay it. This every man can see; but every man cannot see, or does not however reflect, that he is, in consequence, also bound to use the means necessary to enable himself to repay it.

As to the imprisonment of insolvent debtors, if we consider it as a public punishment, founded upon the same reason, and subject to the same rules, as other punishments, the justice of it, together with the degree to which it should be extended, and the objects upon whom it may be inflicted, will be apparent."†

V. "*Contracts of Labor.* 1. *Service.* Service ought always to be voluntary, and by contract; and the master's authority to extend no farther than the terms or equitable construction of the contract will justify.

Clerks and apprentices ought to be employed entirely in the profession or trade which they are intended to

* Ibid. Chap. 9. † Ibid Chap. 10.

learn. Instruction is their hire; and to deprive them of the opportunities of instruction, by taking up their time with occupations foreign to their business, is to defraud them of their wages.

The master is responsible for what a servant does in the ordinary course of his employment; for it is done under a general authority committed to him, which is in justice equivalent to a specific direction.

A master of a family is culpable, if he permits any vices among his domestics, which he might restrain by due discipline and a proper interference. This results from the general obligation to prevent misery when in our power; and the assurance which we have, that vice and misery at the long run go together. Care to maintain in his family a sense of virtue and religion, received the divine approbation in the person of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and *his household* after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."*

2. "*Commissions.* Whoever undertakes another man's business, makes it his own, that is, promises to employ upon it the same care, attention, and diligence, that he would do if it were actually his own: for he knows that the business was committed to him with that expectation.

The agent may be a sufferer in his own person or property by the business which he undertakes; as where one goes a journey for another, and lames his horse, or is hurt himself, by a fall upon the road; can the agent in such case claim a compensation for the misfortune? Unless the same be provided for by express stipulation, the agent is not entitled to any compensation from his employer on that account: for whoever knowingly undertakes a dangerous employment, in common construction, takes upon himself the danger and the consequences."†

* Ibid. Chap. 11. † Ibid. Chap. 12.

CHAPTER XV.

Lies.

"A lie is a breach of promise: for whoever seriously addresses his discourse to another, tacitly promises to speak the truth, because he knows the truth is expected.

Or the obligation of veracity may be made out from the direct ill consequences of lying to social happiness. These consequences consist, either in some specific injury to particular individuals, or in the destruction of that confidence, which is essential to the intercourse of human life: for which latter reason, a lie may be pernicious in its general tendency, and therefore criminal, though it produce no particular or visible mischief to any one.

There are falsehoods which are not lies; that is, which are not criminal; as,

1. Where no one is deceived; which is the case in parables and fables.

2. Where the person to whom you speak has no right to know the truth, or, more properly, where little or no inconvenience results from the want of confidence in such cases; as where you tell a falsehood to a madman, for his own advantage; to a robber, to conceal your property; to an assassin, to defeat or divert him from his purpose. The particular consequence is, by the supposition, beneficial; and, as to the general consequence, the worst that can happen is, that the madman, the robber, the assassin, will not trust you again; which (beside that the first is incapable of deducing regular conclusions from having been once deceived, and the two last not likely to come a second time in your way) is sufficiently compensated by the immediate benefit which you propose by the falsehood."

Such is the language of Dr. Paley. It may be questioned, however, whether he has allowed sufficient weight to the "general consequence" in regard to the duty of keeping a promise,* and speaking the truth to a robber or an assassin. If there is indeed no obligation in such cases, then the subject ought to be so understood by the public, and all men ought to practice accordingly. That which it is right for an individual to do, it is right for all to do in similar circumstances. But as soon as this sentiment and practice become universal or general, robbers and assassins will cease to repose confidence in promises and declarations that are made to them; and many lives will be lost, which might otherwise be saved. How much *property*, let me ask, must be saved, to be an *equivalent* for the *lives* thus lost? And just in proportion as the sentiment I am opposing prevails, just so far is this evil produced. If I were to fall into the hands of an highwayman, I should hope he had not read Paley's Philosophy, lest he should suspect me to be of the same sentiment.

"The worst consequence that can happen," says Dr. Paley, "is, that the robber or assassin will not trust you again; and they are not likely to come a second time in your way." But they are likely to come in *somebody's* way; and if they have been deceived once, they will be the more likely to refuse their confidence to the next man they meet. If they have been deceived repeatedly, they will most certainly trust no man any more. Shall I endanger the lives of my *neighbors*, for the sake of saving a little property? This may be consistent enough with a system of ethics, which makes the very essence of virtue to consist in supreme selfishness; but it is repugnant to the benevolent spirit of the gospel.—Besides, it is

* See p. 195.

possible that the robber may come in *my* way again. He may even seek me out of revenge for the deception I have practised upon him. How much property must I save by falsehood, to be "sufficiently compensated" for the danger to which my life would thus be exposed?

But supposing that property may be so *concealed* by telling a falsehood, that the robber shall never discover the deception, is not falsehood justifiable then? No; for, in the first place, I cannot be *certain* that the deception will not be discovered. If the property in question be about my person, or my carriage, the robber may make trial of my integrity by searching for it; and when he finds it, may stab me to the heart through indignation at the lie I have told him. Even robbers have a sense of the baseness of deception,—especially when it is practised upon themselves. In the second place, "if I have been habitually accustomed to regard a lie with abhorrence, it is extremely improbable that I shall be able to tell one, in such circumstances, with that firmness and freedom from embarrassment, which will make it effectual."* And in the third place, if the lie be *successful*, it may eventually do me more harm, than the loss of property or even of life: it will almost inevitably weaken my general respect for truth.

We have been considering the lawfulness of violating truth for the sake of saving property. It is a more difficult question, whether truth may be violated by a person who is placed in a situation where a lie appears to be the only means of saving his life. This question, too, must, I think, be answered in the negative. "Instances continually occur, in which men risk their lives, in various ways, to defend their property; but if it is justifiable to avoid such risk, where truth must for this purpose

*Rees's Cyclopedia.

be violated, then truth is to be regarded as of less value than money."* Besides, "if it is right to preserve life by falsehood, it must be wrong to forfeit it by adherence to truth; and yet, we conceive there are few who would not cordially approve and admire the conduct of him, who, in such circumstances, followed truth at the certain risk of his life. As far as his conduct is known, it necessarily tends to produce a steady love of duty, a decided attachment to principle. As far as the conduct of one who has preserved his life by a violation of truth, is known, and regarded as justifiable, it tends to weaken the sense of the obligation of a virtue, which is of the first importance to the well-being of society."*

In the preceding remarks, I have rested the argument entirely on human reason and experience. If there were need of it, the argument might be confirmed by the infallible authority of the word of God.†

"If any one should be exposed to a trial so severe as what we have been considering, let him call to mind, that there is something more valuable than life and every external means of comfort,—the approbation of our own hearts, and the present and final approbation of Him who is greater than the heart."‡

As to telling a falsehood to a *madman*, it seems to be a case of a totally different kind. The prohibitions of scripture seem hardly applicable to our conduct toward such a man, since he cannot be regarded as a moral agent. The only general consequences to be apprehended, appear to be the two following: First, if those who have the care of madmen, very frequently practice deception upon them, there is some danger of their forming a *habit*

* Rees's Cyclopedia.

† See p. 91. See also Deut. xxxii. 4; Eph. iv. 25; Col. iii. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 2; Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 15.

‡ Rees's Cyclopedia.

of deception, and sometimes practising it upon others.* Secondly, if *children* were to see deception practised upon mad people, it might produce a bad effect upon them. After allowing due weight to these considerations, the only question appears to be, Whether the madman can, on the whole, be managed to better advantage with the help of deception, than without it.

The lawfulness of deception in *war*, is another difficult case. As it is allowed by the laws of war, and it is so understood, there seems to be no *unfairness* in it. But would it not be equally fair for the contending parties, and more to the honor of the nations of the earth, if "the laws of war" were so *amended*, as to forbid the practice of deception? At any rate, if deception is necessary, and for that reason justifiable, in war, we can only say, that war itself is unlawful; that the engaging in it, except for the defence of life or liberty, is a crime of the deepest die; and that, therefore, we need not wonder, if one crime draws another in its train.

One or two cases remain, not mentioned by Dr. Paley. Many, in their intercourse with *children*, seem to feel released from the obligation of truth and sincerity. This probably arises from an idea, that the tendency of deceiving them is not hurtful, as in the case of adults. But this is an unhappy mistake. The practice of deceiving children is productive of the most pernicious consequences. The formation of their character commences, at least as soon as they are capable of being deceived; and an acquaintance with the elementary principles of education, must impress on the mind of every one the conviction, that in our intercourse with children, even in their earliest years, the strictest truth and sincerity ought to be observed.

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*See p. 80.

There is one case more, in which many think it right to deceive. It sometimes happens that the life of a *sick person* would be apparently endangered, by his being made acquainted with some event, which yet it is difficult to conceal from him without telling a falsehood. On this subject I would offer the following remarks.

1. It may be presumed, that in most instances of the kind, the event may, by proper caution, be concealed without resorting to falsehood.

2. The news in question may have a different effect on the sick person from what is commonly apprehended. But of this a physician is the most competent judge.

3. If any curiosity or suspicion is excited in the sick person, it is seldom that the attendants can completely remove it, even by the aid of direct falsehood. The countenance, tone, and manner, will often contradict the tongue. It may therefore be better for the patient, to make to him a gradual disclosure of the truth, than to let him suffer the anxiety and agitation of suspicion and suspense.

