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IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

MIND.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH.



BY ISAAC WATTS, D. D.



FROM THE LAST LONDON EDITION.



NEW-YORK:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

“ Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his *Improvement of the Mind* ; of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding* ; but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer on him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others may be charged with deficiency in his duty if this book is not recommended.”

*Dr. Johnson's Life of Dr. Watts.*

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Mrs. D. E. Halcizon  
and Mrs. F. W. Powell  
Aug. 22. '26

J. & J. Harper, Printers,  
138 Fulton-Street.

THE  
LIFE OF THE  
REV. DR. ISAAC WATTS.

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DR. Isaac Watts was born at Southampton, July 17, 1674. His father was the master of a boarding school in that town, of very considerable reputation. He was a sufferer for non-conformity, in the time of Charles II. and when at one time in prison, his wife, it is said, was seen sitting on a stone near the prison door, suckling her son Isaac.

This son was a remarkable instance of early attention to books; he began to learn Latin at the age of four, probably at home, and was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by the Rev. John Pinhorn, master of the free-school at Southampton, rector of All Saints, in the same place, prebendary of Leckford, and vicar of Eling in the New Forest. The proficiency he made at this school, induced some persons of property to raise a sum sufficient to maintain him at one of the universities; but his determination was soon fixed to remain among the dissenters, with whom his ancestors had long been connected. In 1690, he went to an academy superintended by the Rev. Thomas Rowe, where he had for his companions, Hughes the poet, and Horte, afterwards archbishop of Tuam; Mr. Samuel Say, afterwards an eminent preacher among the dissenters, and other persons of literary eminence. It is well known that Dr. Watts strove to wean Hughes from his attachment to the stage. In 1693, he joined the congregation which was under the care of Mr. Rowe, as a communicant.

His application at this academy was very intense, and perhaps few young men have laid in a larger stock of various knowledge. The late Dr. Gibbons was in possession of a large volume in his hand-writing, containing twenty-two Latin dissertations upon curious and important subjects, which were evidently written when at this academy; and, says Dr. Johnson, "show a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study." His leisure hours seem to

have been very early occupied in poetical efforts, and particularly when, after leaving the academy in his twentieth year, he went to reside with his father at Southampton, and spent two years in reading, meditation and prayer, to fit himself for the work of the ministry.

At the end of this time, he was invited By Sir John Harropp, to reside in his family at Stoke Newington, near London, as tutor to his son. Here he remained about four or five years, and on his birth day, 1698, preached his first sermon, and was chosen assistant to Dr. Chauncy, minister of the congregation at Marklane. About three years after, he was appointed to succeed Dr. Chauncy, but had scarce entered on this charge, when he was so interrupted by illness, as to render an assistant necessary; and, after an interval of health, he was again seized by a fever, which left a weakness that never wholly abated, and in a great measure checked the usefulness of his public labours.

While in this afflicting situation, he was received into the house of Sir Thomas Abney, of Newington, Knight and Alderman of London, where he was entertained with the utmost tenderness, friendship, and liberality, for the space of thirty-six years. Sir Thomas died about eight years after Dr Watts became an inmate in his family, but he continued with Lady Abney and her daughters to the end of his life. Lady Abney died about a year after him, and the last of the family, Mrs. Elizabeth Abney, in 1782.

“A coalition like this,” says Dr. Johnson, “a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbon’s representation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewise to multitudes besides.”

The passage thus elegantly alluded to is as follows: “Our next observations shall be made upon that remarkably kind providence which brought the Doctor into Sir Thomas Abney’s family, and continued him there till his death, a period of no less than thirty-six years. In the midst of his several labours for the glory of God, and good of his generation, he is seized with a most violent and threatening fever, which leaves him oppressed with great weakness, and puts a stop, at least to his public services, for some years. In this distressing season, doubly so to his active and pious spirit, he is invited to Sir Thomas Abney’s family, nor ever removes from it till he had finished his days. Here he enjoyed the

uninterrupted demonstrations of truest friendship. Here, without any care of his own, he had every thing which could contribute to the enjoyment of life, and favour the unwearied pursuits of his studies. Here he dwelt in a family, which, for piety, order, harmony, and every virtue, was a house of God. Here he had the privilege of a country recess, the fragrant bower, the spreading lawn, the flowery garden, and other advantages, to sooth his mind, and aid his restoration to health; to yield him, whenever he chose them, more grateful intervals for his laborious studies, and enable him to return to them with redoubled vigour and delight. Had it not been for this most happy event, he might, as to outward view have feebly, it may be, painfully, dragged on through many more years of languor and inability for public service, and even for profitable study, or perhaps might have sunk into his grave under the overwhelming load of infirmities in the midst of his days; and thus the church and world have been deprived of those many excellent sermons and works which he drew up and published during his long residence in this family. In a few years after his removing thither, Sir Thomas Abney dies: but his amiable consort survives, who shows the doctor the same respect and friendship as before, and most happily for him, and great numbers besides; for, as her riches were great, her generosity and munificence were in full proportion: her thread of life was drawn out to a great age, even beyond that of the doctor's; and thus this excellent man, through her kindness, and that of her daughter, the present, (1780) Mrs. Elizabeth Abney, who in a like degree esteemed and honoured him, enjoyed all the benefits and felicities he experienced at his first entrance into this family, till his days were numbered and finished, and, like a shock of corn in its season, he ascended into the regions of perfect and immortal life and joy."

In this retreat he wrote the whole, or nearly the whole, of those works which have immortalized his name as a christian poet and philosopher. He occasionally preached, and in the pulpit, says Dr. Johnson, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his discourses very efficacious. Such was his flow of thoughts, and such his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life he did not precompose his cursory sermons; but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

He continued many years to study, and to preach, and to do good by his instruction and example, till at last the infirmities of age disabled him from the more laborious part of his ministerial functions, and being no longer capable of public duty, he offered to remit the salary appendant to it, but his congregation would not accept the resignation. His annual income did not exceed one hundred pounds, of which he allowed one third to the poor.

His death was distinguished by steady faith, and composure, and deprived the world of his useful labours and example, Nov. 25, 1748, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. He expired in that house where his life had been prolonged and made comfortable, by a long continuance of kind and tender attentions of which there are few examples.

Dr. Johnson's character of him, in that admirable life he wrote for the English poets, may be received with confidence. "Few men have left such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke: he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined: he has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars. His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attainments, rather than from any single performance; for it would not be safe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity: yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits."

His entire works have been published in six volumes, quarto, and more recently in octavo. With respect to the work now before the reader, its continued popularity would be a sufficient test of its merit, were we not enabled to add the opinion of the eminent critic already so frequently quoted. "Few books," says Dr. Johnson, "have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his **IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND**, of which the rational principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding*; but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer on him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. **WHOEVER HAS THE CARE OF INSTRUCTING OTHERS, MAY BE CHARGED WITH DEFICIENCY IN HIS DUTY, IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RECOMMENDED.**"

# PREFACE.



## PART I.

**T**HE present Treatise, if it may assume the honour of that name, is made up of a variety of remarks and directions for the improvement of the mind in useful knowledge. It was collected from the observations which I had made on my own studies, and on the temper and sentiments, the humour and conduct of other men in their pursuit of learning, or in the affairs of life; and it has been considerably assisted by occasional collections, in the course of my reading, from many authors on different subjects. I confess, in far the greatest part, I stand bound to answer for the weaknesses or defects that will be found in these papers, not being able to point to other writers whence the twentieth part of them are derived.

The work was composed at different times, and by slow degrees. Now and then, indeed, it spread itself into branches and leaves, like a plant in April, and advanced seven or eight pages in a week: and sometimes it lay by without growth, like a vegetable in the winter, and did not increase half so much in the revolution of a year.

As these thoughts occurred to me in reading or meditation, or in my notices of the various appearances of things among mankind, they were thrown under those heads which make the present titles of the chapters, and were by degrees reduced to something like a method, such as the subject would admit.

On these accounts, it is not to be expected that the same accurate order should be observed, either in the whole book, or in the particular chapters thereof, which is necessary in the system of any science whose scheme is projected at once. A book which has been twenty years a writing may be indulged in some variety of style and manner, though I hope there will not be found any great difference of sentiment;

for wherein I had improved in latter years, beyond what I had first written, a few dashes and alterations have corrected the mistakes: and if the candour of the reader will but allow what is defective in one place to be supplied by additions from another, I hope there will be found a sufficient reconciliation of what might seem, at first, to be scarce consistent.

The language and dress of these sentiments is such as the present temper of mind dictated, whether it were grave or pleasant, severe or smiling. If there has been any thing expressed with too much severity, I suspect it will be found to fall upon those sneering or daring writers of the age against religion, and against the Christian scheme, who seem to have left reason, or decency, or both, behind them, in some of their writings.

The same apology of the length of years in composing this book, may serve also to excuse a repetition of the same sentiments which may happen to be found in different places without the author's design; but in other pages it was intended, so that those rules, for the conduct of the understanding, which are most necessary, should be set in several lights, that they might, with more frequency, and more force, impress the soul. I shall be sufficiently satisfied with the good humour and lenity of my readers, if they will please to regard these papers as parcels of imperfect sketches, which were designed by a sudden pencil, and in a thousand leisure moments, to be, one day, collected into landscapes of some little prospects in the regions of learning, and in the world of common life, pointing out the fairest and most fruitful spots, as well as the rocks, and wildernesses, and faithless morasses of the country. But I feel age advancing upon me; and my health is insufficient to perfect what I had designed, to increase and amplify these remarks, to confirm and improve these rules, and to illuminate the several pages with a richer and more beautiful variety of examples. The subject is almost endless; and new writers in the present, and in the following ages, may still find sufficient follies, weaknesses, and dangers, among mankind, to be represented in such a manner as to guard youth against them.

These hints, such as they are, I hope, may be rendered some way useful to persons in younger years, who will favour them with a perusal, and who would seek the cultivation of their own understandings in the early days of life. Perhaps they may find something here which may wake a



latent genius and direct the studies of a willing mind. Perhaps it may point out to a student, now and then, what may employ the most useful labours of his thoughts, and accelerate his diligence in the most momentous inquiries. Perhaps a sprightly youth might here meet with something to guard or warn him against mistakes, and withhold him, at other times, from those pursuits which are like to be fruitless and disappointing.

Let it be observed also, that, in our age, several of the ladies pursue science with success; and others of them are desirous of improving their reason, even in the common affairs of life, as well as the men: yet the characters which are here drawn occasionally are almost universally applied to one sex; but if any of the other shall find a character which suits them, they may, by a small change of the termination, apply and assume it to themselves, and accept the instruction, the admonition, or the applause which is designed in it.



# PREFACE.



## PART II.

THE author's name, which is prefixed to this book, renders it altogether needless for us to say any thing in order to recommend it; and we need not assure any judicious reader, who has been conversant with Dr. Watt's writings, that this is the genuine work of that excellent author; for he cannot fail of discerning the doctor's easy style and beautiful manner of expression in every page. We esteem it an honour done us by that truly great man, that he was pleased, by his last will, to entrust us with his manuscripts which he designed for the press: however he lived to publish several of those himself, after his will was made; so that not many remain to be published by us. Some indeed there are remaining which he did originally intend for the press; but his broken state of health did not permit him to finish them, and they are left too imperfect to be ever published. Of this sort, among others, is *The larger Discourse on Psalmody*, which he gave notice of his intention to publish, in the preface to the second edition of his Hymns, when he withdrew the shorter essay on that subject, which was annexed to the first edition. There are also among his manuscripts, some tracts relating to a doctrinal controversy which the doctor had been engaged in, but which the world seems to be tired of: so that, most probably, this *Second part of the Improvement of the Mind*, with the *Discourse on Education*, and *some Additions to the Reliquæ Juveniles*, are all the posthumous works of *Dr. Watts* that will ever be printed.

As to this work in particular, a considerable part of it was corrected for the press by the Doctor's own hand: and as to the rest of it, he did not leave it so far unfinished as should, in his own judgment, discourage the publishing it; for he has left this note in a paper along with it; "Though this

book, or the second volume of the Improvement of the Mind, is not so far finished as I could wish, yet I leave it among the number of books corrected for the press, for it is very easy for any person of genius and science to finish it, and publish it in a form sufficiently useful to the world." The corrections we have presumed to make are comparatively but few and trivial: and when now and then it was thought necessary to add a line or two for the illustration of any passage, it is generally put in the form of a note at the foot of the page.

It may perhaps be expected we should make some apology for delaying the publishing of this book so long after the author's death; a book that has been so much expected and so earnestly desired, as appears by several letters found in the Doctor's study, from eminent persons and from learned societies. There are various causes that have contributed to the delay, which the world need not be informed of; but the remote distance of our habitations, and the multiplicity of business in which each of us is stately engaged, are circumstances pretty generally known, and which we hope will be admitted in excuse for some part of the delay, and some part the booksellers must answer for. However, we are the less solicitous to apologise for not publishing this book sooner, as we are satisfied it will be welcome now it comes; and that those who, upon reading the first volume, have so earnestly desired the second, will not be disappointed when they read it.

We have only to add our most sincere wishes and prayers, that a book so admirably suited to improve the minds of men, especially of the rising generation, and to promote universal goodness, as this appears to be, may be attended with a blessing from on high.

D. JENNINGS.  
P. DODDRIDGE.

*June 26, 1751.*

THE  
IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

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PART I.

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*Directions for the Attainment of useful Knowledge.*

INTRODUCTION.

**N**O man is obliged to learn and know every thing; this can neither be sought nor required, for it is utterly impossible; yet all persons are under some obligation to improve their own understanding, otherwise it will be a barren desert, or a forest overgrown with weeds and brambles. Universal ignorance or infinite errors will overspread the mind which is utterly neglected and lies without any cultivation.

Skill in the sciences is indeed the business and profession but of a small part of mankind; but there are many others placed in such an exalted rank in the world, as allows them much leisure and large opportunities to cultivate their reason and to beautify and enrich their minds with various knowledge. Even the lower orders of men have particular callings in life, wherein they ought to acquire a just degree of skill, and this is not to be done well without thinking and reasoning about them.

The common duties and benefits of society, which belong to every man living, as we are social creatures, and even our native and necessary relations to a family, a neighbourhood, or a government, oblige all persons whatsoever to use their reasoning powers upon a thousand occasions; every hour of life calls for some regular

exercise of our judgment as to times and things, persons and actions ; without a prudent and discreet determination in matters before us, we shall be plunged into perpetual errors in our conduct. Now that which should always be practised, must at some time be learnt.

Besides every son and daughter of Adam has a most important concern in the affairs of a life to come, and therefore it is a matter of the highest moment for every one to understand, to judge, and to reason right about the things of religion. It is in vain for any to say, we have no leisure or time for it. The daily intervals of time, and vacancies from necessary labour, together with the one day in seven in the Christian world, allow sufficient time for this, if men would but apply themselves to it with half so much zeal and diligence as they do to the trifles and amusements of this life ; and it would turn to infinitely better account.

Thus it appears to be the necessary duty, and the interest of every person living, to improve his understanding, to inform his judgment, to treasure up useful knowledge, and to acquire the skill of good reasoning, as far as his station, capacity, and circumstances furnish him with proper means for it. Our mistakes in judgment may plunge us into much folly and guilt in practice. By acting without thought or reason, we dishonour the God that made us reasonable creatures, we often become injurious to our neighbours, kindred, or friends, and we bring sin and misery upon ourselves : For we are accountable to God our judge for every part of our irregular and mistaken conduct, where he hath given us sufficient advantages to guard against those mistakes.

It is the design of Logic to give this improvement to the mind, and to teach us the right use of reason in the acquirement and communication of all useful knowledge ; though the greatest part of writers on that subject have turned it into a composition of hard words, trifles, and subtilities, for the mere use of the schools, and that only to amuse the minds and the ears of men with empty sounds, which flatter their vanity, and puff up their pride with a pompous and glittering show of false learning ; and thus they have perverted the great and valuable design of that science.

A few modern writers have endeavoured to recover

the honour of Logic, since that excellent author of the Art of Thinking led the way. Among the rest, I have presumed to make an attempt of the same kind, in a treatise published several years ago, wherein it was my constant aim to assist the reasoning powers of every rank and order of men, as well as to keep an eye to the best interest of the schools and the candidates of true learning. There I have endeavoured to show the mistakes we are exposed to in our conception, judgment, and reasoning; and pointed to the various springs of them. I have also laid down many general and particular rules how to escape error, and attain truth in matters of the civil and religious life, as well as in the sciences.

But there are several other observations very pertinent to this purpose, which have not fallen so directly under any of those heads of discourse, or at least they would have swelled that treatise to an improper size; and therefore I have made a distinct collection of them here out of various authors, as well as from my own observation, and set them down under the following heads.

The learned world, who have done so much unmerited honour to that logical treatise, as to receive it into our two flourishing Universities, may possibly admit this as a second part or supplement to that treatise. And I may venture to persuade myself, that if the common and the busy ranks of mankind, as well as the scholar and the gentleman, would but transcribe such rules into their understanding, and practise them upon all occasions, there would be much more truth and knowledge found among men; and it is reasonable to hope that justice, virtue, and goodness would attend as the happy consequents.

## CHAPTER I.

### *General Rules for the Improvement of Knowledge.\**

#### I. RULE.

**DEEPLY** possess your mind with the vast importance of a good judgment, and the rich and inestimable

\* Though the most of these following rules, are chiefly addressed to those whom their fortune or their station requires to addict themselves to the

advantage of right reasoning. Review the instances of your own misconduct in life; think seriously with yourselves how many follies and sorrows you had escaped, and how much guilt and misery you had prevented, if from your early years you had but taken due pains to judge aright concerning persons, times, and things. This will awaken you with lively vigour to address yourselves to the work of improving your reasoning powers, and seizing every opportunity and advantage for that end.

**II. RULE.** Consider the weakness, frailties, and mistakes of human nature in general, which arise from the very constitution of a soul united to an animal body, and subjected to many inconveniences thereby. Consider the many additional weaknesses, mistakes, and frailties which are derived from our apostacy and fall from a state of innocence; how much our powers of understanding are yet more darkened, enfeebled, and imposed upon by our senses, our fancies, and our unruly passions, &c. Consider the depth and difficulty of many truths, and the flattering appearances of falsehood, whence arises an infinite variety of dangers to which we are exposed in our judgment of things. Read with greediness those authors that treat of the doctrine of prejudices, prepossessions, and springs of error, on purpose to make your soul watchful on all sides, that it suffer not itself, as far as possible, to be imposed upon by any of them. See more on this subject, Logic, Part II. Chap. 3, and Part III. Chap. 3.

**III. RULE.** A slight view of things so momentous is not sufficient. You should therefore contrive and practise some proper methods to acquaint yourself with your own ignorance, and to impress your mind with a deep and painful sense of the low and imperfect degrees of your present knowledge, that you may be incited with labour and activity to pursue after greater measures. Among others, you may find some such methods as these successful.

1. Take a wide survey now and then, of the vast and unlimited regions of learning. Let your meditations

particular improvement of their minds in greater degrees of knowledge; yet every one who has leisure and opportunity to be acquainted with such writings as these, may find something among them for their own use.



run over the names of all the sciences, with their numerous branches, and innumerable particular themes of knowledge; and then reflect how few of them you are acquainted with in any tolerable degree. The most learned of mortals will never have occasion to act over again, what is fabled of Alexander the Great, that when he had conquered what was called the Eastern World, he wept for want of more worlds to conquer. The worlds of science are immense and endless.

2. Think what a numberless variety of questions and difficulties there are belonging even to that particular science in which you have made the greatest progress, and how few of them there are in which you have arrived at a final and undoubted certainty; excepting only those questions in the pure and simple mathematics, whose theorems are demonstrable and leave scarcely any doubt; and yet even in the pursuit of some few of these, mankind have been strangely bewildered.

3. Spend a few thoughts sometimes on the puzzling inquiries concerning vacuums and atoms, the doctrine of infinities, indivisibles, and incommensurables in geometry, wherein there appear some insolvable difficulties. Do this on purpose to give you a more sensible impression of the poverty of your understanding, and the imperfection of your knowledge. This will teach you what a vain thing it is to fancy that you know all things; and will instruct you to think modestly of your present attainments, when every dust of the earth and every inch of empty space surmounts your understanding and triumphs over your presumption. Arithmo had been bred up to accounts all his life, and thought himself a complete master of numbers. But when he was pushed hard to give the square root of the number 2, he tried at it, and laboured long in millesimal fractions, until he confessed there was no end of the inquiry; and yet he learnt so much modesty by this perplexing question, that he was afraid to say it was an impossible thing. It is some good degree of improvement when we are afraid to be positive.

4. Read the accounts of those vast treasures of knowledge which some of the dead have possessed, and some of the living do possess. Read and be astonished at the almost incredible advances which have been made

in science. Acquaint yourselves with some persons of learning, that by converse among them, and comparing yourselves with them, you may acquire a mean opinion of your own attainments, and may be thereby animated with new zeal, to equal them as far as possible, or to exceed; thus let your diligence be quickened by a generous and laudable emulation. If Vanillus had never met with Scitorio and Palydes, he had never imagined himself a mere novice in Philosophy, nor ever set himself to study in good earnest.

Remember this, that if upon a few superficial acquisitions, you value, exalt, and swell yourself, as though you were a man of learning already, you are thereby building a most unpassable barrier against all improvement; you will lie down and indulge idleness, and rest yourself contented in the midst of deep and shameful ignorance. *Multi ad scientiam pervenissent si se illuc pervenisse non putassent.*

IV. RULE. Presume not too much upon a bright genius, a ready wit, and good parts, for these without labour and study will never make a man of knowledge and wisdom. This has been an unhappy temptation to persons of a vigorous and gay fancy to despise learning and study. They have been acknowledged to shine in an assembly, and sparkle in discourse upon common topics, and thence they took it into their heads to abandon reading and labour, and grow old in ignorance; but when they had lost the vivacities of animal nature and youth, they became stupid and sottish even to contempt and ridicule. Lucidas and Scintillo are young men of this stamp; they shine in conversation, they spread their native riches before the ignorant; they pride themselves in their own lively images of fancy, and imagine themselves wise and learned; but they had best avoid the presence of the skilful, and the test of reasoning; and I would advise them once a day to think forward a little, what a contemptible figure they will make in age.

The witty men sometimes have sense enough to know their own foible, and therefore they craftily shun the attacks of argument, or boldly pretend to despise and renounce them; because they are conscious of their own ignorance, and inwardly confess their want of acquaintance with the skill of reasoning.

**V. RULE.** As you are not to fancy yourself a learned man, because you are blessed with a ready wit, so neither must you imagine that large and laborious reading, and a strong memory, can denominate you truly wise.

What that excellent critic has determined when he decided the question, whether wit or study makes the best poet, may well be applied to every sort of learning :—

—————*Ego nec studium sine divite vena,  
Nec rude quid prosit, video, ingenium : alterius sic  
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice.* Hor. de Art. Poet.

THUS MADE ENGLISH :

Concerning poets, there has been contest,  
Whether they're made by art or nature best!  
But if I may presume in this affair,  
Among the rest my judgment to declare,  
No art without a genius will avail,  
And parts without the help of art will fail :  
But both ingredients jointly must unite,  
Or verse will never shine with a transcendent light. *Oldham.*

It is meditation and studious thought, it is the exercise of your own reason and judgment upon all you read, that gives good sense even to the best genius, and affords your understanding the truest improvement. A boy of strong memory may repeat a whole book of Euclid, yet be no Geometrician ; for he may not be able perhaps to demonstrate one single theorem.—Memorino has learnt half the Bible by heart, and is becoming a living concordance and a speaking index to theological folios, and yet he understands little of divinity.

A well furnished library and a capacious memory are indeed of singular use towards the improvement of the mind ; but if all your learning be nothing else but a mere amassment of what others have written, without a due penetration into their meanings, and without a judicious choice and determination of your own sentiments, I do not see what title your head has to true learning above your shelves. Though you have read Philosophy and Theology, Morals and Metaphysics in abundance, and every other art and science, yet if your memory is the only faculty em-

ployed, with the neglect of your reasoning powers, you can justly claim no higher character than that of a good historian of the sciences.

Here note. Many of the foregoing advices are more peculiarly proper for those who are conceited of their abilities, and are ready to entertain a high opinion of themselves. But a modest, humble youth, of a good genius, should not suffer himself to be discouraged by any of these considerations. They are designed only as a spur to diligence, and a guard against vanity and pride.

**VI. RULE.** Be not so weak as to imagine that a life of learning is a life of laziness and ease. Dare not give up yourself to any of the learned professions unless you are resolved to labour hard at study, and can make it your delight and the joy of your life, according to the motto of our late Lord Chancellor King, *Labor ipse voluptas*.

It is no idle thing to be a scholar indeed. A man much addicted to luxury and pleasure, recreation and past time, should never pretend to devote himself entirely to the sciences, unless his soul be so reformed and refined that he can taste all these entertainments eminently in his closet, among his books and papers. Sobrino is a temperate man and a philosopher, and he feeds upon partridge and pheasant, venison and ragouts, and every delicacy, in a growing understanding, and a serene and healthy soul, though he dines on a dish of sprouts or turnips. Languinos loved his ease, and therefore chose to be brought up a scholar; he had much indolence in his temper, and as he never cared for study, he falls under universal contempt in his profession, because he had nothing but the gown and the name.

**VII. RULE.** Let the hope of new discoveries, as well as the satisfaction and pleasure of known truths, animate your daily industry. Do not think learning in general is arrived at its perfection, or that the knowledge of any particular subject in any science cannot be improved, merely because it has lain five hundred or a thousand years without improvement. The present age, by the blessing of God on the ingenuity and diligence of men, has brought to light such truths in natural philosophy, and such discoveries in the heavens and the earth, as seemed to be beyond the reach of man.

But may there not be Sir Isaac Newtons in every science? You should never despair therefore of finding out that which has never yet been found, unless you see something in the nature of it which renders it unsearchable, and above the reach of our faculties.

Nor should a student in divinity imagine that our age is arrived at a full understanding of every thing which can be known by the Scriptures. Every age since the Reformation hath thrown some further light on difficult texts and paragraphs of the Bible, which have been long obscured by the early rise of antichrist; and since there are at present many difficulties and darkneses hanging about certain truths of the christian religion, and since several of these relate to important doctrines, such as the Origin of Sin, the Fall of Adam, the Person of Christ, the Blessed Trinity, the Decrees of God, &c. which do still embarrass the minds of honest and inquiring readers, and which make work for noisy controversy; it is certain there are several things in the Bible yet unknown and not sufficiently explained, and it is certain there is some way to solve these difficulties, and to reconcile these seeming contradictions. And why may not a sincere searcher of truth in the present age, by labour, diligence, study and prayer, with the best use of his reasoning powers, find out the proper solution of those knots and perplexities which have hitherto been unsolved, and which have afforded matter for angry quarrelling? Happy is every man who shall be favoured of Heaven to give a helping hand towards the introduction of the blessed age of light and love.

**VIII. RULE.** Do not hover always on the surface of things, nor take up suddenly, with mere appearances; but penetrate into the depth of matters, as far as your time and circumstances allow, especially in those things which relate to your own profession. Do not indulge yourselves to judge of things by the first glimpse, or a short and superficial view of them; for this will fill the mind with errors and prejudices, give it a wrong turn and ill habit of thinking, and make much work for retraction. Subito is carried away with title pages, so that he ventures to pronounce upon a large octavo at once, and to recommend it wonderfully, when he has read half the preface. Another volume of controversies of equal size was discarded by him at once, because it

pretended to treat of the Trinity, and yet he could neither find the word essence nor subsistencies in the twelve first pages; but Subito changes his opinions of men, and books, and thinks so often, that nobody regards him.

As for those sciences or those parts of knowledge, which either your profession, your leisure, your inclination, or your incapacity, forbids you to pursue with much application, or to search far into them, you must be contented with an historical and superficial knowledge of them, and not pretend to form any judgments of your own, on those subjects which you understand very imperfectly.

**IX. RULE.** Once a day, especially in the early years of life and study, call yourselves to an account what new ideas, what new proposition or truth you have gained, what further confirmation of known truths, and what advances you have made in any part of knowledge; and let no day, if possible, pass away without some intellectual gain; such a course well pursued, must certainly advance us in useful knowledge. It is a wise proverb among the learned, borrowed from the lips and practice of a celebrated painter, *nulla dies sine linea*; let no day pass without one line at least; and it was a sacred rule among the Pythagoreans, that they should every evening thrice run over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct had been, what they had done, or what they had neglected; and they assured their pupils that by this method they would make a noble progress in the path of virtue.

Nor let soft slumber close your eyes,  
 Before you've recollected thrice  
 The train of actions through the day:  
 Where have my feet chose out the way?  
 What have I learnt, where'er I've been,  
 From all I've heard, from all I've seen?  
 What know I more that's worth the knowing?  
 What have I done that's worth the doing?  
 What have I sought that I should shun?  
 What duty have I left undone;  
 Or into what new follies run?  
 These self inquires are the road  
 That leads to virtue, and to God.

I would be glad among a nation of Christians, to find young men heartily engaged in the practice of what this heathen writer teaches.

**X. RULE.** Maintain a constant watch at all times against a dogmatical spirit ; fix not your assent to any proposition in a firm and unalterable manner, till you have some firm and unalterable ground for it, and till you have arrived at some clear and sure evidence ; till you have turned the proposition on all sides, and searched the matter through and through, so that you cannot be mistaken. And even where you may think you have full grounds of assurance, be not too early, nor too frequent, in expressing this assurance in too peremptory and positive a manner, remembering that human nature is always liable to mistake in this corrupt and feeble state. A dogmatical spirit has many inconveniences attending it : As

1. It stops the ear against all further reasoning upon that subject, and shuts up the mind from all further improvements of knowledge. If you have resolutely fixed your opinion, though it be upon too slight and insufficient grounds, yet you will stand determined to renounce the strongest reason brought for the contrary opinion, and grow obstinate against the force of the clearest argument. Positivo is a man of this character, and has often pronounced his assurance of the Cartesian vortexes ; last year some further light broke in upon his understanding, with uncontrollable force, by reading something of mathematical philosophy ; yet having asserted his former opinions in a most confident manner, he is tempted now to wink a little against the truth, or to prevaricate in his discourse upon that subject, lest, by admitting conviction, he should expose himself to the necessity of confessing his former folly and mistake ; and he has not humility enough for that.