4. If it is admitted, that it is right to deceive the sick, for their benefit, this maxim will be remembered on the sick-bed. The sick person will thus be led to feel a continual distrust of those about him, even when they speak the truth. This is a *general* bad consequence, which seems sufficient to overbalance the particular good consequence that might be hoped for in the few cases where it might seem necessary to practise deception.

5. "Deceiving the sick contributes greatly, and almost inevitably, and far beyond usual estimation, to lessen the regard to truth in those around us."* And it must produce the same effect upon ourselves, even when it is unknown to others.

* Rees's Cyclopedia.

Finally, let us remember, that it can hardly meet the approbation of the God of Truth, in whose hand, and at whose disposal the sick person is, that we should resort to falsehood or deception as a means of prolonging life.

As the evil of lying consists in the *deception*, it follows, that any mode whatever of deceiving, involves the guilt of lying. *Exaggeration* and *misrepresentation* in relating a fact or telling a story, are as bad as downright lying; and sometimes worse, because the mixture of truth in the narrative, is more likely to gain credit to the whole. Many people indulge in fiction and exaggeration in telling stories, for the sake of affording amusement or exciting wonder, thinking there can be no harm in it, as it makes no difference to any body whether what they tell be true or false. But harm may sometimes follow, which is not foreseen. Besides, such a habit cannot but diminish the confidence that is placed in one's veracity. And what is more, the habit has a pernicious effect on the person himself. "I have seldom," says Dr. Paley, "known any one who deserted truth in trifles, that could be trusted in matters of importance."

Again, every species of *equivocation* involves the guilt of lying. "It is the wilful deceit that makes the lie; and we wilfully deceive, when our expressions are not true in the sense in which we believe the hearer to apprehend them: besides that it is absurd to contend for any sense of words in opposition to usage; for all senses of all words are founded upon usage, and upon nothing else.

Or a man may *act* a lie; as by pointing his finger in a wrong direction, when a traveller inquires of him his road: for to all moral purposes, and therefore as to veracity, speech and action are the same; speech being only a mode of action.

Or, lastly, there may be lies of *omission*."* When a man professes, or means to be understood, to tell the whole truth on any subject, the intentional concealment of any part, involves all the guilt of direct lying. The case of Ananias and Sapphira is in point. Their crime consisted, not in keeping back a part of the price of the land, but in *professing* to lay the *whole* at the apostles' feet. When Sapphira was interrogated whether they sold the land for 'so much,' she replied in the affirmative. How many there are who practice equivocation of the same kind; and some,—palpably base as the subterfuge is,—even pretend to justify themselves, saying, "I did not tell a lie; I *did* sell the land for *so much*,—and more." Let those who deceive in this way, compare their case with that of Sapphira; and learn in what light their equivocation is regarded by Him who searcheth the heart and who cannot be deceived.

CHAPTER XVI.

Oaths.

"An oath is the calling upon God to witness, i. e. to take notice of what we say, and it is invoking his vengeance, or renouncing his favor, if what we say be false, or what we promise be not performed.

Quakers and Moravians refuse to swear upon any occasion; founding their scruples concerning the *lawfulness* of oaths upon our Savior's prohibition, Matt. v. 34." 'But the clause, "not at all" is to be read in connection with what follows: "Swear not at all, either by the

* Paley's Mor. Philos. Book III. Part I. Chap. 15.

heaven, or by the earth," &c.' It is well known that the Greek language frequently admits two negative particles, where the English admits but one. 'Hence, we may conclude that our Savior meant to prohibit, not judicial oaths, but merely such forms of swearing as he enumerated, which do not appear ever to have been made use of among the Jews in judicial oaths. St. James's words, ch. 5. v. 12, are to be interpreted in the same way: "Swear not, either by heaven, or by earth, or by any oath of the kind."

The guilt of perjury is greater than that of lying, because it is a sin of greater deliberation, and in defiance of the sanctions of religion; and also because it violates a superior confidence, and therefore, in its general consequence, strikes at the security of reputation, property, and even of life itself.' "It merits public consideration, however, whether the requiring of oaths on so many frivolous occasions, especially in the customs, and in the qualification for petty offices, has any other effect, than to make them cheap in the minds of the people."*

For the sense in which oaths are to be interpreted, and the cases in which they are not binding, see the chapter on Promises.

"In taking an "Oath in evidence," the witness swears "to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, touching the matter in question." Upon which it may be observed, that the designed concealment of any truth, which relates to the matter in agitation, is as much a violation of the oath, as to testify a positive falsehood; and this whether the witness be interrogated on that particular point or not."†

* Ibid. Chap. 16. † Ibid. Chap. 17.

CHAPTER XVII.

Wills.

"MANY beneficial purposes are attained by extending the owner's power over his property beyond his life, and beyond his natural right. It invites to industry, encourages marriage, and secures the dutifulness and dependency of children.

From the consideration that wills are the creatures of the municipal law which gives them their efficacy, may be deduced a determination of the question, whether the intention of the testator in an *informal* will be binding upon the conscience of those, who, by operation of law, succeed to his estate. By an *informal* will, I mean a will void in law, for want of some requisite formality, though no doubt be entertained of its meaning or authenticity.

Generally speaking, the heir at law is not bound by the intention of the testator. For the intention can signify nothing, unless the person intending have a right to govern the descent of the estate. That is the first question. Now this right the testator can only derive from the law of the land; but the law confers the right upon certain conditions, with which conditions he has not complied. Had testamentary dispositions been founded in any natural right, independent of positive constitutions, I should have thought differently of this question."*

* Ibid. Chap. 23.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the Conjugal Relation.

It may not be improper to introduce the present chapter with a few remarks on such crimes, resulting from the constitution of the sexes, as may be committed without entering the conjugal relation. The remarks that follow, are in the language of Dr. Paley.

I. Fornication.

"The following are some of the mischiefs of promiscuous concubinage.

1. Fornication supposes prostitution; and prostitution brings and leaves the victims of it to almost certain misery. It is no small quantity of misery in the aggregate, which, between want, disease, and insult, is suffered by those outcasts of human society, who infest popular cities; the whole of which is a *general consequence* of fornication, and to the increase and continuance of which, every instance of fornication contributes.

2. Fornication produces habits of ungovernable lewdness, which introduce the more aggravated crimes of seduction, adultery, violation, &c. Likewise,—however it be accounted for,—the criminal commerce of the sexes corrupts and depraves the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatsoever. It prepares an easy admission for every sin that seeks it; and is usually the first stage in men's progress to the most desperate villanies. Add to this, that habits of libertinism incapacitate and indispose the mind for all intellectual, moral, and religious pleasures; which is a great loss to any man's happiness.

3. Fornication perpetuates a disease, which may be accounted one of the sorest maladies of human nature; and the effects of which are said to visit the constitution of even distant generations.

The christian scriptures condemn fornication absolutely and peremptorily. "Out of the heart," says our Savior, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, *fornications*, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man." These are Christ's own words; and one word from him upon the subject, is final.

If fornication is criminal, all those incentives which lead to it, are accessaries to the crime, as lascivious conversation, whether expressed in obscene or disguised under modest phrases; also wanton songs, pictures, books; the writing, publishing and circulating of which, whether out of frolic, or for some pitiful profit, is productive of so extensive a mischief from so mean a temptation, that few crimes, within the reach of private wickedness, have more to answer for, or less to plead in their excuse.

The invitation, or voluntary admission, of impure thoughts, or the suffering them to get possession of the imagination, falls within the same description, and is condemned by Christ, Matt. v. 28: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Christ, by thus enjoining a regulation of the thoughts, strikes at the root of the evil."*

II. Seduction.

"Seduction is seldom accomplished without fraud; and the fraud is by so much more criminal than other frauds, as the injury effected by it is greater, continues longer, and less admits of reparation.

* Paley's Moral Philos. Book III. Part III. Chap. 2.

This injury is threefold; to the woman, to her family, and to the public.

The injury to the woman is made up, of the *pain* she suffers from shame, of the *loss* she sustains in her reputation and prospects of marriage, and of the *depravation of her moral principle.*

This *pain* must be extreme, if we may judge of it from those barbarous endeavors to conceal their disgrace, to which women, under such circumstances, sometimes have recourse; comparing also this barbarity with their passionate fondness for their offspring in other cases. Nothing but an agony of mind the most insupportable, can induce a woman to forget her nature, and the pity which even a stranger would show to a helpless and imploring infant. It is true, that all are not urged to this extremity; but if any are, it affords an indication of how much all suffer from the same cause. What shall we say to the authors of such mischief?

The *loss*, which a woman sustains by the ruin of her reputation, almost exceeds computation.—The loss of her chastity is also generally the *destruction of her moral principle;* and this consequence is to be apprehended, whether the criminal intercourse be discovered or not.

The injury to the *family* may be understood, by the application of that infallible rule, "of doing to others what we would that others should do to us." Let a father or a brother say, for what consideration he would suffer this injury to a daughter or a sister; and whether any, or even a total loss of fortune could create equal affliction and distress.

Upon the whole, if we pursue the effects of seduction through the complicated misery which it occasions; and if it be right to estimate crimes by the mischief they knowingly produce, it will appear something more than

mere invective to assert, that not one half of the crimes for which men suffer death by the laws of England, are so flagitious as this."*

III. ADULTERY.

"A new sufferer is introduced, the injured husband who receives a wound in his sensibility and affections the most painful and incurable that human nature knows. In all other respects, adultery on the part of the man who solicits the chastity of a married woman, includes the crime of seduction, and is attended with the same mischief.