2. A dogmatical spirit naturally leads us to arrogance of mind, and gives a man some airs in conversation, which are too haughty and assuming. Audens is a man of learning, and very good company, but his infallible assurance renders his carriage sometimes insupportable.

3. A dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious of his neighbours. Every one of his own opinions appear to him written as it were with sunbeams, and

he grows angry that his neighbour does not see it in the same light. He is tempted to disdain his correspondents as men of a low and dark understanding, because they will not believe what he does. Furio goes farther in this wild track, and charges those who refuse his notions with wilful obstinacy and vile hypocrisy; he tells them boldly that they resist the truth and sin against their consciences.

These are the men, that when they deal in controversy delight in reproaches. They abound in tossing about absurdity and stupidity among their brethren. They cast the imputation of heresy and nonsense plentifully upon their antagonists; and in matters of sacred importance, they deal out their anathemas in abundance, upon Christians better than themselves; they denounce damnation upon their neighbours, without either justice or mercy; and when they pronounce sentence of divine wrath against supposed heretics, they add their own human fire and indignation. A dogmatist in religion is not a great way off from a bigot, and is in high danger of growing up to be a bloody persecutor.

**XI. RULE.** Though caution and slow assent will guard you against frequent mistakes and retractions, yet you should get humility and courage enough to retract any mistake, and confess an error; frequent changes are tokens of levity in our first determinations; yet you should never be too proud to change your opinion, nor frightened at the name of a changeling. Learn to scorn those vulgar bugbears which confirm foolish man in his own mistakes, for fear of being charged with inconstancy. I confess it is better not to judge, than to judge falsely, and it is wiser to withhold our assent till we see complete evidence; but if we have too suddenly given our assent, as the wisest man does sometimes, if we have professed what we find afterwards to be false, we should never be ashamed nor afraid to renounce a mistake. That is a noble essay which is found among the occasional papers, to encourage the world to practice retractions; and I would recommend it to the perusal of every scholar and every Christian.

**XII. RULE.** He that would raise his judgment above the vulgar rank of mankind, and learn to pass a just sentence on persons and things, must take heed of a



fanciful temper of mind, and a humorous conduct in his affairs. Fancy and humour early and constantly indulged, may expect an old age overrun with follies.

The notion of a humorist is one that is greatly pleased, or greatly displeas'd with little things, who sets his heart much upon matters of very small importance, who has his will determin'd every day by trifles, his actions seldom directed by the reason and nature of things, and his passions frequently rais'd by things of little moment. Where this practice is allow'd, it will insensibly warp the judgment to pronounce little things great, and tempt you to lay a great weight upon them. In short, this temper will incline you to pass an unjust value on almost every thing that occurs; and every step you take in this path, is just so far out of the way to wisdom.

**XIII. RULE.** For the same reason have a care of trifling with things important and momentous, or of sporting with things awful and sacred; do not indulge a spirit of ridicule, as some witty men do on all occasions and subjects. This will as unhappily bias the judgment on the other side, and incline you to pass a low esteem on the most valuable objects. Whatsoever evil habit we indulge in practice, it will insensibly obtain a power over our understanding, and betray us into many errors. *Jocander* is ready with his jest to answer every thing that he hears; he reads books in the same jovial humour, and has gotten the art of turning every thought and sentence into merriment. How many awkward and irregular judgments does this man pass upon solemn subjects, even when he designs to be grave and in earnest? His mirth and laughing humour is formed into habit and temper, and leads his understanding shamefully astray. You will see him wandering in pursuit of a gay flying feather, and he is drawn by a kind of *IGNIS FATUUS* into bogs and mire, almost every day of his life.

**XIV. RULE.** Ever maintain a virtuous and pious frame of spirit; for an indulgence of vicious inclinations debases the understanding, and perverts the judgment. Whoredom and wine, and new wine, take away the heart and soul, and reason of a man. Sensuality ruins the better faculties of the mind; an indulgence to appetite and passion enfeebles the powers of reason, it makes

the judgment weak and susceptible of every falsehood, and especially of such mistakes as have a tendency towards the gratification of the animal; and it warps the soul aside strangely from that steadfast honesty and integrity that necessarily belongs to the pursuit of truth. It is the virtuous man who is in a fair way to wisdom. "God gives to those that are good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy." Ecc. ii. 26.

Piety towards God, as well as sobriety and virtue, are necessary qualifications to make a truly wise and judicious man. He that abandons religion must act in such a contradiction to his own conscience and best judgment, that he abuses and spoils the faculty itself. It is thus in the nature of things, and it is thus by the righteous judgment of God; even the pretended sages among the heathens, who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they were given up to a reprobate mind, *εις νοον αδοκιμον* an undistinguishing or injudicious mind, so that they judged inconsistently, and practised mere absurdities, *τα μη ανηκοντα*. Rom. i. 28.

And it is the character of the slaves of antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 10. &c. that those "who receive not the love of the truth, were exposed to the power of diabolical sleights and lying wonders." When divine revelation shines and blazes in the face of men with glorious evidence, and they wink their eyes against it, the God of this world is suffered to blind them even in the most obvious, common, and sensible things. The great God of heaven, for this cause, sends them strong delusions that they should believe a lie; and the nonsense of transubstantiation in the popish world, is a most glaring accomplishment of this prophecy, beyond even what could have been thought of or expected among creatures who pretend to reason.

**XV. RULE.** Watch against the pride of your own reason, and a vain conceit of your own intellectual powers, with the neglect of divine aid and blessing. Presume not upon great attainments in knowledge by your own self-sufficiency; those who trust to their own understandings entirely, are pronounced fools in the word of God; and it is the wisest of men gives them this character, "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. xxviii. 26. And the same divine writer advises us "to trust in the Lord with

all our heart, and not to lean to our own understandings, nor to be wise in our own eyes." Chap. iii. 5, 7.

Those who, with a neglect of religion, and dependence on God, apply themselves to search out every article in the things of God by the mere dint of their own reason, have been suffered to run into wild excesses of foolery, and strange extravagance of opinions. Every one who pursues this vain course, and will not ask for the conduct of God in the study of religion, has just reason to fear he shall be left of God, and given up a prey to a thousand prejudices; that he shall be consigned over to the follies of his own heart, and pursue his own temporal and eternal ruin. And even in common studies, we should, by humility and dependence, engage the God of truth on our side.

**XVI. RULE.** Offer up therefore your daily requests to God, the Father of lights, that he would bless all your attempts and labours in reading, study, and conversation. Think with yourself, how easily and how insensibly, by one turn of thought, he can lead you into a large scene of useful ideas; he can teach you to lay hold on a clue which may guide your thoughts with safety and ease through all the difficulties of an intricate subject. Think how easily the Author of your beings can direct your motions by his providence, so that the glance of an eye, or a word striking the ear, or a sudden turn of the fancy, shall conduct you to a train of happy sentiments. By his secret and supreme method of government, he can draw you to read such a treatise, or converse with such a person, who may give you more light into some deep subject in an hour, than you could obtain by a month of your own solitary labour.

Think with yourself, with how much ease the God of spirits can cast into your minds some useful suggestion, and give a happy turn to your own thoughts, for the thoughts of those with whom you converse, whence you may derive unspeakable light and satisfaction in a matter that has long puzzled and entangled you; he can show you a "*path which the vulture's eye hath not seen,*" and lead you by some unknown gate or portal, out of a wilderness and labyrinth of difficulties wherein you have been long wandering.

Implore constantly his divine grace to point your inclination to proper studies, and to fix your heart there. He can keep off temptations on the right hand and on

the left, both by the course of his providence, and by the secret and insensible intimations of his Spirit. He can guard your understandings from every evil influence of error, and secure you from the danger of evil books and men, which might otherwise have a fatal effect, and lead you into pernicious mistakes.

Nor let this sort of advice fall under the censure of the godless and profane, as a mere piece of bigotry or enthusiasm, derived from faith and the Bible; for the reasons which I have given to support this pious practice of invoking the blessing of God on our studies, are derived from the light of nature as well as revelation. He that made our souls, and is the Father of spirits, shall he not be supposed to have a most friendly influence towards the instruction and government of them? The Author of our rational powers can involve them in darkness when he pleases, by a sudden distemper, or he can abandon them to wander into dark and foolish opinions when they are filled with a vain conceit of their own light. He expects to be acknowledged in the common affairs of life, and he does as certainly expect it in the superiour operations of the mind, and in the search of knowledge and truth. The very heathens, by the light of reason, were taught to say, "*A Jove Principium Musæ.*" In works of learning they thought it necessary to begin with God. Even the poets call upon the muse as a goddess to assist them in their compositions.

The first lines of Homer in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the first line of Musæus in his song of *Hero* and *Leander*, the beginning of *Hesiod* in his poem of *Weeks* and *Days*, and several others, furnish us with sufficient examples of this kind; nor does *Ovid* leave out this piece of devotion as he begins his stories of the *Metamorphosis*. Christianity so much the more obliges us by the precepts of Scripture to invoke the assistance of the true God in all our labours of the mind, for the improvement of ourselves and others. *Bishop Saunderson* says, that study without prayer is atheism, as well as that prayer without study is presumption. And we are still more abundantly encouraged by the testimony of those who have acknowledged from their own experience, that sincere prayer was no hindrance to their studies; they have gotten more knowledge sometimes upon their knees, than by their labour in

perusing a variety of authors, and they have left this observation for such as follow, *Bene orâsse est bene studuisse*, Praying is the best studying.

To conclude, let industry and devotion join together, and you need not doubt the happy success; Prov. ii. 2.

“Incline thine ear unto wisdom, apply thine heart to understanding; cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice; seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,” &c. which is “the beginning of wisdom,” It is “the Lord who gives wisdom, even to the simple, and out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

## CHAP. II.

*Observation, Reading, Instruction by Lectures, Conversation, and Study, compared.*

**T**HERE are five eminent means or methods whereby the mind is improved in the knowledge of things; and these are observation, reading, instruction by lectures, conversation, and meditation, which last in a most peculiar manner, is called study. Let us survey the general definitions or description of them all.

I. Observation is the notice that we take of all occurrences in human life, whether they are sensible or intellectual, whether relating to persons or things, to ourselves or others. It is this that furnishes us, even from our infancy, with a rich variety of ideas and propositions, words and phrases; it is by this we know that fire will burn, that the sun gives light, that a horse eats grass, that an acorn produces an oak, that man is a being capable of reasoning and discourse, that our judgment is weak, that our mistakes are many, that our sorrows are great, that our bodies die and are carried to the grave, and that one generation succeeds another. All those things which we see, which we hear or feel, which we perceive by sense or consciousness, or which we know in a direct manner, with scarce any exercise of our reflecting faculties or our reasoning powers, may be included under the general name of observation.

When this observation relates to any thing that immediately concerns ourselves, and of which we are

conscious, it may be called experience. So I am said to know or experience that I have in myself a power of thinking, fearing, loving, &c. That I have appetites and passions working in me, and many personal occurrences have attended me in this life.

Observation therefore includes all that Mr. Locke means by sensation and reflection.

When we are searching out the nature or properties of any being by various methods of trial; or when we apply some active powers, or set some causes to work, to observe what effects they would produce, this sort of observation is called experiment. So when I throw a bullet into water, I find it sinks; and when I throw the same bullet into quicksilver, I see it swims; but if I beat out this bullet into a thin hollow shape like a dish, then it will swim in the water too. So when I strike two flints together, I find they produce fire; when I throw a seed into the earth, it grows up into a plant.

All these belong to the first method of knowledge, which I shall call observation.

II. Reading is that means or method of knowledge, whereby "we acquaint ourselves with what other men have written, or published to the world in their writings." These arts of reading and writing, are of infinite advantage; for by them we are made partakers of the sentiments, observations, reasonings, and improvements, of all the learned world, in the most remote nations, and in former ages, almost from the beginning of mankind.

III. Public or private lectures are such "verbal instructions as are given by a teacher while the learners attend in silence." This is the way of learning religion from the pulpit, or of philosophy or theology from the professor's chair, or of mathematics by a teacher showing us various theorems or problems, i. e. speculations or practices by demonstration and operation, with all the instruments of art necessary to those operations.

IV. Conversation is another method of improving our minds, wherein "by mutual discourse and inquiry we learn the sentiments of others, as well as communicate our sentiments to others in the same manner." Sometimes indeed, though both parties speak by turns, yet the advantage is only on one side; as, when a

teacher and a learner meet and discourse together; but frequently the profit is mutual. Under this head of conversation, we may also rank disputes of various kinds.

V. Meditation or study includes all those "exercises of the mind, whereby we render all the former methods useful, for our increase in true knowledge and wisdom." It is by meditation we come to confirm our memory of things that pass through our thoughts in the occurrences of life, in our own experiences, and in the observations we make; it is by meditation that we draw various inferences, and establish in our minds general principles of knowledge. It is by meditation that we compare the various ideas which we derive from our senses, or from the operations of our souls, and join them in propositions. It is by meditation that we fix in our memory whatsoever we learn, and form our own judgment of the truth or falsehood, the strength or weakness of what others speak or write. It is meditation or study that draws out long chains of argument, and searches and finds deep and difficult truths, which before lay concealed in darkness.

It would be a needless thing to prove that our own solitary meditations, together with the few observations that the most part of mankind are capable of making, are not sufficient, of themselves, to lead us into the attainment of any considerable proportion of knowledge, at least in an age so much improved as ours is, without the assistance of conversation and reading, and other proper instructions that are to be attained in our days. Yet each of these five methods have their peculiar advantages, whereby they assist each other; and their peculiar defects, which have need to be supplied by the other's assistance. Let us trace over some of the particular advantages of each.

I. One method of improving the mind, is observation, and the advantages of it are these:

1. It is owing to observation that our "mind is furnished with the first simple and complex ideas." It is this lays the ground work and foundation of all knowledge, and makes us capable of using any of the other methods for improving the mind; for if we did not attain a variety of sensible and intellectual ideas by

the sensations of outward objects, by the consciousness of our own appetites and passions, pleasures and pains, and by inward experience of the actings of our own spirits, it would be impossible either for men or books to teach us any thing. It is observation that must give us our first ideas of things, as it includes in it sense and consciousness.

2. All our knowledge derived from observation, whether it be of single ideas or of propositions, is knowledge gotten at first hand. Hereby we see and know things as they are, or as they appear to us; we take the impressions of them on our minds from the original objects themselves, which give a clearer and stronger conception of things; these ideas are more lively, and the propositions (at least in many cases) are much more evident. Whereas what knowledge we derive from lectures, reading and conversation, is but the copy of other men's ideas, that is, the picture of a picture; and it is one remove further from the original.

3. Another advantage of observation is, that we may gain knowledge all the day long, and every moment of our lives, and every moment of our existence we may be adding something to our intellectual treasures thereby, except only while we are asleep; and even then the remembrance of our dreaming will teach us some truths, and lay a foundation for a better acquaintance with human nature, both in the powers and in the frailties of it.

II. The next way of improving the mind is by reading, and the advantages of it are such as these:

1. By reading we acquaint ourselves in a very extensive manner "with the affairs, actions, and thoughts of the living and the dead, in the most remote nations, and most distant ages;" and that with as much ease as though they lived in our own age and nation. By reading of books, we may learn something of all parts of mankind; whereas, by observation, we learn all from ourselves, and only what comes within our own direct cognizance; by conversation we can only enjoy the assistance of a very few persons, viz. those who are near us, and live at the same time when we do, that is, our neighbours and contemporaries; but our knowledge is much more narrowed still, if we confine our-



selves merely to our own solitary reasonings, without much observation or reading. For then all our improvement must arise only from our own inward powers and meditations.

2. By reading we learn not only the actions and sentiments of different nations and ages, but we transfer to ourselves the knowledge and improvements of the "most learned men, the wisest and the best of mankind," when or wheresoever they lived: For though many books have been written by weak and injudicious persons, yet the most of those books which have obtained great reputation in the world, are the products of great and wise men in their several ages and nations; whereas we can obtain the conversation and instruction of those only who are within the reach of our dwellings, or our acquaintance, whether they are wise or unwise; and sometimes that narrow sphere scarce affords any person of great eminence in wisdom or learning, unless our instructor happen to have this character. And as for our own study and meditation, even when we arrive at some good degrees of learning, our advantage for further improvement in knowledge by them is still far more contracted than what we may derive from reading.

3. When we read good authors we learn "the best, the most laboured, and most refined sentiments even of those wise and learned men;" for they have studied hard, and have committed to writing their maturest thoughts, and the result of their long study and experience; whereas by conversation, and in some lectures, we obtain many times, only the present thoughts of our tutors or friends, which (though they may be bright and useful) yet, at first perhaps, may be sudden and indigested, and are mere hints which have risen to no maturity.

4. It is another advantage of reading, that we may "review what we have read;" we may consult the page again and again, and meditate on it at successive seasons in our serenest and retired hours, having the book always at hand; but what we obtain by conversation and in lectures, is oftentimes lost again as soon as the company breaks up, or at least when the day vanishes; unless we happen to have the talent of a good memory, or quickly retire and note down what

remarkables we have found in those discourses. And for the same reason, and for the want of retiring and writing, many a learned man has lost several useful meditations of his own, and could never recal them again.

III. The advantages of verbal instructions by public or private lectures are these :

1. There is something more sprightly, more delightful and entertaining in the living discourse of a wise, learned, and well qualified teacher, than there is in the silent and sedentary practice of reading. The very turn of voice, the good pronunciation, and the polite and alluring manner which some teachers have attained, will engage the attention, keep the soul fixed, and convey and insinuate into the mind the ideas of things in a more lively and forcible way, than the mere reading of books in the silence and retirement of the closet.

2. A tutor or instructor when he paraphrases and explains other authors, can "mark out the precise point of difficulty or controversy," and unfold it. He can show you which paragraphs are of greatest importance, and which are of less moment. He can teach his hearers what authors, or what parts of an author, are best worth reading on any particular subject ; and thus save his disciples much time and pains, by shortening the labours of their closet and private studies. He can show you what were the doctrines of the ancients in a compendium, which perhaps would cost much labour and the perusal of many books to attain. He can inform you what new doctrines or sentiments are arising in the world, before they come to be public ; as well as acquaint you with his own private thoughts, and his own experiments and observations, which never were, and perhaps never will be published to the world, and yet may be very valuable and useful.

3. A living instructor can convey to our senses those notions with which he would furnish our minds, when he teaches us natural philosophy, or most parts of mathematical learning. He can make the experiments before our eyes. He can describe figures and diagrams, point to the lines and angles, and make out the demonstration in a more intelligible manner by sensible means, which cannot so well be done by mere reading, even though we should have the same figures lying in a

book before our eyes. A living teacher, therefore, is a most necessary help in these studies.

I might add also, that even where the subject of discourse is moral, logical, or rhetorical, &c. and which does not directly come under the notice of our senses, a tutor may explain his ideas by such familiar examples, and plain or simple similitudes, as seldom find place in books and writings.

4. When an instructor in his lectures delivers any matter of difficulty, or expresses himself in such a manner as seems obscure, so that you do not take up his ideas clearly or fully, you have opportunity, at least when the lecture is finished, or at other proper seasons, to inquire how such a sentence should be understood, or how such a difficulty may be explained and removed.

If there be permission given to free converse with the tutor, either in the midst of the lecture, or rather at the end of it, concerning any doubts or difficulties that occur to the hearer, this brings it very near to conversation or discourse.

IV. Conversation is the next method of improvement, and it is attended with the following advantages :

1. When we converse familiarly with a learned friend, we have his own help at hand to explain to us every word and sentiment that seems obscure in his discourse, and to inform us of his whole meaning, so that we are in much less danger of mistaking his sense ; whereas in books, whatsoever is really obscure, may also abide always obscure without remedy, since the author is not at hand, that we may inquire his sense.

If we mistake the meaning of our friend in conversation, we are quickly set right again ; but in reading we many times go on in the same mistake, and are not capable of recovering ourselves from it.— Thence it comes to pass that we have so many contests in all ages about the meaning of ancient authors, and especially the sacred writers. Happy should we be, could we but converse with *Moses*, *Isaiah*, and *St. Paul*, and consult the prophets and apostles, when we meet with a difficult text ! But that glorious conversation is reserved for the ages of future blessedness.

2. When we are discoursing upon any theme with a friend, we may propose our doubts and objections against his sentiments, and have them solved and an-

swered at once. The difficulties that arise in our minds may be removed by one enlightening word of our correspondent; whereas in reading, if a difficulty or question arise in our thoughts which the author has not happened to mention, we must be content without a present answer or solution of it. Books cannot speak.

3. Not only the doubts which arise in the mind upon any subject of discourse are easily proposed and solved in conversation, but the very difficulties we meet with in books and in our private studies, may find a relief by friendly conference. We may pore upon a knotty point in solitary meditation many months without a solution, because perhaps we have gotten into a wrong tract of thought; and our labour (while we are pursuing a false scent) is not only useless and unsuccessful, but it leads us perhaps into a long train of error, for want of being corrected in the first step. But if we note down this difficulty when we read it, we may propose it to an ingenious correspondent when we see him; we may be relieved in a moment, and find the difficulty vanish: He beholds the object perhaps in a different view, sets it before us in quite another light, leads us at once into evidence and truth, and that with a delightful surprise.

4. Conversation calls out into light what has been lodged in all the recesses and secret chambers of the soul; by occasional hints and incidents, it brings old useful notions into remembrance; it unfolds and displays the hidden treasures of knowledge with which reading, observation, and study, had before furnished the mind. By mutual discourse the soul is awakened and allured to bring forth its hoards of knowledge, and it learns how to render them most useful to mankind. A man of vast reading, without conversation, is like a miser who lives only to himself.

5. In free and friendly conversation, our intellectual powers are more animated, and our spirits act with a superior vigour in the quest and pursuit of unknown truths. There is a sharpness and sagacity of thought that attends conversation, beyond what we find whilst we are shut up reading and musing in our retirements. Our souls may be serene in solitude, but not sparkling, though perhaps we are employed in reading the works of the brightest writers. Often has it happened in free discourse, that new thoughts are strangely struck out,

and the seeds of truth sparkle and blaze through the company, which in calm and silent reading would never have been excited. By conversation you will both give and receive this benefit; as flints when put into motion and striking against each other, produce living fire on both sides, which would never have arisen from the same hard materials in a state of rest.

6. In generous conversation, amongst ingenious and learned men, we have a great advantage of proposing our private opinions, and of bringing our own sentiments to the test, and learning in a more compendious and safer way what the world will judge of them, how mankind will receive them, what objections may be raised against them, what defects there are in our scheme; and how to correct our own mistakes; which advantages are not so easy to be obtained by our own private meditations; for the pleasure we take in our own notions, and the passion of self love, as well as the narrowness of our views, tempt us to pass too favourable an opinion on our own schemes; whereas the variety of genius in our several associates, will give happy notices how our opinions will stand in the view of mankind.

7. It is also another considerable advantage of conversation, that it furnishes the student with knowledge of men and the affairs of life, as reading furnishes him with book learning. A man who dwells all his days among books, may have amassed together a vast heap of notions, but he may be a mere scholar, which is a contemptible sort of character in the world. A hermit who has been shut up in his cell in a college, (has contracted a sort of mould and rust upon his soul,) and all his airs of behaviour have a certain awkwardness in them; but these awkward airs are worn away by degrees in company; the rust and the mould are filed and brushed off by polite conversation. The scholar now becomes a citizen or a gentleman, a neighbour and a friend; he learns how to dress his sentiments in the fairest colours, as well as to set them in the strongest light. Thus he brings out his notions with honour, he makes some use of them in the world, and improves the theory by the practice.

But before we proceed too far in finishing a bright character by conversation, we should consider that

something else is necessary besides an acquaintance with men and books, and therefore I add,

V. Mere lectures, reading, and conversation without thinking, are not sufficient to make a man of knowledge and wisdom. It is our own thought and reflection, study and meditation, must attend all the other methods of improvement, and perfect them. It carries these advantages with it :

1. Though observation and instruction, reading and conversation, may furnish us with many ideas of men and things, yet it is our own meditation, and the labour of our own thoughts that must form our judgment of things. Our own thoughts should join or disjoin these ideas in a proposition for ourselves; it is our own mind that must judge for ourselves concerning the agreement or disagreement of ideas, and form propositions of truth out of them. Reading and conversation may acquaint us with many truths, and with many arguments to support them, but it is our own study and reasoning that must determine whether these propositions are true, and whether these arguments are just and solid.

It is confessed there are a thousand things which our eyes have not seen, and which would never come within the reach of our personal and immediate knowledge and observation, because of the distance of times and places; these must be known by consulting other persons, and that is done either in their writings or in their discourses. But after all, let this be a fixed point with us, that it is our own reflection and judgment must determine how far we should receive that which books or men inform us of, and how far they are worthy of our assent and credit.

2. It is meditation and study that transfers and conveys the notions and sentiments of others to ourselves, so as to make them properly our own. It is our own judgment upon them as well as our memory of them, that makes them become our own property. It does as it were concoct our intellectual food, and turns it into a part of ourselves; just as a man may call his limbs and his flesh his own, whether he borrowed the materials from the ox or the sheep, from the lark or the lobster; whether he derived it from corn or milk, the fruits of the trees, or the herbs and roots of the earth: it is all now become

one substance with himself, and he wields and manages those muscles and limbs for his own proper purposes, which once were the substance of other animals or vegetables; that very substance which last week was grazing in the field, or swimming in the sea, waving in the milk pail, or growing in the garden, is now become part of the man.

3. By study and meditation we improve the hints that we have acquired by observation, conversation, and reading; we take more time in thinking, and by the labour of the mind we penetrate deeper into the themes of knowledge, and carry our thoughts sometimes much farther on many subjects, than we ever met with, either in the books of the dead, or discourses of the living. It is our own reasoning that draws out one truth from another, and forms a whole scheme or science, from a few hints which we borrowed elsewhere.

By a survey of these things, we may justly conclude, that he who spends all his time in hearing lectures, or poring upon books, without observation, meditation, or converse, will have but a mere historical knowledge of learning, and be able only to tell what others have known or said on the subject; he that lets all his time flow away in conversation, without due observation, reading or study, will gain but a slight and superficial knowledge, which will be in danger of vanishing with the voice of the speaker; and he that confines himself merely to his closet, and his own narrow observation of things, and is taught only by his own solitary thoughts, without instruction by lectures, reading, or free conversation, will be in danger of a narrow spirit, a vain conceit of himself, and an unreasonable contempt of others; and after all, he will obtain a very limited and imperfect view and knowledge of things, and he will seldom learn how to make that knowledge useful.

These five methods of improvement should be pursued jointly, and go hand in hand, where our circumstances are so happy as to find opportunity and conveniency to enjoy them all; though I must give my opinion that two of them, viz. (reading and meditation) should employ much more of our time, than public lectures or conversation and discourse. As for observation, we may be always acquiring knowledge that way, whether we are alone or in company.

But it will be for our further improvement, if we go over all these five methods of obtaining knowledge more distinctly and more at large, and see what special advances in useful science we may draw from them all.

### CHAP. III.

#### *Rules relating to Observation.*

**T**HOUGH observation, in the strict sense of the word, and as it is distinguished from meditation and study, is the first means of improvement, and in its strictest sense does not include in it any reasonings of the mind upon the things which we observe, or inferences drawn from them; yet the motions of the mind are so exceeding swift, that it is hardly possible for a thinking man to gain experiences or observations, without making some secret and short reflections upon them; and therefore, in giving a few directions concerning this method of improvement, I shall not so narrowly confine myself to the first mere impression of objects on the mind by observation; but include also some hints which relate to the first, most easy, and obvious reflections or reasonings which arise from them.

I. Let the enlargement of your knowledge be one constant view and design in life; since there is no time or place, no transactions, occurrences, or engagements in life, which excludes us from this method of improving the mind. When we are alone, even in darkness and silence, we may converse with our own hearts, observe the working of our own spirits, and reflect upon the inward motions of our own passions in some of the latest occurrences in life; we may acquaint ourselves with the powers and properties, the tendencies and inclinations of both body and spirit, and gain a more intimate knowledge of ourselves. When we are in company, we may discover something more of human nature, of human passions and follies, and of human affairs, vices and virtues, by conversing with mankind and observing their conduct. Nor is there any thing more valuable than the knowledge of ourselves, and the knowledge of men, except it be the knowledge of God who made us, and our relation to him as our Governor.

When we are in the house, or the city, wheresoever



we turn our eyes, we see the works of men ; when we are abroad in the country, we behold more of the works of God. The skies and the ground, above and beneath us, and the animal and vegetable world round about us, may entertain our observation with ten thousand varieties.

Endeavour therefore to derive some instruction, or improvement of the mind from every thing which you see or hear, from every thing which occurs in human life, from every thing within you or without you.

Fetch down some knowledge from the clouds, the stars, the sun, the moon, and the revolutions of all the planets ; dig and draw up some valuable meditations from the depths of the earth, and search them through the vast oceans of water ; extract some intellectual improvements from the minerals and metals ; from the wonders of nature among the vegetables and herbs, trees and flowers. Learn some lessons from the birds and the beasts, and the meanest insects. Read the wisdom of God and his admirable contrivance in them all : read his Almighty power, his rich and various goodness, in all the works of his hands.

From the day and the night, the hours and the flying minutes, learn a wise improvement of time, and be watchful to seize every opportunity to increase in knowledge.

From the vicissitudes and revolutions of nations and families, and from the various occurrences of the world, learn the instability of mortal affairs, the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death. From a coffin and a funeral, learn to meditate upon your own departure.