The infidelity of the woman is aggravated by cruelty to her children, who are generally involved in their parents' shame, and always made unhappy by their quarrel.

If it be said that these consequences are chargeable not so much upon the crime, as the discovery, we answer, first, that the crime could not be discovered unless it were committed, and that the commission is never secure from discovery; and secondly, that if we excuse adulterous connections, whenever they can hope to escape detection, which is the conclusion to which this argument conducts us, we leave the husband no other security for his wife's chastity, than in her want of opportunity or temptation; which would probably either deter men, from marrying, or render marriage a state of such jealousy and alarm to the husband, as must end in the slavery and confinement of the wife.

All behavior which is designed, or which knowingly tends, to captivate the affections of a married woman, is a barbarous intrusion upon the peace and virtue of a family, though it fall short of adultery.

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* Ibid. Chap. 3.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery," was an interdict delivered by God himself. By the Jewish law, adultery was capital to both parties in the crime: "Even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death."* †

IV. Incest.

"In order to preserve chastity in families, and between persons of different sexes, brought up and living together in a state of unreserved intimacy, it is necessary by every method possible to inculcate an abhorrence of incestuous connections; which abhorrence can only be upheld by the absolute reprobation of *all* commerce of the sexes between near relations. Upon this principle, the *marriage*, as well as other cohabitations, of brothers and sisters, of lineal kindred, and of all who usually live in the same family, may be said to be forbidden by the law of nature."‡

V. Polygamy.

"The equality in the number of males and females born into the world, intimates the intention of God, that one woman should be assigned to one man. It seems also a significant indication of the divine will, that he at first created only one woman to one man.

Polygamy not only violates the constitution of nature, and the apparent design of the Deity, but produces contests and jealousies among the wives of the same husband, and distracted affections, or the loss of all affection, in the husband himself.

Polygamy is retained to this day among the Turks, and throughout every part of Asia in which Christianity

* Lev. xx. 10. † Paley's Moral Philos. Book III. Part III. Chap. 4.
‡ Ibid. Chap. 5.

is not professed. In christian countries, it is universally prohibited. In Sweden, it is punished with death."*

VI. DIVORCE.

"The power of dissolving the marriage contract, was allowed to the husband, among the Jews, the Greeks, and latter Romans; and is at this day exercised by the Turks and Persians. The congruity of such a right with the law of nature, is the question before us. And, in the first place, it is manifestly inconsistent with the duty, which the parents owe to their children; which duty can never be so well fulfilled, as by their cohabitation and united care.

A lawgiver, whose counsels are directed by views of general utility, would make the marriage contract indissoluble during the joint lives of the parties, for the sake of the following advantages:

1. Because this tends to preserve peace and concord between married persons, by perpetuating their common interest, and by inducing a necessity of mutual compliance.

2. Because new objects of desire would be continually sought after, if men could, at will, be released from their subsisting engagements.

The law of nature admits of an exception in favor of the injured party, in cases of adultery, of obstinate desertion, of attempts upon life, of outrageous cruelty, of incurable madness, and, perhaps, of personal imbecility.

The scriptures seem to have drawn the obligation tighter than the law of nature left it. "Whoever," saith Christ, "shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away, committeth adul-

* Ibid. Chap. 6.

tery."* And there seems to be no sufficient reason to depart from the plain and strict meaning of Christ's words. The rule was new. It both surprised and offended his disciples; yet Christ added nothing to relax or explain it.

Inferior causes may justify the separation of husband and wife, although they will not authorize such a dissolution of the marriage contract, as would leave either party at liberty to marry again; for it is that liberty in which the danger and mischief of divorces principally consist. If the care of children does not require that they should live together, and it is become, in the serious judgment of both, necessary for their mutual happiness that they should separate, let them separate by consent. Nevertheless, this necessity can hardly exist, without guilt and misconduct on one side or on both. Moreover, cruelty, ill usage, extreme violence or moroseness of temper, or other great and continued provocations, make it lawful for the party aggrieved to withdraw from the society of the offender without his or her consent."†

VII. MARRIAGE.

"The parties, by the marriage vow, engage their personal fidelity expressly and specifically; they engage likewise to consult and promote each other's happiness; the wife, moreover, promises *obedience* to her husband. Nature may have made and left the sexes of the human species nearly equal in their faculties, and perfectly so in their rights; but to guard against those competitions which equality, or a contested superiority, is almost sure to produce, the christian scriptures enjoin upon the wife that obedience which she here promises.

Whoever is conscious, at the time of his marriage, of such a dislike to the woman he is about to marry, or of such a subsisting attachment to some other woman, that

* Matt. xix. 9. † Paley's Moral Philos. Book III. Part III. Chap. 7.

he cannot reasonably, nor does in fact, expect ever to entertain an affection for his future wife, is guilty, when he pronounces the marriage vow, of a direct and deliberate prevarication; and that, too, aggravated by the presence of those ideas of religion, and of the Supreme Being, which the ritual, and the solemnity of the occasion, cannot fail of bringing to his thoughts. The same likewise of the woman.

The marriage vow is violated,

1. By adultery.

2. By any behavior which, knowingly, renders the life of the other miserable; as desertion, neglect, prodigality, drunkenness, peevishness, penuriousness, jealousy, or any levity of conduct which administers occasion of jealousy."*

The following remarks of Dr. Brown "On the Duties of the Conjugal Relation," are worthy to be read, not only before fixing the choice of a companion for life, but also "after twenty years of wedlock:"†

"The duties of the conjugal relation, like the duties of all our other reciprocal affinities, however minutely divided and subdivided, are involved in the simple obligation to make those who are the objects of it, *as happy as it is in our power to make them.*

In these few simple words, however, what a complication of duties is involved,—of duties, which it is less easy for the ethical inquirer to state and define, than for the heart which feels affection, to exercise them all with instant readiness. He who loves sincerely the object of any one of those relations which bind us together in amity, and who is wise enough to discern the difference of conferring a momentary gratification, which

* Ibid. Chap. 8. † Brown's Philosophy, Lect. 88.

may produce more misery than happiness, and of conferring that which is not merely present happiness, but a source of future enjoyment,—needs no rule of duty, as far at least as relates to that single individual, for the direction of a conduct, of which love itself, unaided by any other guidance, will be a quick and vigilant director.

The husband should have, then, as his great object and rule of conduct, the happiness of the wife. Of that happiness, the confidence in *his* affection is the chief element; and the proofs of this affection on his part, therefore, constitute his chief duty,—an affection that is not lavish of caresses only, as if these were the only demonstrations of love, but of that respect which distinguishes love as a *principle*, from that brief passion which assumes, and only assumes, the name,—a respect which consults the judgment as well as the wishes, of the object beloved,—which considers *her*, who is worthy of being taken to the heart, as worthy of being admitted to all the counsels of the heart. If there are any delights, of which he feels the value as essential to his own happiness,—if his soul be sensible to the charms of literary excellence,—and if he considers the improvement of his own understanding, and the cultivation of his own taste, as a duty, and one of the most delightful duties of an intellectual being,—he will not consider it as a duty or a delight that belongs only to man, but will feel it more delightful, as there is now another soul that may share with him all the pleasure of the progress. To love the happiness of her whose happiness is in his affection, is of course to be conjugally faithful; but it is more than to be merely faithful; it is, not to allow room even for a doubt as to that fidelity, at least for such a doubt as a reasonable mind might form. It is truly to love her best,—but it is also to seem to feel that love which is truly felt.

As the happiness of the wife is the rule of conjugal duty to the husband, the happiness of the husband is in like manner the rule of conjugal duty to the wife. There is no human being whose affection is to be to her like his affection, as there is no happiness which is to be to her like the happiness which he enjoys. All that I have said of the moral obligation of the husband, then, is not less applicable to her duty; but, though the gentle duties belong to both, it is to her province that they more especially belong; because she is at once best fitted by nature for the ministry of tender courtesies, and best exercised in the offices that inspire them. While man is occupied in other cares during the business of the day, the business of *her* day is but the continued discharge of many little duties, that have a direct relation to wedlock, in the common household which it has formed. He must often forget her, or be useless to the world: she is most useful to the world, by remembering him. From the tumultuous scenes which agitate many of his hours, he returns to the calm scene, where peace awaits him, and happiness is sure to await him—because she is there waiting, whose smile is peace, and whose very presence is more than happiness to his heart.

> Here Love his golden shafts employs,—here lights
> His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings—
> Here reigns and revels.

The vows, which constitute a solemn part of the matrimonial engagement, give to this duty of reciprocal love the sanction of an *additional authority;* but they only give an *additional* sanction, and *increase* the guilt of violating duties, which, without these vows, it would still have been guilt to violate.