From the vices and follies of others, observe what is hateful in them ; consider how such a practice looks in another person, and remember that it looks as ill or worse in yourself. From the virtue of others, learn something worthy of your imitation.

From the deformity, the distress, or calamity of others, derive lessons of thankfulness to God, and hymns of grateful praise to your Creator, Governor, and Benefactor, who has formed you in a better mould, and guarded you from those evils. Learn also the sacred lesson of contentment in your own estate, and compassion to your neighbour under his miseries.

From your natural powers, sensations, judgment,

memory, hands, feet, &c. make this inference, that they were not given you for nothing, but for some useful employment to the honour of your Maker, and for the good of your fellow-creatures, as well as for your own best interest and final happiness.

From the sorrows, the pains, the sicknesses and sufferings that attend you, learn the evil of sin, and the imperfection of your present state. From your own sins and follies, learn the patience of God toward you, and the practice of humility toward God and man.

Thus from every appearance in nature, and from every occurrence in life, you may derive natural, moral, and religious observations to entertain your minds, as well as rules of conduct in the affairs relating to this life, and that which is to come.

II. In order to furnish the mind with a rich variety of ideas, the laudable curiosity of young people should be indulged and gratified rather than discouraged. It is a very hopeful sign in young persons, to see them curious in observing, and inquisitive in searching into the greatest part of things that occur; nor should such an inquiring temper be frowned into silence, nor be rigorously restrained, but should rather be satisfied by proper answers given to all those queries.

For this reason also, where time and fortune allow it, young people should be led into company at proper seasons, should be carried abroad to see the fields and the woods, and the rivers, the buildings, towns, and cities distant from their own dwelling; they should be entertained with the sight of strange birds, beasts, fishes, insects, vegetables, and productions both of nature and art of every kind, whether they are the products of their own or foreign nations; and in due time, where Providence gives opportunity, they may travel under a wise inspector or tutor to different parts of the world for the same end, that they may bring home treasures of useful knowledge.

III. Among all these observations, write down what is most remarkable and uncommon; reserve these remarks in store for proper occasions, and at proper seasons take a review of them. Such a practice will give you a habit of useful thinking; this will secure the workings of your soul from running to waste, and by this means even your looser moments will turn to hap-

py account both here and hereafter. And whatever useful observations have been made, let them be at least some part of the subject of your conversation among your friends at next meeting.

Let the circumstances or situations in life be what or where they will, a man should never neglect this improvement which may be derived from observation. Let him travel into the East or West Indies, and fulfil the duties of the military or the mercantile life there; let him rove through the earth or the seas for his own humour as a traveller, or pursue his diversions in what part of the world he pleases as a gentleman; let prosperous or adverse fortune call him to the most distant parts of the globe; still let him carry on his knowledge and the improvement of his soul by wise observations. In due time, by this means, he may render himself some way useful to the societies of mankind.

**THEOBALDINO**, in his younger years, visited the forests of Norway on the account of trade and timber, and besides his proper observations of the growth of trees on those northern mountains, he learned there was a sort of people called Fins, in those confines which border upon Sweden, whose habitation is in the woods; and he lived afterwards to give a good account of them, and some of their customs, to the Royal Society, for the improvement of natural knowledge. **PUTEOLI** was taken captive into Turkey in his youth, and travelled with his master in their holy pilgrimage to Mecca, whereby he became more intelligent in the forms, ceremonies, and fooleries of the Mahometan worship, than perhaps ever any Briton knew before; and by his manuscripts we are more acquainted in this last century with the Turkish sacreds than any one had ever informed us.

IV. Let us keep our minds as free as possible from passions and prejudices, for these will give a wrong turn to our observations both on persons and things. The eyes of a man in the jaundice make yellow observations on every thing; and the soul tinctured with any passion or prejudice, diffuses a false colour over the real appearances of things, and disguises many of the common occurrences of life; it never beholds things in a true light, nor suffers them to appear as they are. Whensoever, therefore, you would make proper observations, let self, with all its influences, stand

aside as far as possible ; abstract your own interest and your own concern from them, and bid all friendships and enmities stand aloof and keep out of the way, in the observations that you make relating to persons and things.

If this rule were well obeyed, we should be much better guarded against those common pieces of misconduct in the observations of men, viz. the false judgments of pride and envy. How ready is envy to mingle with the notices which we take of other persons ? How often is mankind prone to put an ill sense upon the actions of their neighbours, to take a survey of them in an evil position and in an unhappy light ? And by this means we form a worse opinion of our neighbours than they deserve ; while at the same time pride and self flattery tempt us to make unjust observations on ourselves in our own favour. In all the favourable judgments we pass concerning ourselves, we should allow a little abatement on this account.

V. In making your observations on persons, take care of indulging that busy curiosity which is ever inquiring into private and domestic affairs, with an endless itch of learning the secret history of families. It is but seldom that such a prying curiosity attains any valuable ends : it often begets suspicions, jealousies, and disturbances in households, and it is a frequent temptation to persons to defame their neighbours. Some persons cannot help telling what they know ; a busy body is most liable to become a tattler upon every occasion.

VI. Let your observations, even of persons and their conduct, be chiefly designed in order to lead you to a better acquaintance with things, particularly with human nature ;— and to inform you what to imitate and what to avoid, rather than to furnish out matter for the evil passions of the mind, or the impertinencies of discourse, and reproaches of the tongue.

VII. Though it may be proper sometimes to make your observations concerning persons as well as things, the subject of your discourse in learned or useful conversation ; yet what remarks you make on particular persons, especially to their disadvantage, should for the most part lie hid in your own breast, till some just and apparent occasion, some necessary call of Providence, leads you to speak to them.

If the character or conduct which you observe be greatly culpable, it should so much the less be published. You may treasure up such remarks of the follies, indecencies, or vices of your neighbours, as may be a constant guard against your practice of the same, without exposing the reputation of your neighbour on that account. It is a good old rule, that our conversation should rather be laid out on things than on persons; and this rule should generally be observed, unless names be concealed, wheresoever the faults or follies of mankind are our present theme.

Our late Archbishop Tillotson has written a small, but excellent discourse on evil speaking, wherein he admirably explains, limits, and applies that general apostolic precept, *Speak evil of no man.* Titus iii. 2.

VIII. Be not too hasty to erect general theories from a few particular observations, appearances, or experiments. This is what the logicians call a false induction. When general observations are drawn from so many particulars as to become certain and indubitable, these are jewels of knowledge, comprehending great treasure in a little room, but they are therefore to be made with the greater care and caution, lest errors become large and diffusive, if we should mistake in these general notions.

A hasty determination of some universal principles, without a due survey of all the particular cases which may be included in them, is the way to lay a trap for our own understandings in their pursuit of any subject, and we shall often be taken captives into mistake and falsehood. Niveo in his youth observed, that on three Christmas days together there fell a good quantity of snow, and now hath writ it down in his Almanack as a part of his wise remarks on the weather, that it will always snow at Christmas. Euron, a young lad, took notice ten times, that there was a sharp frost when the wind was in the north east, therefore in the middle of last July, he almost expected it should freeze, because the weathercocks showed him a north east wind; and he was still more disappointed when he found it a very sultry season. It is the same hasty judgment that hath thrown scandal on a whole nation for the sake of some culpable characters belonging to several particular natives of that country; whereas all the Frenchmen are not gay and airy; all the Italians are not jealous and revengeful; nor are all the English overrun with the spleen.

*Of Books and Reading.*

1. **T**HE world is full of books, but there are multitudes which are so ill written, they were never worth any man's reading; and there are thousands more which may be good in their kind, yet are worth nothing when the month or year or occasion is past for which they were written. Others may be valuable in themselves, for some special purpose, or in some peculiar science, but are not fit to be perused by any but those who are engaged in that particular science or business. To what use is it for a divine, or physician, or a tradesman, to read over the huge volumes of reports of judged cases in the law? Or for a lawyer to learn Hebrew and read the Rabbins? It is of vast advantage for improvement of knowledge and saving time, for a young man to have the most proper books for his reading recommended by a judicious friend.

II. Books of importance of any kind, and especially complete treatises on any subject, should be first read in a more general and cursory manner, to learn a little what the treatise promises, and what you may expect from the writer's manner and skill. And for this end I would advise always that the preface be read and a survey taken of the table of contents, if there be one, before the first survey of the book. By this means you will not only be better fitted to give the book the first reading, but you will be much assisted in your second perusal of it, which should be done with greater attention and deliberation, and you will learn with more ease and readiness what the author pretends to teach. In your reading, mark what is new or unknown to you before, and review those chapters, pages, or paragraphs. Unless a reader has an uncommon and most retentive memory, I may venture to affirm, that there is scarce any book or chapter worth reading once, that is not worthy of a second perusal. At least to take a careful review of all the lines or paragraphs which you marked, and make a recollection of the sections which you thought truly valuable.

There is another reason also why I would choose to take a superficial and cursory survey of a book, before

If sit down to read it, and dwell upon it with studious attention ; and that is, there may be several difficulties in it, which we cannot easily understand and conquer at the first reading, for want of a fuller comprehension of the author's whole scheme. And therefore, in such treatises, we should not stay till we master every difficulty at the first perusal ; for perhaps many of these would appear to be solved when we have proceeded further in that book, or would vanish of themselves upon a second reading.

What we cannot reach and penetrate at first, may be noted down as matter of after consideration and inquiry, if the pages that follow do not happen to strike a complete light on those which went before.

III. If three or four persons agree to read the same book, and each bring his own remarks upon it at some set hours appointed for conversation, and they communicate mutually their sentiments on the subject, and debate about it in a friendly manner, this practice will render the reading any author more abundantly beneficial to every one of them.

IV. If several persons engaged in the same study, take into their hands distinct treatises on one subject, and appoint a season of communication once a week, they may inform each other in a brief manner concerning the sense, sentiments, and method of those several authors, and thereby promote each other's improvement, either by recommending the perusal of the same book to their companions, or perhaps by satisfying their inquiries concerning it by conversation, without every one's perusing it.

V. Remember that your business in reading or in conversation, especially on subjects of natural, moral, or divine science, is not merely to know the opinion of the author or speaker, for this is the mere knowledge of history ; but your chief business is to consider whether their opinions are right or no, and to improve your own solid knowledge on that subject by meditation on the themes of their writings or discourse. Deal freely with every author you read, and yield up your assent only to evidence and just reasoning on the subject.

Here I would be understood to speak only of human authors, and not of the sacred and inspired writings.

In these our business is only to find out the true sense, and understand the true meaning of the paragraph and page, and our assent then is bound to follow when we are before satisfied that the writing is divine. Yet I might add also that even this is sufficient evidence to demand our assent.

But in the composures of men remember you are a man as well as they; and it is not their reason but your own that is given to guide you when you arrive at years of discretion, of manly age and judgment.

VI. Let this therefore be your practice, especially after you have gone through one course of any science in your academical studies; if a writer on that subject maintains the same sentiments as you do, yet if he does not explain his ideas or prove the positions well, mark the faults or defects, and endeavour to do it better, either in the margin of your book, or rather in some papers of your own, or at least let it be done in your private meditations.—As for instance:

Where the author is obscure, enlighten him; where he is imperfect, supply his deficiencies; where he is too brief and concise, amplify a little, and set his notions in a fairer view; where he is redundant, mark those paragraphs to be retrenched; when he trifles and grows impertinent, abandon those passages or pages; where he argues, observe whether his reasons be conclusive; if the conclusion be true, and yet the argument weak, endeavour to confirm it by better proofs; where he derives or infers any propositions darkly or doubtfully, make the justice of the inference appear, and add further inferences or corollaries, if such occur to your mind; where you suppose he is in a mistake, propose your objections and correct his sentiments; what he writes so well as to approve itself to your judgment, both as just and useful, treasure it up in your memory, and count it a part of your intellectual gains.

Note.—Many of these same directions which I have now given may be practised with regard to conversation, as well as reading, in order to render it useful in the most extensive and lasting manner.

VII. Other things also of the like nature, may be usefully practised with regard to the authors which you read, viz. If the method of a book be irregular, reduce it into form by a little analysis of your own, or



by hints in the margin; if those things are heaped together which should be separated, you may wisely distinguish and divide them; if several things relating to the same subject are scattered up and down separately through the treatise, you may bring them all to one view by references; or if the matter of a book be really valuable and deserving, you may throw it into a better method, reduce it to a more logical scheme, or abridge it into a lesser form; all these practices will have a tendency to advance your skill both in logic and method, to improve your judgment in general, and to give you a fuller survey of that subject in particular. When you have finished the treatise with all your observations upon it, recollect and determine what real improvements you have made by reading that author.

VIII. If a book has no index to it, or good table of contents, it is very useful to make one as you are reading it; not with that exactness as to include the sense of every page and paragraph, which should be done if you designed to print it; but it is sufficient in your index to take notice only of those parts of the book which are new to you, or which you think well written, and worthy of your remembrance or review.

Shall I be so free as to assure you my younger friends, from my own experience, that these methods of reading will cost some pains in the first years of your study, and especially in the first authors which you peruse in any science, or on any particular subject; but the profit will richly compensate the pains. And in the following years of life, after you have read a few valuable books on any special subject in this manner, it will be very easy to read others of the same kind, because you will not usually find very much new matter in them which you have not already examined.

IX. If the writer be remarkable for any peculiar excellencies or defects in his style or manner of writing, make just observations upon this also; and whatsoever ornaments you find there, or whatsoever blemishes occur in the language or manner of the writer, you may make just remarks upon them. And remember, that one book read over in this manner, with all this laborious meditation, will tend more to enrich your under-

standing than the skimming over the surface of twenty authors.

X. By perusing books in the manner I have described, you will make all your reading subservient, not only to the enlargement of your treasures of knowledge, but also to the improvement of your reasoning powers.

There are many who read with constancy and diligence, and yet make no advances in true knowledge by it. They are delighted with the notions which they read or hear, as they would be with stories that are told, but they do not weigh them in their minds as in a just balance, in order to determine their truth or falsehood; they make no observations upon them, or inferences from them. Perhaps their eye slides over the pages, or the words slide over their ears, and vanish like a rhapsody of evening tales, or the shadows of a cloud flying over a green field in a summer's day.

Or if they review them sufficiently, to fix them in their remembrance, it is merely with the design to tell the tale over again, and show what men of learning they are. Thus they dream out their days in a course of reading without real advantage. As a man may be eating all day, and for want of digestion is never nourished; so these endless readers may cram themselves in vain with intellectual food, and without real improvement of their minds, for want of digesting it by proper reflections.

XI. Be diligent therefore in observing these directions: Enter into the sense and arguments of the authors you read, examine all their proofs, and then judge of the truth or falsehood of their opinions; and thereby you shall not only gain a rich increase of your understanding, by those truths which the author teaches, when you see them well supported, but you shall acquire also by degrees, an habit of judging justly, and of reasoning well, in imitation of the good writer whose works you peruse.

This is laborious indeed, and the mind is backward to undergo the fatigue of weighing every argument and tracing every thing to its original. It is much less labour to take all things upon trust; believing is much easier than arguing. But when Studentio had once persuaded his mind to tie itself down to this method which

I have prescribed, he sensibly gained an admirable facility to read, and judge of what he read, by his daily practice of it, and the man made large advances in the pursuit of truth; while Plumbinus and Plumeo made less progress in knowledge, though they had read over more folios. Plumeo skimmed over the pages like a swallow over the flowery meads in May. Plumbinus read every line and syllable, but did not give himself the trouble of thinking and judging about them. They both could boast in company of their great reading, for they knew more titles and pages than Studentio, but were far less acquainted with science.

I confess those whose reading is designed only to fit them for much talk and little knowledge, may content themselves to run over their authors in such a sudden and trifling way; they may devour libraries in this manner, yet be poor reasoners at last, and have no solid wisdom or true learning. The traveller who walks on fair and softly in a course that points right, and examines every turning before he ventures upon it; will come sooner and safer to his journey's end, than he who runs through every lane he meets, though he gallops full speed all the day. The man of much reading and a large retentive memory, but without meditation, may become in the sense of the world a knowing man; and if he converses much with the ancients, he may attain the fame of learning too; but he spends his days afar off from wisdom and true judgment, and possesses very little of the substantial riches of the mind.

XII. Never apply yourselves to read any human author with a determination beforehand either for or against him, or with a settled resolution to believe or disbelieve, to confirm or to oppose whatsoever he saith; but always read with a design to lay your mind open to truth, and to embrace it wheresoever you find it, as well as to reject every falsehood, though it appear under ever so fair a disguise. How unhappy are those men who seldom take an author into their hands but they have determined before they begin whether they will like or dislike him! They have got some notion of his name, his character, his party, or his principles, by general conversation, or perhaps by some slight view of a few pages; and having all their own opinions adjusted beforehand, they read all that he writes with a prepossession

sion either for or against him. Unhappy those who hunt and purvey for a party, and scrape together out of every author, all those things, and those only, which favour their own tenets, while they despise and neglect all the rest.

XIII. Yet take this caution. I would not be understood here as though I persuaded a person to live without any settled principles at all, by which to judge of men, and books, and things; or that I would keep a man always doubting about his foundations. The chief things that I design in this advice are these three:

1. That after our most necessary and important principles of science, prudence, and religion, are settled upon good grounds, with regard to our present conduct and our future hopes, we should read with a just freedom of thought all those books which treat of such subjects as may admit of doubt and reasonable dispute. Nor should any of our opinions be so resolved upon, especially in younger years, as never to hear or bear an opposition to them.

2. When we peruse those authors who defend our own settled sentiments, we should not take all their arguing for just and solid; but we should make a wise distinction between the corn and the chaff, between solid reasoning and the mere superficial colours of it; nor should we readily swallow down all their lesser opinions, because we agree with them in the greater.

3. That when we read those authors which oppose our most certain and established principles, we should be ready to receive any information from them in other points, and not abandon at once every thing they say, though we are well fixed in our opposition to their main point of arguing.

..... *Fas est, et ab hoste doceri*..... VIRG.

Seize upon truth where'er 'tis found,  
 Amongst your friends, amongst your foes,  
 On *Christian* or on *Heathen* ground;  
 The flowers divine where'er it grows:  
 Neglect the prickles, and assume the rose.

XIV. What I have said hitherto on this subject relating to books and reading, must be chiefly understood of that sort of books, and those hours of our reading

and study, whereby we design to improve the intellectual powers of the mind with natural, moral, or divine knowledge. As for those treatises which are written to direct or to enforce and persuade our practice, there is one thing further necessary; and that is, that when our consciences are convinced that these rules of prudence or duty belong to us, and require our conformity to them, we should then call ourselves to account, and inquire seriously whether we have put them in practice or no; we should dwell upon the arguments, and impress the motives and methods of persuasion upon our own hearts, till we feel the force and power of them inclining us to the practice of the things which are there recommended.

If folly or vice be represented in its open colours, or its secret disguises, let us search our hearts, and review our lives, and inquire how far we are criminal: Nor should we ever think we have done with the treatise till we feel ourselves in sorrow for our past misconduct, and aspiring after a victory over those vices, or till we find a cure of those follies begun to be wrought upon our souls.

In all our studies and pursuits of knowledge, let us remember that virtue and vice, sin and holiness, and the confirmation of our hearts and lives to the duties of true religion and morality, are things of far more consequence than all the furniture of our understanding, and the richest treasures of mere speculative knowledge; and that because they have a more immediate and effectual influence upon our eternal felicity or eternal sorrow.

XV. There is yet another sort of books, of which it is proper I should say something while I am treating on this subject; and these are, history, poesy, travels, books of diversion or amusement; among which we may reckon also, little common pamphlets, newspapers, or such like; for many of these I confess once reading may be sufficient, where there is a tolerable good memory.

Or when several persons are in company, and one reads to the rest such sort of writings, once hearing may be sufficient, provided that every one be so attentive, and so free, as to make their occasional remarks on

such lines or sentences, such periods or paragraphs, as in their opinion deserve it. Now all those paragraphs or sentiments deserve a remark, which are new and uncommon, are noble and excellent for the matter of them, are strong and convincing for the argument contained in them, are beautiful and elegant for the language or the manner, or any way worthy of a second rehearsal; and at the request of any of the company, let those paragraphs be read over again.

Such parts also of these writings as may happen to be remarkably stupid and silly, false or mistaken, should become subjects of an occasional criticism, made by some of the company; and this may give occasion to the repetition of them for the confirmation of the censure, for amusement or diversion.

Still let it be remembered, that where the historical narration is of considerable moment, where the poesy, oratory, &c. shines with some degree of perfection and glory, a single reading is neither sufficient to satisfy a mind that has a true taste for this sort of writings, nor can we make the fullest and best improvement of them without proper reviews, and that in our retirement as well as in company. Who is there that has any goût for polite writings, that would be sufficiently satisfied with hearing the beautiful pages of Steel or Addison, the admirable description of Virgil or Milton, or some of the finest poems of Pope, Young, or Dryden, once read over to them, and then lay them by for ever?

XVI. Among these writings of the latter kind, we may justly reckon short miscellaneous essays on all manner of subjects; such as the Occasional Papers, the Tatlers, the Spectators, and some other books that have been compiled out of the weekly and daily products of the press, wherein are contained a great number of bright thoughts, ingenious remarks, and admirable observations, which have had a considerable share in furnishing the present age with knowledge and politeness.

I wish every paper among these writings could have been recommended both as innocent and useful. I wish every unseemly idea, and wanton expression had been banished from amongst them, and every trifling page had been excluded from the company of the rest

when they had been bound up in volumes. But it is not to be expected, in so imperfect a state, that every page or peice of such mixed public papers should be entirely blameless and laudable. Yet in the main it must be confessed, there is so much virtue, prudence, ingenuity, and goodness in them, especially in eight volumes of Spectators, there is such a reverence of things sacred, so many valuable remarks for our conduct in life, that they are not improper to lie in parlours, or summer houses, or places of usual residence, to entertain our thoughts in any moment of leisure, or vacant hours that occur. There is such a discovery of the follies, iniquities, and fashionable vices of mankind contained in them, that we may learn much of the humours and madneses of the age, and the public world, in our own solitary retirement, without the danger of frequenting vicious company, or receiving the mortal infection.

XVII. Among other books which are proper and requisite, in order to improve our knowledge in general, or our acquaintance with any particular science, it is necessary that we should be furnished with Vocabularies and Dictionaries of several sorts, viz. of common words, idioms, and phrases, in order to explain their sense ; of technical words or the terms of art, to show their use in arts and sciences ; of names of men, countries, towns, rivers, &c. which are called historical and geographical dictionaries, &c. These are to be consulted and used upon every occasion ; and never let an unknown word pass in your reading, without seeking for its sense and meaning in some of these writers.

If such books are not at hand, you must supply the want of them, as well as you can, by consulting such as can inform you ; and it is useful to note down the matters of doubt and inquiry in some pocket book, and take the first opportunity to get them resolved, either by persons or books, when we meet with them.

XVIII. Be not satisfied with a mere knowledge of the best authors that treat of any subject, instead of acquainting yourselves thoroughly with the subject itself. There is many a young student that is fond of enlarging his knowledge of books, and he contents himself with the notice he has of their title page, which is the attainment of a bookseller rather than a scholar. Such persons are under a great temptation to practice

these two follies. (1.) To heap up a great number of books, at greater expense than most of them can bear, and to furnish their libraries infinitely better than their understandings. And (2.) when they have gotten such rich treasures of knowledge upon their shelves, they imagine themselves men of learning, and take a pride in talking of the names of famous authors, and the subjects of which they treat, without any real improvement of their own minds in true science or wisdom. At best their learning reaches no farther than the indexes and tables of contents, while they know not how to judge or reason concerning the matters contained in those authors.

And indeed how many volumes of learning soever a man possesses, he is still deplorably poor in his understanding, till he has made those several parts of learning his own property, by reading and reasoning, by judging for himself, and remembering what he has read.

## CHAP. V.

### *Judgment of Books.*

I. IF we would form a judgment of a book which we have not seen before, the first thing that offers is the title page, and we may sometimes guess a little at the import and design of a book thereby; though it must be confessed that titles are often deceitful, and promise more than the book performs. The author's name, if it be known in the world, may help us to conjecture at the performance a little more, and lead us to guess in what manner it is done. A perusal of the preface or introduction (which I before recommended) may further assist our judgment; and if there be an index of the contents, it will give us still some advancing light.

If we have not leisure or inclination to read over the book itself regularly, then by the titles of chapters we may be directed to peruse several particular chapters or sections, and observe whether there be any thing valuable or important in them. We shall find thereby, whether the author explains his ideas clearly, whether he reasons strongly, whether he methodizes well,



whether his thoughts and sense be manly, and his manner polite ; or, on the other hand, whether he be obscure, weak, trifling and confused ; or finally, whether the matter may not be solid and substantial, though the style and manner be rude and disagreeable.

II. By having run through several chapters and sections in this manner, we may generally judge whether the treatise be worth a complete perusal or no. But if by such an occasional survey of some chapters, our expectation be utterly discouraged, we may well lay aside that book ; for there is great probability he can be but an indifferent writer on that subject, if he affords but one prize to diverse blanks, and it may be some downright blots too. The piece can hardly be valuable, if, in seven or eight chapters which we peruse, there be but little truth, evidence, force of reasoning, beauty, and ingenuity of thought, &c. mingled with much error, ignorance, impertinence, dulness, mean and common thoughts, inaccuracy, sophistry, railing, &c. Life is too short, and time is too precious, to read every new book quite over, in order to find that it is not worth reading.

III. There are some general mistakes which persons are frequently guilty of in passing a judgment on the books which they read.

One is this ; when a treatise is written but tolerably well, we are ready to pass a favourable judgment of it, and sometimes to exalt its character far beyond its merit, if it agree with our own principles, and support the opinions of our party. On the other hand, if the author be of different sentiments, and espouse contrary principles, we can find neither wit nor reason, good sense or good language in it. Whereas, alas ! if our opinions of things were certain and infallible truth, yet a silly author may draw his pen in the defence of them, and he may attack even gross errors with feeble and ridiculous arguments. Truth in this world is not always attended and supported by the wisest and safest methods ; and error, though it never can be maintained by just reasoning, yet may be artfully covered and defended ; an ingenious writer may put excellent colours upon his own mistakes. Some Socinians who deny the atonement of Christ, have written well, and with much appearance of argument for their own unscriptural sen-

timents, and some writers for the Trinity and satisfaction of Christ, have exposed themselves and the sacred doctrine, by their feeble and foolish manner of handling it. Books are never to be judged of merely by their subject, or the opinion they represent, but by the justness of their sentiments, the beauty of their manner, the force of their expression; or the strength of reason, and the weight of just and proper argument which appears in them.

But this folly and weakness of trifling instead of arguing does not happen to fall only to the share of Christian writers; there are some who have taken the pen in hand to support the deistical or antichristian scheme of our days, who make big pretences to reason upon all occasions, but seem to have left it all behind them when they are jesting with the Bible, and grinning at the books which we call sacred. Some of these performances would scarce have been thought tolerable if they had not assaulted the Christian faith, though they are now grown up to a place among the admired pens. I much question whether several of the rhapsodies called the Characteristics, would ever have survived the first edition, if they had not discovered so strong a tincture of infidelity, and now and then cast out a profane sneer at our holy religion. I have sometimes indeed been ready to wonder how a book in the main so loosely written, should ever obtain so many readers among men of sense. Surely they must be conscious in the perusal, that sometimes a patrician may write as idle as a man of plebian rank, and trifle as much as an old schoolman, though it is in another form. I am forced to say, there are few books that ever I read, which made any pretences to a great genius, from which I derived so little valuable knowledge as from these treatises. There is indeed amongst them a lively pertness, a parade of literature, and much of what some folks nowadays call politeness, but it is hard that we should be bound to admire all the reveries of this author, under the penalty of being unfashionable.

IV. Another mistake which some persons fall into is this: When they read a treatise on a subject with which they have but little acquaintance, they find almost every thing new and strange to them, their understandings are greatly entertained and improved by the occurrence of

many things which were unknown to them before, they admire the treatise, and commend the author at once; whereas if they had but attained a good degree of skill in that science, perhaps they would find that the author had written very poorly, that neither his sense or his method was just and proper, and that he had nothing in him but what was very common or trivial in his discourses on that subject.

Hence it comes to pass that Cario and Faber, who were both bred up to labour, and unacquainted with the sciences, shall admire one of the weekly papers, or a little pamphlet, that talks pertly on some critical or learned theme, because the matter is all strange and new to them, and they join to extol the writer to the skies; and for the same reason a young academic shall dwell upon a Journal or an Observator that treats of trade and politics in a dictatorial style, and shall be lavish in the praise of the author; while at the same time persons well skilled in those different subjects hear the impertinent tattle with a just contempt; for they know how weak and awkward many of those little diminutive discourses are; and that those very papers of science, politics or trade, which were so much admired by the ignorant, are perhaps but very mean performances; though it must be also confessed there are some excellent essays in those papers, and that upon science as well as trade. ✓

V. But there is a danger of mistake in our judgment of books on the other hand also; for when we have made ourselves masters of any particular theme of knowledge, and surveyed it long on all sides, there is perhaps scarce any writer on that subject who much entertains and pleases us afterwards, because we find little or nothing new in him; and yet in a true judgment perhaps his sentiments are most proper and just, his explication clear, and his reasonings strong, and all the parts of the discourse are well connected and set in a happy light; but we knew most of those things before, and therefore they strike us not, and we are in danger of discommending them.

Thus the learned and the unlearned have their several distinct dangers and prejudices ready to attend them in their judgment of the writings of men. These

which I have mentioned are a specimen of them, and indeed but a mere specimen; for the prejudices that warp our judgment aside from truth are almost infinite and endless.

VI. Yet I cannot forbear to point out two or three more of these follies, that I may attempt something towards the correction of them, or at least to guard others against them.