The husband is to seek the happiness of his wife, the wife, to seek the happiness of her husband. This rule is sufficiently simple and efficacious, where affection is

sufficiently strong, as in the domestic scenes of harmony and delight which I have pictured. But there may be cases of occasional disagreement, and then what is the duty? In such cases, it is obviously *necessary*, that for mutual peace, the will of *one* should be submitted to the will of the other;—and, if a point, so important as this, were left to the decision of the individuals themselves without any feeling of greater duty on either side,—the disagreement, it is evident, would still be continued, under a different name; and, instead of combating who should concede, the controversy would be, of whom it was the duty to make the concession. It is of most important advantage, therefore, *upon the whole*, that there should be a feeling of duty to be called in for decision, in such unfortunate cases; and since, from various circumstances, natural and factitious, man is everywhere in possession of physical and political superiority,—since his education is usually less imperfect, and since the charge of providing for the support of the family, in almost every instance, belongs to him—it is surely, from all these circumstances, fit, upon the whole, that, if the power of decision, in doubtful matters, should be given to *one* rather than to the *other*, it should be with *man* that it is to rest—whatever number of exceptions there may be, in which, but for the importance of the general rule, it would have been of advantage, that woman, in those cases, the wiser and more virtuous, were the decider.

The power of decision, therefore, which, for the sake of peace, must be understood as resting somewhere, should rest with *man;* but though it rest with him, it is only in unfortunate cases, as I before said, that the power of authoritative decision should be exercised. In the general circumstances of conjugal life, there should be absolute equality, because, where love should be equal, there should be that equal desire of conferring happiness, which is

implied in equality of love; and he, who, from the mere wish of gratifying his feeling of superiority, can wilfully thwart a wish of her, whose wishes,—where they do not lead to any moral or prudential impropriety,—should be to him like his own, or even dearer than his own, if they do not truly become *his* wishes, when known to be hers,—would deserve no slight punishment, as the violator of conjugal obligation, if he were not almost sufficiently punished in the very want of that better affection, the delightful feeling of which would have saved him from his tyranny of power.

"The husband, it has been said, should decide, in affairs of importance,—the wife in smaller matters. But the husband should decide, in consulting his wife,—the wife in seeking what is to please her husband. Let them learn, often, the pleasure of mutual concessions. Let them say often, I wish this because it is right; but let them say sometimes, too, I wish this much, because I love you."*

The great evil in matrimonial life, is the cessation of those cares, which were regarded as necessary for obtaining love, but which are unfortunately conceived to be less necessary, when love is once obtained. The carelessnesses of a husband, are not less severely felt, however, because they are the neglects of one whose attentions are more valuable, as he who offers them is more valued; and frequent inattentions, by producing frequent displeasure, may at last, though they do not destroy love wholly, destroy the best happiness of love. No advice can be more salutary for happiness, than that which recommends an equal attention to please, and anxiety not to offend, after twenty years of wedlock, as when it was the object of the lover to awake the passion, on which he conceived every enjoyment of his life to depend. We

* St. Lambert, Oeuv. Phil. Tome III. p. 38.

gain at least as much, in preserving a heart, as in conquering one.

The cessation of these cares would be, of itself, no slight evil, even though love had originally been less profuse of them, than it usually is, in the extravagance of an unreflecting passion. She who has been worshipped as a goddess, must feel doubly the insult of the neglect which afterwards disdains to bestow on her the common honor that is paid to woman; and with the ordinary passions of a human being, it will be difficult for her to retain,—I will not say love, for that is abandoned,—but the decorous and dignified semblance of love, for him who has cared little for the reality of it. It is not easy to say by how insensible a transition, in many cases, this conjugal resentment, or forced indifference, passes into conjugal infidelity;—though it is easy, in such a case, to determine, to whom the greater portion of the guilt is to be ascribed.

But it will perhaps be said, love is not dependent on our mere will—and how can we continue to love one, whom no effort of ours can prevent us from discovering to be unworthy of our continued affection? But by whom is this objection usually made?—Not by those, who, in engaging to love, and honor, and cherish during life, have been careful in considering who it was, to whom they entered under this solemn engagement. It is, in almost every instance, the objection of those, who, when they formed the engagement, made a vow, of the real import of which they were regardless; and who afterwards dare to plead one crime as the justification of another. There are duties of marriage, which begin before the marriage itself, in the provision that is made for matrimonial virtue and happiness; and he who neglects the means of virtuous love, in a state of which virtuous love is to be the principal charm, is far more

inconsiderate, and far more guilty, than the heedless producer of misery, who forms a matrimonial connection without the prospect of any means of subsistence, for one who is to exist with him only to suffer with him in indigence, and for the little sufferers who are afterwards to make indigence still more painfully felt. He who has vowed to love one, to whom he pledges love only because he knows that she is worthy of such a pledge, will not afterwards have reason to complain of the difficulty of loving the unworthy.

If, however, it be necessary for man to be careful to whom he engages himself by a vow so solemn, it is surely not less necessary for the gentler tenderness of woman. She, too, has duties to fulfil, that depend on love, or at least that can be sweetened only by love; and when she engages to perform them where love is not felt, she is little aware of the precariousness of such a pledge, and of the perils to which she is exposing herself. It is truly painful, then, to see, in the intercourse of the world, how seldom affection is considered as a necessary matrimonial preliminary,—at least in one of the parties, and in the one to whom it is the *more* necessary; and how much quicker the judgment of fathers, mothers, friends, is to estimate the wealth or the worldly dignity, than the wisdom or the virtue, which they present as a fit offering to her, whom wealth and worldly dignity may render only weaker and more miserable, but whom wisdom might counsel, and virtue cherish. It is painful to see one, who has in other respects, perhaps, many moral excellencies, consent, as an accomplice in this fraud, to forego the moral delicacy, which condemns the apparent sale of affection, that is not to be sold,—rejoice in the splendid sacrifice which is thus made of her peace,—consign her *person* to one whom she despises, with the same indifference as she consigns her *hand*,—a prostitute

for gold, not less truly because the prostitution is to be for life, and not less criminally a prostitute, because to the guilt and meanness of the pecuniary barter, are added the guilt of a mockery of tenderness, that wishes to deceive man, and the still greater guilt of a perjury, that, in vows which the heart belies, would wish to deceive God, on whom it calls to sanction the deceit.

When marriages are thus formed, it is not for the sufferer to complain, if she find that she has acquired a few more trappings of wealth, but not a husband. She has her house, her carriage, and the living machines that are paid to wait around her and obey her; she takes rank in public spectacles, and presides, in her own mansion, in spectacles as magnificent; she has obtained all she wished to obtain;—and the affection and happiness, which she scorned, she must leave to those who sought them.

"There is a place on the earth," it has been said, "where pure joys are unknown—from which politeness is banished, and has given place to selfishness, contradiction, and half-veiled insults. Remorse and inquietude, like furies that are never weary of assailing, torment the inhabitants. This place is the house of a wedded pair, who have no mutual love nor even esteem.—There is a place on the earth, to which vice has no entrance,—where the gloomy passions have no empire,—where pleasure and innocence live constantly together,—where cares and labors are delightful,—where every pain is forgotten in reciprocal tenderness,—where there is an equal enjoyment of the past, the present, and the future. It is the house, too, of a wedded pair—but of a pair who, in wedlock, are lovers still."*

* St. Lambert, Oeuv. Phil. Tome II. p. 62.

CHAPTER XIX.

On the Parental and Filial Relations.

I. *Duty and Rights of Parents.*

"1. *Maintenance.* The wants of children make it necessary that some person maintain them; and, as no one has a right to burden others by his act, it follows, that the parents are bound to undertake this charge themselves. Hence we learn the guilt of those who run away from their families, or, (what is much the same,) in consequence of idleness or drunkenness, throw them upon a parish; or who leave them destitute at their death, when, by diligence and frugality, they might have laid up a provision for their support.

2. *Education.* Education may comprehend every preparation that is made in our youth for the sequel of our lives. Some such preparation is necessary for children of all conditions, because, without it, they must be miserable, and probably will be vicious, when they grow up. To send an uneducated child into the world, is injurious to the rest of mankind; it is little better than to turn out a mad dog or a wild beast into the streets. In the inferior classes of the community, this principle condemns the neglect of parents, who do not inure their children betimes to labor and restraint.

In the middle orders of society, those parents are the most reprehensible, who neither qualify their children for a profession, nor enable them to live without one."*

The following remarks of a writer in the New Edinburgh Encyclopedia, are worthy the attention of every parent:

*Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book III. Part III. Chap. 9.

"In every judicious system of moral education, few things are more deserving of attention than the formation of *habits*. The great object to be aimed at in early culture, is the complete occupation of the mind by some employment which may lay the foundation of useful habits in after life; or, at least, may prevent the formation of such as are wrong. And where bad habits have been acquired, they are not to be conquered by the power of argument or of demonstration; they are to be overcome only through the influence of some counteracting practice, which must be made sufficiently interesting to engage the feelings, and abstract the attention from the hurtful habits which have engrossed it. To effect a reformation in such circumstances, is a work of extreme difficulty; but it ought not to be abandoned in despair. The most pernicious habits have often been acquired from the want of congenial employment; for if a man is either idle or forced to do what he dislikes, he has every chance to seek for pleasure from forbidden gratifications. We should think it advisable to give every young person who is not condemned to manual labor, as many securities as possible against the formation of evil habits; and ample resources are furnished in cultivating the pleasures of taste, or in the departments of the arts, or of polite literature, or of scientific research. And we believe it has often happened, that, from injudicious restraints, or from the mind's being forced into an unnatural channel, the worst consequences have been produced; and the young have been led to seek from vice, that pleasure which might have been found more pure and ample in congenial occupations."*

"3. *A reasonable provision for the happiness of a child, in respect to outward condition.* This requires three

* See the article "Moral Philosophy," in the New Edinburgh Encyclopedia.

things: a situation suited to his habits and reasonable expectations; a competent provision for the exigencies of that situation; and a probable security for his virtue.

In the disposal of his property after his death, a parent is justified in making a difference between his children according as they stand in greater or less need of the assistance of his fortune, in consequence of the difference of their age or sex, or of the situations in which they are placed, or the various success they have met with.

On account of the few lucrative employments which are left to the female sex, and by consequence the little opportunity they have of adding to their income, daughters ought to be the particular objects of a parent's care and foresight; and as an option of marriage, from which they can reasonably expect happiness, is not presented to every woman who deserves it, a father should endeavor to enable his daughters to lead a single life with independence and decorum, even though he subtract more for that purpose from the portions of his sons than is agreeable to modern usage, or than they expect.

If the rest of the community make it a rule to prefer sons to daughters, an individual of that community ought to guide himself by the same rule, upon principles of mere equality,—when it does not interfere with the weightier reason explained in the last paragraph. For, as the son suffers by the rule, in the fortune he may expect in marriage, it is but reasonable that he should receive the advantage of it in his own inheritance. Indeed, whatever the rule be, as to the preference of one sex to the other, marriage restores the equality.

After the first requisite, namely, a provision for the exigencies of his situation, is satisfied, a parent may diminish a child's portion, in order to punish any flagrant crime, or to punish contumacy and want of filial duty.

Our children gain not so much as we imagine, in the chance of this world's happiness, or even of its external prosperity, by setting out in it with large capitals. Of those who have died rich, a great part began with little. And, in respect of enjoyment, there is no comparison between a fortune, which a man acquires by well-applied industry, or by a series of successes in his business, and one found in his possession, or received from another.

A principal part of a parent's duty is still behind, viz. the using of proper precautions and expedients, in order to form and preserve his children's virtue.

For this purpose, the first point to be endeavored after is, to impress upon children the idea of *accountableness*, that is, to accustom them to look forward to the consequences of their actions in another world; which can only be brought about by the parents' visibly acting with a view to these consequences themselves. Parents, to do them justice, are seldom sparing in lessons of virtue and religion; in admonitions which cost little, and which profit less; while their *example* exhibits a continual contradiction of what they teach. A good parent's first care is to be virtuous himself; his second, to make his virtues as easy and engaging to those about him as their nature will admit. Virtue itself offends, when coupled with forbidding manners. Young minds are particularly liable to these unfortunate impressions. For instance, if a father's economy degenerate into a minute and teasing parsimony, it is odds but that the son, who has suffered under it, set out a sworn enemy to all rules of order and frugality. If a father's piety be morose, rigorous, and tinged with melancholy, perpetually breaking in upon the recreation of his family, and surfeiting them with the language of religion upon all occasions, there is danger lest the son carry from home with him a settled prejudice against se-

riousness and religion, and turn out, when he mixes with the world, a character of levity or dissoluteness."*

"The *rights* of parents result from their duties. If it be the duty of a parent to educate his children, to form them for a life of usefulness and virtue, he has a right to such authority, and in support of that authority to exercise such discipline, as may be necessary for these purposes. The law of nature acknowledges no other foundation of a parent's right over his children."†

II. *Duty of Children.*

"The duty of children may be considered,

1. *During Childhood.* The submission of children during this period must be ready and implicit, with an exception, however, of any manifest crime which may be commanded them.

2. *After they have attained to manhood, but continue in their father's family.* If children, when they are grown up, voluntarily continue members of their father's family, they are bound, beside the general duty of gratitude to their parents, to observe such regulations of the family as the father shall appoint; contribute their labor to its support, if required; and confine themselves to such expenses as he shall allow.

3. *After they have attained to manhood, and have left their father's family.* In this state of the relation, the duty to parents is simply the duty of gratitude; not different *in kind*, from that which we owe to any other benefactor; *in degree*, just so much exceeding other obligations, as a parent has been a greater benefactor than any other friend."‡

It is an important question, how far the authority of

* Paley's Moral Philos. Book III. Part III. Chap. 9.
† Ibid. Chap. 10. ‡ Ibid. Chap. 11

parents over children extends in regard to forming the *marriage* connection.

1. In the first place, parents have a right, as long as their children are under age, to forbid their forming any particular connection which they disapprove, or, if they think proper, to forbid their marrying at all. Whether they have a right to prohibit all intercourse between the parties during this period, is not quite so clear; but must, I think, be conceded. Children, in this case, are, generally speaking, bound to regard their parents as more competent to judge of the expediency and propriety of a particular connection, than themselves. It is, therefore, not only their duty, when their parents require it, to abstain from all intercourse, personal or epistolary, but also to control their affections, so far, at least, that the attachment they have formed shall not unfit them, in any degree, for the discharge of the duties which they owe to their parents, or retard them in the attainment of such education as their parents may think proper to give them. The child is not bound, however, to relinquish all idea of ever marrying the object of his affection. If, upon coming of age and renewing his acquaintance, he finds that the same preference and attachment still continue, the restrictions which his parents have imposed are no longer binding; nor will they, if they have just views of the extent of their authority, any longer attempt to oppose his inclination, otherwise than by persuasion and advice. Nor ought a child, who marries against his parents' wishes, to suffer in their affection or their fortune, any farther than, by such a marriage, he gives evidence of an unworthy character.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that as "a parent has, in no case, a right to destroy his child's happiness," and as attachments are sometimes formed at an early age, so rong and unconquerable that the parties must be wretch-

ed without each other, to forbid their marriage for a period of four or five years, and especially to prohibit all intercourse between them during that period, is exceeding the limits of the parent's authority; and that, therefore, the child, in such a case, is released from his obligation to obey. On a case of this kind, several remarks may be made.

In the first place, it is an error to suppose that the attachment of the sexes is ever unconquerable, if proper means are taken to overcome it. The chief difficulty in controlling or overcoming an attachment, arises from a fixed belief in the parties themselves, that they cannot overcome it. This false and dangerous notion is derived chiefly from the reading of novels; and is one of the mischievous effects produced by the indulgence, in youth, of an indiscriminate perusal of that class of writings. Besides, "it is the nature of love and hatred, and of all violent affections, to delude the mind with a persuasion that we shall always continue to feel them as we feel them at present: we cannot conceive that they will either change or cease. But experience of similar or greater changes in ourselves, or a habit of giving credit to what our, parents, or tutors, or books teach us, may control this persuasion."* Those romantic ideas of "irresistible love" and of "invincible and eternal attachment," ought to be banished from every rational mind, and especially ought never to be suffered to take possession of the minds of the young. Perhaps I shall be reminded how many have been made wretched for life, and how many have lost their reason, in consequence of disappointment in love. It is probable that most of these cases have taken place in consequence of the pernicious practice of novel-reading, and through a criminal indulgence of passion in

* Ibid.

the individual. But however this may be, those may be presumed to have been all cases, in which the disappointment was total, the hope of a connection forever abandoned, and the lover driven to despair. Now, I have only required the parties to suspend their intercourse till they are of age; and if a girl will die of a broken heart because she cannot marry till she is eighteen, it cannot be a very great loss to the public.

In the second place I would remark, that so violent an attachment at so early an age, is one of the most weighty reasons why the parties should not be suffered immediately to marry. It is an indication of rashness and want of judgment; and is less likely to be lasting, than a passion that is more moderate and more easily controlled.

A third remark is, that if it will be four or five years before the parties will be of age, they are too young to be capable of making a judicious choice, have not yet had time to obtain a proper education, and cannot yet be qualified to discharge the duties connected with the married state. If we suppose a year or two added to their age, the period will be so much the shorter that they will have to wait, before they will be at liberty to act for themselves.

2. But it may be inquired, whether, in so important an affair as that of marriage, the authority of parents over their children, especially over their daughters, does not extend beyond the period of their minority. I reply, that important as the affair is, it is far more so to the parties themselves, than it can be to their parents; and if they are allowed to act for themselves in other things, they certainly ought to be in this.—'But are not daughters under the authority of their parents as long as they continue in their father's family?' They are bound to observe all the regulations of the family; and so they would be "if they were admitted into any other family, or re-

ceived support from any other hand." But they are not bound to continue in the family any longer than they please; neither can parents, without impropriety and inhumanity, forbid any gentleman's entering their house to visit a daughter, unless his moral character be bad, or they have reason to suspect him of dishonorable views. Parents have no more right to forbid a daughter to receive company at their house, or to be absent at any hour she may choose, than they have to do the same in the case of any other female who may become a member of the family.

"Still less have parents a right to urge their children upon marriages to which they are averse; nor ought they, in any shape, to resent the child's disobedience to such commands. This is a different case from opposing a match of inclination, because the child's misery is a much more probable consequence; it being easier to live without a person that we love, than with one whom we hate. Add to this, that compulsion in marriage necessarily leads to prevarication; as the reluctant party promises an affection, which neither exists, nor is expected to take place; and parental, like all human authority, ceases at the point where obedience becomes criminal."*

I close this subject with one remark. The gratitude which children owe to their parents, ought to lead them to consult their wishes and feelings, both while they remain in the family and afterwards, and both in the choice of a companion and in other things, as far as they can consistently with duty and their own interest, and even to make some sacrifices of comfort and of interest, rather than render a parent unhappy. Children ought, also, in most cases, to pay that deference to their parents' judgment and advice, which is due to superior age and expe-

* Ibid.

rience;—especially if their parents have shown themselves worthy of their confidence and esteem, by the education they have given them, the example they have set before them, and the provision they have made for their happiness.