There are some persons of a forward and lively temper, and who are fond to intermeddle with all appearances of knowledge, will give their judgment on a book as soon as the title of it is mentioned, for they would not willingly seem ignorant of any thing that others know. And especially if they happen to have any superior character or possessions of this world, they fancy they have a right to talk freely upon every thing that stirs or appears, though they have no other pretence to this freedom. Divito is worth forty thousand pounds: Politulus is a fine young gentleman, who sparkles in all the shining things of dress and equipage: Aulinus is a small attendant on a minister of state, and is at court almost every day. These three happened to meet in a visit, where an excellent book of warm and refined devotions lay in the window: What dull stuff is here? said Divito; I never read so much nonsense in one page in my life, nor would I give a shilling for a thousand such treatises. Aulinus, though a courtier, and not used to speak roughly, yet would not allow there was a line of good sense in the book, and pronounced him a madman that wrote it in his secret retirement, and declared him a fool that published it after his death. Politulus had more manners than to differ from men of such rank and character, and therefore he sneered at the devout expressions as he heard them read, and made the divine treatise a matter of scorn and ridicule; and yet it was well known that neither this fine gentleman, nor the courtier, nor the man of wealth, had a grain of devotion in them beyond their horses that waited at their door with their gilded chariots. But this is the way of the world; blind men will talk of the beauty of colours, and of the harmony or disproportion of figures in painting; the deaf will prate of discords in music; and those who have nothing to do with religion will arraign the best treatise on divine

subjects, though they do not understand the very language of the scripture, nor the common terms or phrases used in Christianity.

VII. I might here name another sort of judges, who will set themselves up to decide in favour of an author, or will pronounce him a mere blunderer, according to the company they have kept, and the judgment they have heard passed upon a book by others of their own stamp or size, though they have no knowledge or taste of the subject themselves. These with a fluent and voluble tongue become mere echoes of the praises or censures of other men. Sonillus happened to be in the room where the three gentlemen just mentioned gave out their thoughts so freely upon an admirable book of devotion; and two days afterwards he met with some friends of his where this book was the subject of conversation and praise. Sonillus wondered at their dulness, and repeated the jests which he had heard cast upon the weakness of the author. His knowledge of the book and his decision upon it was all from hearsay, for he had never seen it, and if he had read it through he had no manner of right to judge about the things of religion, having no more knowledge or taste of any thing of inward piety, than a hedgehog or a bear has of politeness.

When I had written these remarks, Probus, who knew all the four gentlemen, wished they might have an opportunity to read their own character as it is represented here. Alas! Probus, I fear it would do them very little good, though it may guard others against their folly, for there is never a one of them would find their own name in these characters if they read them, though all their acquaintance would acknowledge the features immediately, and see the persons almost alive in the picture.

VIII. There is yet another mischievous principle which prevails among some persons in passing a judgment on the writings of others, and that is, when from the secret stimulations of vanity, pride or envy, they despise a valuable book, and throw contempt upon it by wholesale; and if you ask them the reason of their severe censure, they will tell you perhaps that they have found a mistake or two in it, or there are a few sentiments or expressions not suited to their tooth and

humour. Bavius cries down an admirable treatise of philosophy, and says there is Atheism in it, because there are a few sentences that seem to suppose brutes to be mere machines. Under the same influence, Momus will not allow Paradise Lost to be a good poem, because he had read some flat and heavy lines in it, and he thought Milton had too much honour done him. It is a paltry humour that inclines a man to rail at any human performance because it is not absolutely perfect. Horace would give us a better example.

*Sunt delicta quibus nos ignovisse velimus,  
Nam neque chorda sonum reddit quam vult manus et mens,  
Nec semper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus :  
Atque ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis  
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,  
Aut humana parum cavit natura. .... Hor. de. Art Poet.*

THUS ENGLISHED.

Be not too rigidly censorious :  
A string may jar in the best master's hand,  
And the most skilful archer miss his aim :  
So in a poem elegantly writ  
I will not quarrel with a small mistake,  
Such as our nature's frailty may excuse....*Roscommon.*

This noble translator of Horace, whom I here cite, has a very honourable opinion of Homer in the main, yet he allows him to be justly censured for some grosser spots and blemishes in him.

For who without aversion ever look'd  
On holy garbage, though by Homer cook'd  
Whose railing heroes and whose wounded gods  
Make some suspects he snores as well as nods.

Such wise and just distinctions ought to be made when we pass a judgment on mortal things, but envy condemns by wholesale. Envy is a cursed plant; some fibres of it are rooted almost in every man's nature, and it works in a sly and imperceptible manner, and that even in some persons who in the main are men of wisdom and piety. They know not how to bear the praises that are given to an ingenious author, especially if he be living and of their profession, and therefore they will, if possible, find some blemish in his writings, that they may nibble and bark at it. They

will endeavour to diminish the honour of the best treatise that has been written on any subject, and to render it useless by their censures, rather than suffer their envy to lie asleep, and the little mistakes of that author to pass unexposed. Perhaps they will commend the work in general with a pretended air of candour, but pass so many sly and invidious remarks upon it afterwards, as shall effectually destroy all their cold and formal praises.\*

IX. When a person feels any thing of this invidious humour working in him, he may by the following considerations attempt the correction of it. Let him think with himself how many are the beauties of such an author whom he censures in comparison of his blemishes, and remember that it is a much more honourable and good natured thing to find out peculiar beauties than faults: True and undisguised candour is a much more amiable and divine talent than accusation. Let him reflect again, what an easy matter it is to find a mistake in all human authors, who are necessarily fallible and imperfect.

I confess where an author sets himself up to ridicule divine writers and things sacred, and yet assumes an air of sovereignty and dictatorship, to exalt and almost deify all the Pagan ancients, and cast his scorn upon all the moderns, especially if they do but savour of miracles and the gospel, it is fit the admirers of this author should know, that nature and these ancients are not the same, though some writers always unite them. Reason and nature never made these ancient Heathens their standard, either of art or genius, of writing or heroism. Sir Richard Steele, in his little essay, called the Christian Hero, has shown our Saviour and St. Paul in a more glorious and transcendant light, than a Virgil or a Homer could do for their Achilles, Ulysses, or Æneas; and I am persuaded, if Moses and David had not been inspired writers, these very men would have ranked them at least with Herodotus and Horace, if not given them the superior place.

\* I grant when wisdom itself censures a weak and foolish performance, it will pass its severe sentence, and yet with an air of candour, if the author has any thing valuable in him: But envy will sometimes imitate the same favourable airs, in order to make its false cavils appear more just and credible, when it has a mind to snarl at some of the brightest performances of a human writer.

But where an author has many beauties consistent with virtue, piety and truth, let not little critics exalt themselves, and shower down their ill nature upon him without bounds or measure; but rather stretch their own powers of soul till they write a treatise superior to that which they condemn. This is the noblest and surest manner of suppressing what they censure.

A little wit, or a little learning, with a good degree of vanity and ill nature, will teach a man to pour out whole pages of remark and reproach upon one real or fancied mistake of a great and good author; and this may be dressed up by the same talents, and made entertaining enough to the world, who loves reproach and scandal; but if the remarker would but once make this attempt, and try to outshine the author by writing a better book on the same subject, he would soon be convinced of his own insufficiency, and perhaps might learn to judge more justly and favourable of the performance of other men. A cobbler or a shoemaker may find some little fault with the latchet of a shoe that an Apelles had painted, and perhaps with justice too; when the whole figure and portraiture in such as none but Apelles could paint. Every poor low genius may cavil at what the richest and the noblest hath performed; but it is a sign of envy and malice, added to the littleness and poverty of genius, when such a cavil becomes a sufficient reason to pronounce at once against a bright author, and a whole valuable treatise.

X. Another, and that a very frequent fault, in passing a judgment upon books is this, that persons spread the same praises or the same reproaches over a whole treatise, and all the chapters in it, which are due only to some of them. They judge as it were by wholesale, without making a due distinction between the several parts or sections of the performance; and this is ready to lead those who hear them talk into a dangerous mistake. Florus is a great and just admirer of the late Archbishop of Cambray, and mightily commends every thing he has written, and will allow no blemish in him; whereas the writings of that excellent man are not all of a piece, nor are those very books of his, which have a good number of beautiful and valuable sentiments in them, to be recommended throughout, or all at once with-



out distinction. There is his demonstration of the existence and attributes of God, which has justly gained an universal esteem for bringing down some new and noble thoughts of the wisdom of the creation to the understanding of the unlearned, and they are such as well deserve the perusal of men of science, perhaps as far as the 50th section ; but there are many of the following sections, which are very weakly written, and some of them built upon an enthusiastical and mistaken scheme, a kin to the peculiar opinions of father Malebranche ; such as sec. 51, 53. That we know the finite, only by the ideas of the infinite. Sec. 55, 60. That the superior reason in man is God himself acting in him. Sec. 61, 62. That the idea of unity cannot be taken from creatures, but from God only ; and several of his sections, from 65 to 68, upon the doctrine of liberty, seem to be inconsistent. Again, toward the end of his book, he spends more time and pains than are needful, in refuting the Epicurean fancy of atoms moving eternally through infinite changes which might be done effectually in a much shorter and better way.

So in his Posthumous Essays, and his letters, there are many admirable thoughts in practical and experimental religion, and very beautiful and divine sentiments on devotion ; but sometimes in large paragraphs, or in whole chapters together, you find him in the clouds of mystic divinity, and he never descends within the reach of common ideas or common sense.

But remember this also, that there are but few such authors as this great man, who talks so very weakly sometimes, and yet in other places is so much superior to the greatest part of writers.

There are other instances of this kind, where men of good sense in the main, set up for judges, but they carry too many of their passions about them, and then, like lovers, they are in rapture at the name of their fair idol ; they lavish out all their incense upon that shrine, and cannot bear the thought of admitting a blemish in them.

You shall hear Altisono not only admire Casimere of Poland in his lyrics, as the utmost purity and perfection of Latin poesy, but he will allow nothing in him to be extravagant or faulty, and will vindicate every line ; nor can I much wonder at it when I have heard

him pronounce Lucan the best of the ancient Latins, and idolize his very weaknesses and mistakes. I will readily acknowledge the Odes of Casimere to have more spirit and force, more magnificence and fire in them, and in twenty places arise to more dignity and beauty, than I could ever meet with in any of our modern poets; yet I am afraid to say, that "*Pala subtilise luce*" has dignity enough in it for a robe made for the Almighty, Lib. 4. Od. 7. l. 37; or that the Man of Virtue in Od. 3. l. 44. under the ruins of heaven and earth, will bear up the fragments of the fallen world with a comely wound on his shoulders.

.....*late ruenti*  
*Subjiciens sua colla caelo*  
*Mundum decoro vulnere fulciet:*  
*Interque caeli fragmina.*

Yet I must needs confess also, that it is hardly possible a man should rise to so exalted and sublime a vein of poesy as Casimere, who is not in danger now and then of such extravagancies; but still they should not be admired or defended, if we pretend to pass a just judgment on the writings of the greatest men.

Milton is a noble genius, and the world agrees to confess it; his poem of Paradise Lost is a glorious performance, and rivals the most famous pieces of antiquity; but that reader must be deeply prejudiced in favour of the poet, who can imagine him equal to himself through all that work. Neither the sublime sentiments, nor dignity of numbers, nor force or beauty of expression, are equally maintained, even in all those parts which require grandeur or beauty, force or harmony. I cannot but consent to Mr. Dryden's opinion, though I will not use his words, that for some scores of lines together, there is a coldness and flatness, and almost a perfect absence of that spirit of poesy which breathes and lives and flames in other pages.

XI. When you hear any person pretending to give his judgment of a book, consider with yourself whether he be a capable judge, or whether he may not lie under some unhappy bias or prejudice for or against it, or whether he has made a sufficient inquiry to form his justest sentiments upon it.

Though he be a man of good sense, yet he is incapa-

ble of passing a true judgment of a particular book, if he be not well acquainted with the subject of which it treats, and the manner in which it is written, be it verse or prose; or if he hath not had an opportunity or leisure to look sufficiently into the writing itself.

Again, though he be ever so capable of judging on all other accounts, by the knowledge of the subject, and of the book itself, yet you are to consider also, whether there be any thing in the author, in his manner, in his language, in his opinions, and his particular party, which may warp the sentiments of him that judgeth, to think well or ill of the treatise, and to pass too favourable or too severe a sentence concerning it.

If you find that he is either an unfit judge because of his ignorance, or because of his prejudices, his judgment of that book should go for nothing. Philographo is a good divine, an useful preacher, and an approved expositor of scripture, but he never had a taste for any of the polite learning of the age; he was fond of every thing that appeared in a devout dress, but all verse was alike to him. He told me last week there was a very fine book of poems published on the three Christian graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, and a most elegant piece of oratory on the four last things, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Do you think I shall buy either of those books merely on Philographo's recommendation?

## CHAP. VI.

### *Of living Instructions and Lectures, of Teachers and Learners.*

1. **THERE** are a few persons of so penetrating a genius, and so just a judgment, as to be capable of learning the arts and sciences without the assistance of teachers. There is scarce any science so safely and so speedily learned, even by the noblest genius and the best books, without a tutor. His assistance is absolutely necessary for most persons, and it is very useful for all beginners. Books are a sort of dumb teachers, they point out the way to learning; but if we labour under any doubt or mistake, they cannot answer sudden questions, or explain present doubts

and difficulties ; this is properly the work of a living instructor.

II. There are very few tutors who are sufficiently furnished with such universal learning, as to sustain all the parts and provinces of instruction. The sciences are numerous, and many of them lie far wide of each other ; and it is best to enjoy the instructions of two or three tutors at least, in order to run through the whole encyclopædia, or circle of sciences, where it may be obtained ; then we may expect that each will teach the few parts of learning which are committed to his care in greater perfection. But where this advantage cannot be had with convenience, one great man must supply the place of two or three common instructors.

III. It is not sufficient that instructors be competently skilled in those sciences which they profess and teach ; but they should have skill also in the art or method of teaching, and patience in the practice of it.

It is a great happiness indeed, when persons, by a spirit of party, or faction, or interest, or by purchase, are set up for tutors, who have neither due knowledge of science, nor skill in the way of communication. And, alas ! there are others, who with their ignorance and insufficiency, have self admiration and affrontery enough to set up themselves ; and the poor pupils fare accordingly, and grow lean in their understandings.

And let it be observed also, there are some very learned men, who know much themselves, but have not the talent of communicating their own knowledge ; or else they are lazy, and will take no pains at it. Either they have an obscure and perplexed way of talking, or they show their learning uselessly, and make a long periphrasis on every word of the book they explain, or they cannot condescend to young beginners, or they run presently into the elevated parts of science, because it gives themselves greater pleasure, or they are soon angry and impatient, and cannot bear with a few impertinent questions of a young, inquisitive, and sprightly genius ; or else they skim over a science in a very slight and superficial survey, and never lead their disciples into the depths of it.

IV. A good tutor should have characters and qualifications very different from all these. He is such an

one as both can and will apply himself with diligence and concern, and indefatigable patience to effect what he undertakes; to teach his disciples, and see that they learn; to adapt his way and method as near as may be to the various dispositions, as well as to the capacities of those whom he instructs, and to inquire often into their progress and improvement.