CHAPTER XX.

The Rights of Self-Defence.

"There is one case in which all extremes are justifiable; namely, when our life is assaulted, and it becomes necessary for our preservation to kill the assailant. This liberty is restrained to cases in which no other probable means of preserving our life remain, as flight, calling for assistance, disarming the adversary, &c.

The instance which approaches the nearest to the preservation of life, and which seems to justify the same extremities, is the defence of chastity.

Homicide is also justifiable,

1. To prevent the commission of a crime, which, when committed, would be punishable with death. Thus, it is lawful to shoot a highwayman, or one attempting to break into a house by night; but not so if the attempt be made in the day time.

2. In necessary endeavors to carry the law into execution, as in suppressing riots, apprehending malefactors preventing escapes, &c."*

There is one case which presents some difficulty, and can seldom happen; but which is worthy of consideration on account of the principle which it involves. How

* Paley's Mor. Philos. Book IV. Chap. 1.

is the right of self-defence, or rather of self-preservation, to be adjusted, "where two persons are reduced to a situation, in which one or both of them must perish; as in a shipwreck, where two seize upon a plank which will support only one?" According to Dr. Paley, each has a right to save his own life and take that of the other. Of course, since "right and obligation are *reciprocal*,"* each is under obligation to yield up his own life to save that of the other. But to be serious, it seems that the doctrine of "public utility" might have led to a different conclusion. According to this principle, each of the two ought to consider which life is likely to be most useful to the public. Or is the obligation to consult the public good binding no farther than while that good coincides with one's private interest? If a man is not under obligation to part with his life for the public good, neither is he under obligation to expose his life to any hazard, or to make any sacrifice whatever, for the public good. I conclude, therefore, that in such cases as that stated, if both or either of the parties is able to form an opinion which life is likely to be the most valuable to the world, it is their duty to save that life and sacrifice the other. Where the one has a family dependent on his care and support, and the other has not, this might be sufficient to decide the question.

In what I have said on this subject, I have gone on the supposition that both parties are in the same situation in respect to being prepared for a future state. If the one is pious and the other not, the case becomes more difficult. I think, however, that in this case, the pious man ought to resign his life to save that of the other; informing him of his motives for so doing, and exhorting him, with his last words, to devote the remainder of his life to the service of God.

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*See p. 182.

CHAPTER XXI.

Drunkenness.

" Drunkenness is either actual or habitual ; just as it is one thing to be drunk, and another to be a drunkard. What we shall deliver upon the subject must principally be understood of a *habit* of intemperance.

The mischief of drunkenness, from which we are to compute the guilt of it, consists in the following bad effects :

1. It betrays most constitutions either to extravagances of anger, or sins of lewdness.

2. It disqualifies men for the duties of their station, both by the temporary disorder of their faculties, and at length by a constant incapacity and stupefaction.

3. It is attended with expenses, which can often be ill spared.

4. It is sure to occasion distress to the family of the drunkard.

5. It shortens life.

To these consequences of drunkenness must be added the peculiar danger and mischief of the *example*. Drunkenness is apt, beyond any vice that can be mentioned, to draw in others by the example. I would expostulate with the drunkard thus : Do you say the waste of time and money is of small importance to you ? It may be of the utmost to some one or other whom your society corrupts. Do you say that you have a constitution fortified against the poison of strong liquors ? Those excesses, which hurt not *your* health, may be fatal to your companion. Do you say that you have neither wife, nor child, nor parent, to lament your absence from home, or expect your return to it with terror ? Other families, in which husbands and fathers have been invited to share in

your ebriety, or encouraged to imitate it, may justly lay their misery or ruin at your door. This will hold good, whether the person seduced be seduced immediately by you, or the vice be propagated from you to him through several intermediate examples. All these considerations it is necessary to assemble, to judge truly of a vice, which usually meets with milder names and more indulgence than it deserves.

Drunkenness is repeatedly forbidden by St. Paul: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." "Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness." "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor *drunkards*, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."* The same Apostle likewise condemns drunkenness, as peculiarly inconsistent with the christian profession: "They that be drunken, are drunken in the night; but let us, who are of the day, be sober."†

It is a question of some importance, how far drunkenness is an excuse for the crimes which the drunken person commits.

In the solution of this question, we will first suppose the drunken person to be altogether deprived of moral agency, that is to say, of all reflection and foresight. The guilt with which he is chargeable, was incurred at the time when he voluntarily brought himself into this situation. And as every man is responsible for the consequences which he foresaw, or might have foreseen, those vices which are the known effects of drunkenness, are nearly as criminal as if committed with all his faculties and senses about him. If the privation of reason be only partial, the guilt will be of a mixed nature.

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* Eph. v. 18. Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

† 1 Thess. v. 7, 8.

The appetite for intoxicating liquors appears to me to be almost always *acquired*.—If a habit of drunkenness be ever overcome, it is upon some change of place, situation, company, or profession. A man sunk deep in a habit of drunkenness, will, when he finds himself loosened from the associations which held him fast, sometimes make a plunge, and get out. In a matter of so great importance, it is well worth while, where it is in any degree practicable, to change our habitation and society, for the sake of the experiment.

Habits of drunkenness commonly take their rise either from a fondness for, and connection with, some company, or some companion, already addicted to this practice; or from want of regular employment; or from grief, or fatigue, both which strongly solicit that relief which inebriating liquors administer, and also furnish a specious excuse for complying with the inclination. But the habit, when once set in, is continued by different motives from those to which it owes its origin. Persons addicted to excessive drinking, suffer, in the intervals of sobriety, and near the return of their accustomed indulgence, a faintness and oppression, which it exceeds the ordinary patience of human nature to endure. This is usually relieved for a short time by a repetition of the same excess; and to this relief, as to the removal of every long-continued pain, they who have once experienced it, are urged almost beyond the power of resistance. This is not all: as the liquor loses its *stimulus*, the dose must be increased, which increase proportionably accelerates the progress of all the maladies that drunkenness brings on. Whoever reflects upon the violence of the craving in the advanced stages of the habit, and the fatal termination to which the gratification of it leads, will, the moment he perceives in himself the first symptoms of a growing inclination to intemperance," firmly and solemnly resolve

never more to touch the intoxicating bowl. "Indefinite resolutions of abstemiousness are apt to yield to *extraordinary* occasions; and *extraordinary* occasions to occur perpetually. Whereas, the stricter the rule is, the more tenacious we grow of it." The only rational hope of safety is in *total abstinence.** And, generally speaking, there is no hope that a man who is addicted to excessive drinking, *will* totally abstain from the use of ardent spirits, unless he not only firmly and solemnly resolve so to do, but also resolve to avoid every thing which might *tempt* him to *break* that resolution.

There is a difference, no doubt, between convivial intemperance, and that solitary sottishness which waits neither for company nor invitation. But the one most commonly ends in the other; and this last is the basest degradation to which the faculties and dignity of human nature can be reduced."†

The degree in which intemperance prevails in our country, and the many and great evils which it draws in its train, will excuse a few additional remarks. For although much has been written, and well written, on the subject, yet a friend to human happiness can hardly feel justified in neglecting an opportunity for saying or doing any thing which may be likely to check, in any measure, the prevalence of so baneful a practice. Little hope, indeed, is to be indulged of the reformation of those who have already formed a habit of intemperate drinking. But it would seem as if we *might* hope, that the virtuous part of the community would be willing to make some efforts, and, if necessary, some sacrifices, to save *themselves* and their *children* from being drawn into this vortex. The present generation of drunkards will soon

*See p. 110. †Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book IV. Chap. 2.

pass off the stage; and their fate is comparatively of little importance. If all the vice and wretchedness which are produced by intemperance, could be buried with them in the grave, a new era would commence in our land. And how can this event be secured? By bringing up all the children that are now on the stage, and that shall hereafter be born, in *total abstinence* from the use of ardent spirits. *If they never drank any they would never need any*,—except for a medicinal purpose, in case of sickness. Few, I think, will dispute the truth of this proposition. The experiment has been sufficiently tried. Neither health nor happiness is promoted by even the moderate use of ardent spirits. How much money, then, might be spared for better purposes, and how much vice and wretchedness might be prevented! But I would go farther. Most of those who are now in the habit of drinking spirituous liquor in such quantities as it has been customary for temperate men to use, might totally abstain without impairing their health, strength, or happiness. How can he be called a friend to virtue or to mankind, who is not willing to make the *experiment* for a few months? And let those who find they receive injury from total abstinence, *reduce* the quantity which they habitually drink, as much as they can without injury. Both these *have* been done, in many instances, and the result has been happy. The vicious and the profane have sometimes derided; but even they can seldom avoid being influenced, more or less, by the example of those whose virtue and merits command their respect.

The course I have recommended, will require no sacrifice on the part of young children, and not much in those who are several years of age. As to adults, admit that it is a sacrifice, and that self-denial will be, for a while, required; what is this to the magnitude of the object? That man is unworthy of the name, who is such

an enemy to his species, and so grossly selfish, that he will not deny himself a small sensual indulgence, for the sake of promoting the public good.

But there are many who *are* thus grossly selfish, and who will not submit to self-denial for the sake of the public good. Such must be made to feel that it is for their *own* interest, to shun the paths of intemperance. I do not mean their *eternal* interest, for that they disregard. They must be made to feel that the *temporal* and the *present* evils of intemperance, are too dear a price to pay for the pleasures of drinking. Nor is the prospect of ruining their health, shortening their life, and bringing poverty and distress upon their families, sufficient. Many form a habit of drinking, though aware of the danger; and persist in this habit, though with the fullest conviction that such must be the dreadful result. The intemperate man, even in the early stages of the habit, must be made to suffer *present* evils, and those of no small magnitude. The method I would recommend, is this. Let every person who drinks intemperately, whether he has become a confirmed drunkard or not, be excluded from the society of all sober people. Let no one offer him any employment, or have any dealings with him. Let him never be beheld, except with the aspect of pity, or the frown of disapprobation. Ant let him never be spoken to, except in a way that shall make him the more deeply feel, that he has lost the favor of God and of man.

It would be well, if a *tax* were laid on ardent spirits, so heavy, as to make the price of them tenfold what it now is. Many drunkards would thus be unable to obtain them; and others would reduce themselves to poverty before they were past the hope of reformation. Many would also be prevented from ever forming a habit of intemperance.—But perhaps it is too much to hope

that our legislators will at present impose such a tax. Indeed, if the laws already in existence in New-England for the suppression of intemperance, were rigorously enforced, much evil would be prevented. A neglect to enforce these laws, is scarcely less criminal than drunkenness itself. And retailers of ardent spirits, who sell to those whom they know to be intemperate, appear to be as selfish, and as worthy to be reprobated, as the drunkards whose vices they encourage.—But it is on the more virtuous part of the community, that we must chiefly depend for the cure of this evil. Though they may not be able to procure the enactment of more effectual laws, or even the enforcement of the laws already in being, yet they may do much toward making every intemperate man an outcast from all respectable society. This would be the means of reforming many, and would inspire the rising generation with a proper abhorrence and dread of intemperance.

CHAPTER XXII.

Suicide.

The unlawfulness of suicide appears from the following considerations:

1. Suicide is unlawful on account of its *general consequences.* It is evident, that, if it were to become a common thing, the injury to the public must be very great. 'Many lives would be lost, of which some might be useful and important; many families would be brought into the deepest affliction, and all into a state of consternation. Mankind would live in continual alarm for the fate of their friends and dearest relations.'

2. Suicide is unlawful, because it is the duty of the self-murderer to live in the world, and be useful in it. We may venture to say, that there is no case where a person ought to despair of ever again being able to do any good on earth.

3. Suicide is unlawful, because, beside the general bad consequences, there are particular bad consequences, more or less numerous, attending on every case of the commission of this crime.

4. Suicide is unlawful, because he who commits it, deprives himself of all farther opportunity to prepare for happiness in a future state. The self-murderer takes away his life to escape from the evils he endures in this world; and plunges into an abyss of inconceivable sorrow and despair.

Finally, suicide is unlawful, because it is inconsistent with the spirit and temper of the gospel. This will be made evident from the following observations.

"1. Human life is spoken of in the New Testament as a *term* assigned or prescribed to us: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—"I have finished my course."—"That I may finish my course with joy."—"Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." These expressions appear inconsistent with the opinion, that we are at liberty to determine the duration of our lives for ourselves.

2. There is not one quality which Christ and his apostles inculcate upon their followers so often, or so earnestly, as that of patience under affliction. Now this virtue would have been in a great measure superseded, and the exhortations to it might have been spared, if the disciples of his religion had been at liberty to quit the world as soon as they grew weary of the ill usage which they received in it.

3. The *conduct* of the apostles, and of the Christians of the apostolic age, affords no obscure indication of their sentiments upon this point. They lived, we are sure, in a confirmed persuasion of the existence, as well as of the happiness of a future state. They experienced in this world every extremity of external injury and distress. To die, was gain. The change which death brought with it was, in their expectation, infinitely beneficial. Yet it never, that we can find, entered into the intention of one of them to hasten this change by an act of suicide; from which it is difficult to say what motive could have so universally withheld them, except the apprehension of some unlawfulness in the expedient."*

CHAPTER XXIII.

On Prayer and Public Worship.

"Our duty towards God, so far as it is external, is divided into *worship* and *reverence*. God is the immediate object of both; and the difference between them is, that the one consists in action, and the other in forbearance. When we go to church on the Lord's day, led thither by a sense of duty towards God, we perform an act of worship; when, from the same motive, we rest in a journey upon that day, we discharge a duty of reverence."†

I. PRAYER.

"Prayer is necessary to keep up, in the minds of mankind, a sense of God's agency in the universe, and of their own dependency upon him. The duty of prayer, however, depends upon its efficacy. The efficacy of

*Paley's Moral Philosophy, Book IV. Chap. 3.
†Ibid. Book V. Chap. 1.

prayer imports that we obtain something in consequence of praying, which we should not have received without prayer; against all expectation of which, the following objection has been often and seriously alleged: 'If what we request be fit for us, we shall have it without praying; if it be not fit for us, we cannot obtain it by praying.' This objection admits but of one answer, namely, that it may be agreeable to perfect wisdom to grant that to our prayers, which it would not have been agreeable to the same wisdom to have given us without praying for.

1. A favor granted to prayer may be more apt, on that very account, to produce good effects upon the person obliged.

2. It may be consistent with the wisdom of the Deity, to withhold his favors till they be asked for, as an expedient to encourage devotion in his rational creation, in order thereby to keep up and circulate a knowledge and sense of their dependency upon *him*.

3. Prayer has a natural tendency to amend the petitioner himself.

But efficacy, we are told, is ascribed to prayer without that proof which can alone in such a subject produce conviction, the confirmation of experience. It is possible, in the nature of things, that our prayers may, in many instances, be efficacions, and yet our experience of their efficacy be dubious and obscure." Though the particular favors that are asked be not granted, yet other favors may be bestowed in consequence of our prayers; and such, perhaps, as will be more beneficial to us.—But it is said, that "to pray for particular favors by name, is to dictate to divine wisdom and goodness." Not if we pray with that submissive temper, with which every petition ought to be offered.* It is farther objected, that "to in-

*See Luke xxii. 42.

tercede for others, especially for whole nations and empires, is still worse; that it is to presume that we possess such an interest with the Deity, as to be able, by our applications, to bend the most important of his counsels." But to bestow blessings on some in answer to the prayers of others, "is nothing more than the making of one man the instrument of happiness and misery to another; which is perfectly of a piece with the course and order that obtain, and which we must believe were intended to obtain, in human affairs. The happiness and misery of great numbers we see oftentimes at the disposal of one man's choice, or liable to be much affected by his conduct: what greater difficulty is there in supposing, that the prayers of an individual may avert a calamity from multitudes, or be accepted to the benefit of whole communities?"* "The scriptures require prayer to God as a duty; and they contain positive assurance of its efficacy and acceptance. See the following passages:

1. Texts enjoining prayer in general. Matt. vii. 7, 11; Luke xxi. 36; Rom. xii. 12; Phil. iv. 6; 1 Thess. v. 17; 1 Tim. ii. 8.

2. Examples of prayer for particular favors by name. 2 Cor. xii. 8; 1 Thess. iii. 10.

3. Directions to pray for national or public blessings. Ps. cxxii. 6; Zech. x. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 1–3.

4. Examples of intercession, and exhortations to intercede for others. Ex. xxxii. 11; Acts xii. 5; Rom. i. 9; xv. 30; James v. 16.

5. Declarations and examples authorizing the repetition of unsuccessful prayer. Luke xviii. 1; Matt. xxvi. 44; 2 Cor. xii. 8."†

II. Private Prayer.

"Concerning private, family, and public devotion, it is first of all to be observed, that each has its separate and

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*Paley's Mor. Philos. Book V. Chap. 2. †Ibid. Chap. 3.

peculiar use; and therefore, that the exercise of one species of worship, however regular it be, does not supersede, or dispense with, the obligation of either of the other two.

Private Prayer is recommended for the sake of the following advantages:

Private wants cannot always be made the subject of public prayer.

Private prayer is generally more devout and earnest than the share we are capable of taking in joint acts of worship; because it affords leisure and opportunity for the circumstantial recollection of those personal wants, by the remembrance and ideas of which the warmth and earnestness of prayer are chiefly excited.

Private prayer, in proportion as it is usually accompanied with more actual thought and reflection of the petitioner's own, has a greater tendency than other modes of devotion to revive and fasten upon the mind the general impressions of religion. Solitude powerfully assists this effect. When a man finds himself alone in communion with his Creator, his imagination becomes filled with a conflux of awful ideas concerning the universal agency, and invisible presence, of that Being; concerning what is likely to become of himself, and of the superlalative importance of providing for the happiness of his future existence, by endeavors to please *him*, who is the arbiter of his destiny: reflections, which, whenever they gain admittance, for a season overwhelm all others; and leave, when they depart, a solemnity upon the thoughts that will seldom fail, in some degree, to affect the conduct of life.

Private prayer, thus recommended by its own propriety, receives a superior sanction from the authority and example of Christ.*

*See Matt. vi. 6; xiv. 23.

III. Family Prayer.

The peculiar use of family prayer consists in its influence upon servants, and the young members of a family, whose attention you cannot easily command in public worship.

IV. Public Worship.

Assemblies for public worship afford opportunities for moral and religious instruction to those who otherwise would receive none."—Perhaps some one will say, 'I see no use in *my* going to church. I can spend the sabbath more to my benefit at home. Why should I be "obliged to sit out a tedious sermon, in order to hear what is known already, what is better learned from books, or suggested by meditation.' They, whose qualifications and habits best supply to themselves all the effect of public ordinances, will be the last to prefer this excuse, when they advert to the *general consequence* of setting up such an exemption, as well as when they consider the *turn* which is sure to be given in the neighborhood to their absence from public worship. You stay from church, to employ the sabbath at home in exercises suited to its proper business: your next neighbor stays from church, to spend the seventh day less religiously than he passed any of the six, in a sleepy, stupid rest, or at some rendezvous of drunkenness and debauchery, and yet thinks that he is only imitating you, because you both agree in not going to church.

There are other valuable advantages growing out of the use of religious assemblies.

1. Joining in prayer and praises to their common Creator and Governor, has a sensible tendency to unite mankind together, and to cherish and enlarge the generous affections. Sprung from the same extraction, preparing together for the period of all worldly distinctions, reminded of their mutual infirmities and common depen-

dency, imploring and receiving support and supplies from the same great source of power and bounty, having all one interest to secure, one Lord to serve, one judgment, the supreme object to all of their hopes and fears, to look towards; it is hardly possible, in this position, to behold mankind as strangers, competitors, or enemies; or not to regard them as children of the same family, assembled before their common parent, and with some portion of the tenderness which belongs to the most endearing of our domestic relations.

2. Assemblies for the purpose of divine worship, force upon the thoughts the natural equality of the human species, and thereby promote humility and condescension in the highest orders of the community.

The public worship of Christians is a duty of divine appointment. "Where two or three," says Christ, "are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* This invitation will want nothing of the force of a command with those who respect the person and authority from which it proceeds. Again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;"† which reproof seems as applicable to the desertion of our public worship at this day, as to the forsaking the religious assemblies of Christians in the age of the Apostle."‡

V. Forms of Prayer.

"Liturgies, or preconcerted forms of public devotion, being neither enjoined in scripture, nor forbidden, there can be no good reason for either receiving or rejecting them, but that of expediency; which expediency is to be gathered from a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages attending upon this mode of worship, with those which usually accompany extemporary prayer.

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* Matt. xviii. 20. † Heb. x. 25.

‡ Paley's Moral Philos. Book V. Chap. 4.

The advantages of a liturgy are these:

1. That it prevents absurd and extravagant addresses to God."—So Dr. Paley. I would rather say, that men who cannot pray extempore without absurdity and extravagance, are unqualified for the christian ministry.

"2. That it prevents the *confusion* of extemporary prayer, in which the congregation, being ignorant of each petition before they hear it, and having little or no time to join in it after they have heard it, are confounded between their attention to the minister, and to their own devotion."—The weight of this objection of Dr. Paley to extemporary prayer, must be judged of by experience. Nothing more seems necessary, however, to the devotion of a congregation, in time of prayer, than that each individual distinctly perceive the ideas of the speaker, and have such feelings excited as correspond with those ideas. It is not found necessary, in other cases, that a man should know beforehand what he is going to hear, in order that it may have a proper effect on his feelings. When I converse with a friend, I can enter into all his various feelings, as he is uttering sentence after sentence. Or when I hear an eloquent orator, he excites in my breast various emotions and passions, however rapid may be his elocution. It would seem, therefore, by analogy, that extemporary prayer, if devout on the part of the speaker, may be so on the part of the hearers.

3. That it prevents the incoherence and needless repetitions of extemporary prayer. This is an objection of weight. The incoherence of many extemporary prayers, which have, perhaps, no other fault, presents a serious obstacle to the devotion of them that join.

"These advantages of a liturgy are connected with two principal inconveniences; first, that forms of prayer composed in one age, become unfit for another, by the unavoidable change of language, circumstances, and

opinions; secondly, that the perpetual repetition of the same form of words, produces weariness and inattentiveness in the congregation.

The Lord's Prayer is a precedent, as well as a pattern, for forms of prayer.—The properties required in a public liturgy are, that it be compendious; that it express just conceptions of the divine attributes; that it recite such wants as a congregation are likely to feel, and no other; and that it contain as few controverted propositions as possible."* Of course, the same properties are required in extemporary prayer.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the Sabbath.

I. *Use of Sabbatical Institutions.*

The advantages of sabbatical institutions are the following:

1. "Sunday affords an interval of relaxation to the laborious part of mankind.

2. Sunday leaves to men of all ranks and professions, sufficient leisure, and not more than what is sufficient, both for the external offices of christianity, and the retired, but equally necessary, duties of religious meditation and inquiry.

3. They whose humanity embraces the whole sensitive creation, will esteem it no inconsiderable recommendation of a weekly return of public rest, that it affords a respite to the toil of brutes."

4. The institution of the sabbath, in connection with public worship, is promotive of mental and moral im-

* Ibid. Chap. 5.

provement, encourages a taste for reading, and conduces to cleanliness and neatness in the person and dress of the lower classes, and also to good manners and good order in society. These advantages are derived from the observance of the sabbath, even supposing that they are unaccompanied with any religious improvement. Whoever reflects upon these and the other advantages that have been enumerated, "must acknowledge the utility of the sabbath, and must consequently perceive it to be every man's duty to uphold the observance of the day when once established, let the establishment have proceeded from whom or from what authority it will."*

II. *The Christian Sabbath.*

"The practice of holding religious assemblies upon the first day of the week, was so early and universal in the Christian church, that it carries with it considerable proof of having originated from some precept of Christ or of his Apostles, though none such be now extant.†

The duty of the christian sabbath is violated,

1. By the going of journeys, the paying or receiving of visits, or employing the time at home in writing letters, settling accounts, or in applying ourselves to studies, or to reading," conversing, or thinking on subjects, "which bear no relation to the business of religion.

2. By unnecessary encroachments upon the rest and liberty which Sunday ought to bring to the inferior orders of the community; as by keeping servants on that day confined and busied in preparations for the superfluous elegancies of our table or dress."‡

3. By all recreations, even such as are innocent and allowable on other days.

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* Ibid. Chap. 6.

† See John, xx. 19, 26. Acts, xx. 6, 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Rev. i. 10.

‡ Paley's Moral Philos. Book V. Chapters 7 and 8.

CHAPTER XXV.

On Reverencing the Deity.

"*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Now the mention of the name of God is vain, when it is useless ; and it is useless, when it is neither likely nor intended to serve any good purpose ; as when it flows from the lips idle and unmeaning, or is applied upon occasions inconsistent with any consideration of religion and devotion. The offence of profane swearing is aggravated by the consideration, that in it duty and decency are sacrificed to the slightest of temptations."* To say nothing of the contempt which it casts upon God, and the abhorrence in which it is therefore held by all men of piety, the want of good breeding which it shows, is enough to make it avoided by every person of a cultivated mind or respectable character.

There is another species of irreverence of the Deity, to which it may be proper just to advert. I allude to the quoting of passages of scripture,—not for the sake of mockery and ridicule, for that is the work of the infidel,—but for the sake of pleasantry and wit. The wit consists in accommodating a passage to a purpose which is wholly foreign from that for which it is used in the Bible, and yet bears a fanciful resemblance to it. This manner of quoting passages of scripture is frequent, and is practised even by some men of piety. And perhaps it may sometimes be done without harm, when the passages which are thus quoted, do not, in the Bible, relate to anything of a serious and solemn nature. Otherwise, the irreverence appears to be of the same kind with that of profane swearing.

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* Ibid. Chap. 9

Irreverence of the Deity, whatever form it may assume, can arise only from very inadequate conceptions, or an almost total forgetfulness, of his attributes, and of the relations which we sustain to him. A man who holds an elevated station, and who is venerable for his many virtues, is seldom treated with disrespect. Few can appear in the presence of an earthly monarch, without some impressions of reverence and awe. What American can pronounce irreverently the sacred and beloved name of WASHINGTON? How would our bosom be pained, to hear such contempt cast on this name, as we are accustomed to hear, on that of the Most High!—Those who profane the name of Jehovah, or otherwise treat him with irreverence, forget who it is that they treat in this manner. They forget, that it is his power, by which they are upheld in existence from one moment to another,—by which their pulse beats and their limbs move;—that power, which created all worlds, and which moves all the wheels of nature. They forget, that not a word, or thought, or feeling of ours, can escape the notice of his omniscient eye;—that eye, which surveys the universe, and, with a single glance, pervades innumerable orders of being. They forget, that life and death are at his disposal, and heaven and hell under his control; that he is as pure and holy, as he is wise and powerful; that before his tribunal we must all appear, and by his decision must be fixed in a state of interminable bliss or wo.

THE END.

ERRATA.

In consequence of the greater part of the work having been printed without the superintendence of the author, several typographical errors, worthy of correction, have occurred.

Page 41, line 18, read, 'feelings' being involved.'
" 49, line 10, read, 'by no means.'
" 57, line 15, for 'or others' read 'of others.'
" 87, line 2, for 'is' read 'are.'
" 95, in the note, for '83' read '84'.
" 135, line 17, for 'no' read 'do.'
" 143, line 1, for 'unfeeling' read 'unsleeping.'
" 159, lines 22 and 23, read '*time*' and '*for life*,' in italics,
" 200, line 21, read 'or be lamed.'
" 213, line 13, for 'popular' read 'populous.'

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