And he should take particular care of his own temper and conduct, that there may be nothing in him or about him which may be of ill example; nothing that may savour of a haughty temper, or a mean and sordid spirit; nothing that may expose him to the aversion or to the contempt of his scholars, or create a prejudice in their minds against him and his instructions; but if possible, he should have so much of a natural candour and sweetness mixed with all the improvements of learning, as might convey knowledge into the minds of his disciples with a sort of gentle insinuation and sovereign delight, and may tempt them into the highest improvements of their reason by a resistless and insensible force. But I shall have occasion to say more on this subject when I come to speak more directly of the methods of the communication of knowledge.

V. The learner should attend with constancy and care on all the instructions of his tutor, and if he happens to be at any time unavoidably hindered, he must endeavour to retrieve the loss by double industry for the time to come. He should always recollect and review his lectures, read over some other author or authors upon the same subject, confer upon it with his instructor or with his associates, and write down the clearest result of his present thoughts, reasonings, and inquiries, which he may have recourse to hereafter, either to re-examine them and to apply them to proper use, or to improve them further to his own advantage.

VI. A student should never satisfy himself with bare attendance on the lectures of his tutor, unless he clearly takes up his sense and meaning, and understands the things which he teaches. A young disciple should behave himself so well as to gain the affection and the ear of his instructor, that upon every occasion he may with the utmost freedom ask questions, and talk over his own sentiments, his doubts and difficulties with him, and in a humble and modest manner, desire the solution of them.

VII. Let the learner endeavour to maintain an honourable opinion of his instructor, and heedfully listen to his instructions, as one willing to be led by a more experienced guide; and though he is not bound to fall in with every sentiment of his tutor, yet he should so far comply with him as to resolve upon a just consideration of the matter, and try and examine it thoroughly with an honest heart, before he presume to determine against him. And then it should be done with great modesty, with a humble jealousy of himself, and apparent unwillingness to differ from his tutor if the force of argument and truth did not constrain him.

VIII. It is a frequent and growing folly in our age, that pert young disciples soon fancy themselves wiser than those who teach them; at the first view, or upon a very little thought, they can discern the insignificance, weakness, and mistake of what their teacher asserts. The youth of our day, by an early petulency, and pretended liberty of thinking for themselves, dare reject at once, and that with a sort of scorn, all those sentiments and doctrines which their teachers have determined, perhaps after long and repeated consideration, after years of mature study, careful observation, and much prudent experience.

IX. It is true, teachers and masters are not infallible, nor are they always in the right; and it must be acknowledged, it is a matter of some difficulty for younger minds to maintain a just and solemn veneration for the authority and advice of their parents, and the instructions of their tutors, and yet at the same time to secure to themselves a just freedom in their own thoughts. We are sometimes too ready to imbibe all their sentiments without examination if we reverence and love them; or, on the other hand, if we take all freedom to contest their opinions, we are sometimes tempted to cast off that love and reverence to their persons which God and nature dictate. Youth is ever in danger of these two extremes.

X. But I think I may safely conclude thus: Though the authority of a teacher must not absolutely determine the judgment of his pupil, yet young and raw and unexperienced learners should pay all proper deference that can be to the instructions of their parents and teachers, short of absolute submission to their dic-

tates. Yet still we must maintain this, that they should never receive any opinion into their assent, whether it be conformable or contrary to the tutor's mind, without sufficient evidence of it first given to their own reasoning powers.

## CHAP. VII.

### *Of learning a Language.*

**T**HE first thing required in reading an author, or in hearing lectures of a tutor, is, that you well understand the language in which they write or speak. Living languages, or such as the native tongue of any nation in the present age, are more easily learned and taught by a few rules and much familiar converse, joined to the reading some proper authors. The dead languages are such as cease to be spoken in any nation; and even these are more easy to be taught, as far as may be, in that method wherein living languages are best learned; i. e. partly by rule, and partly by rote or custom. And it may not be improper in this place to mention a few directions for that purpose.

I. Begin with the most necessary and most general observations and rules which belong to that language, compiled in the form of a grammar; and these are but few in most languages. The regular declensions and variations of nouns and verbs should be early and thoroughly learned by heart, together with twenty or thirty of the plainest and most necessary rules of syntax.

But let it be observed, that in almost all languages some of the most common nouns and verbs have many irregularities in them; such are the common auxiliary verbs *to be* and *to have*, *to do* and *to be done*, &c. The comparatives and superlatives of the words *good*, *bad*, *great*, *much*, *small*, *little*, &c. and these should be learned among the first rules and variations, because they continually occur.

But as to other words which are less frequent, let but few of the anomalies or irregularities of the tongue be taught among the general rules to young beginners. These will come in afterwards to be learned by advanced scholars, in a way of notes on the rules, as in the Latin grammar, called the Oxford grammar, or in Rud-

diman's notes on his rudiments, &c. Or they may be learned by examples alone, when they do occur; or by a larger and more complete system of grammar, which descends to the more particular forms of speech; so the heteroclite nouns of the Latin tongue which are taught in the school book called *Quæ Genus*, should not be touched in the first learning of the rudiments of that tongue.

II. As the grammar by which you learn any tongue should be very short at first, so it must be written in a tongue with which you are well acquainted, and which is very familiar to you. Therefore I much prefer the common English Accidence (as it is called) to any grammar whatsoever, written in Latin for this end. The English Accidence has, doubtless, many faults; but those editions of it which were printed since the year 1728, under the correction of a learned professor, are the best, or the English rudiments of the Latin tongue, by that learned North Briton, Mr. Ruddiman, which are perhaps the most useful books of this kind which I am acquainted with; especially because I would not depart too far from the ancient and common forms of teaching, which several good grammarians have done, to the great detriment of such lads as have been removed to other schools.

The tiresome and unreasonable method of learning the Latin tongue by a grammar with Latin rules, would appear, even to those masters who teach it so, in its proper colours of absurdity and ridicule, if those very masters would attempt to learn the Chinese or Arabic tongue, by a grammar written in the Chinese or Arabic language. Mr. Clarke of Hull, has said enough in a few pages of the preface to his new grammar, 1723, to make that practice appear very irrational and improper; though he has said it in so warm and angry a manner that it has kindled Mr. Ruddiman to write against him, and to say what can be said to vindicate a practice which I think is utterly indefensible.

III. At the same time, when you begin the rules, begin also the practice. As for instance, when you decline *MUSA MUSÆ*, read and construe the same day, some easy Latin author by the help of a tutor, or with some English translation; choose such a book whose style is



simple, and the subject of discourse very plain, obvious and not hard to be understood; many little books have been composed with this view, as Corderius's Colloquies, some of Erasmus's little writings, the sayings of the wise men of Greece, Cato's Moral Distiches, and the rest which are collected at the end of Mr. Ruddiman's English Grammar, or the Latin Testament of Castellio's translation, which is accounted the purest Latin, &c. These are very proper upon this occasion, together with Æsop's and Phædrus's Fables, and little stories, and the common and daily affairs of domestic life, written in the Latin tongue. But let the higher poets, and orators, and historians, and other writers, whose language is more laboured, and whose sense is more remote from common life, be rather kept out of sight until there be some proficiency made in the language.

It is strange that masters should teach children so early Tully's Epistles, or Orations, or the Poems of Ovid, or Virgil, whose sense is oftentimes difficult to find, because of the great transposition of the words; and when they have found the grammatical sense, they have very little use of it, because they have scarce any notion of the ideas and designs of the writer, it being so remote from the knowledge of a child; whereas, little common stories and colloquies, and the rules of a child's behaviour, and such obvious subjects, will much better assist the memory of the words by their acquaintance with the things.

IV. Here it may be useful also to appoint the learner to get by heart the more common and useful words, both nouns and adjectives, pronouns and verbs, out of some well formed and judicious vocabulary. This will furnish him with names for the most familiar ideas.

V. As soon as ever the learner is capable, let the tutor converse with him in the tongue which he is to be learned, if it be a living language, or if it be Latin, which is the living language of the learned world; thus he will acquaint himself a little with it by rote, as well as by rule, and by living practice as well as by reading the writings of the dead. For if a child of two years old by this method learns to speak his mother tongue, I am sure the same method will greatly assist and fa-

cilitate the learning of any other language to those who are older.

VI. Let the chief lessons and the chief exercises of schools *v. c.* where Latin is learned (at least for the first year or more) be the nouns, verbs, and general rules of syntax, together with a mere translation out of some Latin author into English; and let scholars be employed and examined by their teacher, daily, in reducing the words to their original or theme, to the first case of nouns or first tense of verbs, and giving an account of their formations and changes, their syntax and dependencies, which is called parsing. This is a most useful exercise to lead boys into a complete and thorough knowledge of what they are doing.

The English translations which the learner has made, should be well corrected by the master, and then they should be translated back again for the next day's exercise, by the child, into Latin, while the Latin author is withheld from him; but he should have the Latin words given him in their first case and tense, and should never be left to seek them himself from a dictionary; and the nearer he translates it to the words of the author whence he derives his English, the more should the child be commended. Thus will he gain skill in two languages at once. I think Mr. Clark has done good service to the public by his translations of Latin books for this end.

But let the foolish custom of employing every silly boy to make themes or declamations, and verses upon moral subjects, in a strange tongue, before he understands common sense, even in his own language, be abandoned and cashiered for ever.

VII. As the learner improves let him acquaint himself with the anomalous words, the irregular declensions of nouns and verbs, the more uncommon connexions of words in syntax, and the exceptions to the general rules of grammar; but let them all be reduced, as far as possible, to those several original and general rules which he has learned, as the proper rank and place to which they belong.

VIII. While he is doing this, it may be proper for him to converse with authors which are a little more difficult, with historians, orators, and poets, &c. but let his tutor inform him of the Roman or Greek customs which occur therein. Let the lad then translate some parts of them into his mother tongue, or into some

other well known language, and thence back again into the original language of the author. But let the verse be translated into prose, for poesy does not belong to grammar.

IX. By this time he will be able to acquaint himself with some of the special emphasis of speech, and the peculiar idioms of the tongue. He should be taught also the special beauties and ornaments of the language; and this may be done partly by the help of authors who have collected such idioms and cast them into an easy method, and partly by the judicious remarks which his instructor may make upon the authors which he reads, wheresoever such peculiarities of speech or special elegancies occur.

X. Though the labour of learning all the lessons by heart that are borrowed from poetical authors which they construe, is an unjust and unnecessary imposition upon the learner, yet he must take the pains to commit to memory the most necessary, if not all the common rules of grammar, with an example or two under each of them; and some of the select and most useful periods or sentences in the Latin or Greek author which he reads may be learnt by heart, together with some of the choiser lessons out of their poets; and sometimes whole episodes out of heroic poems, &c. as well as whole odes among the lyrics may deserve this honour.

XI. Let this be always carefully observed, that the learners perfectly understand the sense as well as the language of all those rules, lessons, or paragraphs, which they attempt to commit to memory. Let the teacher possess them of their true meaning, and then the labour will become easy and pleasant; whereas to impose on a child to get by heart a long scroll of unknown phrases, or words without any ideas under them, is a piece of useless tyranny, a cruel imposition, and a practice fitter for a jackdaw or parrot, than for any thing that wears the shape of a man.

XII. And here, I think, I have a fair occasion given me to consider that question which has been often debated in conversation, viz. Whether the teaching of a school full of boys to learn Latin by the Heathen poets, as Ovid in his Epistles, and the silly fables of his Metamorphoses, Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, in their impure odes, Satires, Epigrams, &c. is so proper and agreeable a practice in a Christian country.

XIII. (1.) I grant the language and style of those men who wrote in their own native tongue, must be more pure and perfect in some nice elegancies and peculiarities, than modern writers of other nations who have imitated them; and it is owned also that the beauties of their poesy may much excel; but in either of these things boys cannot be supposed to be much improved or injured by one or the other.

XIV. (2.) It shall be confessed too, that modern poets, in every living language, have brought into their works so many words, epithets, phrases, and metaphors, from the Heathen fables and stories of their gods and heroes, that in order to understand these modern writers, it is necessary to understand something of those ancient follies; but it may be answered, that a good dictionary, or such a book as the Pantheon, or history of those Gentile deities, may give sufficient information of those stories, so far as they are necessary and useful to school boys.

XV. (3.) I will grant yet further, that lads who are designed to make great scholars or divines may, by reading these Heathen poets, be taught better to understand the writings of the ancient fathers against the Heathen religion; and they learn here what ridiculous fooleries the Gentile nations believed as the articles of their faith; what wretched and foul idolatries they indulged and practised as duties of religion, for want of the light of divine revelation. But this perhaps may be learnt as well either by the Pantheon, or some other collection at school; or after they have left the school, they may read what their own inclinations lead them to, and whatsoever of this kind may be really useful for them.

XVI. But the great question is, Whether all these advantages which have been mentioned will compensate for the long months and years that are wasted among their incredible and trifling romances, their false and shameful stories of the gods and goddesses and their amours, and of the lewd heroes and vicious poets of the Heathen world? Can these idle and ridiculous tales be of real and solid advantage in human life? Do they not too often defile the mind with vain, mischievous and impure ideas? Do they not stick long on the fancy, and have an unhappy influence upon youth? Do they not tincture the imagination with folly and vice,

very early, and pervert it from all that is good and holy?

XVII. Upon the whole survey of things, it is my opinion, that for almost all boys who learn this tongue, it would be much safer to be taught Latin poesy (as soon and as far as they can need it) from those excellent translations of David's Psalms, which are given us by Buchanan in the various measures of Horace; and the lower classes had better read Dr. Johnson's translation of these Psalms, another elegant writer of the Scots nation, instead of Ovid's Epistles; for he has turned the same Psalms, perhaps with greater elegance, into elegiac verse, whereof the learned W. Benson, Esq. has lately published a noble edition, and I hear that these Psalms are honoured with an increasing use in the schools of Holland and Scotland. A stanza or a couplet of these writers, would now and then stick upon the minds of youth, and would furnish them infinitely better with pious and moral thoughts, and do something towards making them good men and Christians.

XVIII. A little book collected from the Psalms of both these translators, Buchanan and Johnston, and a few other Christian poets, would be of excellent use for schools to begin their instructions in Latin poesy; and I am well assured this would be richly sufficient for all those in lower rank, who never design a learned profession, and yet custom has foolishly bound them to learn that language.

But lest it should be thought hard to cast Horace and Virgil, Ovid and Juvenal, entirely out of the schools, I add, if here and there a few lyric odes or pieces of satires, or some episodes of heroic verse, with here and there an epigram of Martial, all which shall be pure and clear from the stains of vice and impiety, and which may inspire the mind with noble sentiments, fire the fancy with bright and warm ideas, or teach lessons of morality and prudence, were chosen out of those ancient Roman writers for the use of the schools, and were collected and printed in one moderate volume, or two at the most, it would be abundantly sufficient provision out of the Roman poets for the instruction of boys in all that is necessary in that age of life.

Surely Juvenal himself would not have the face to vindicate the masters who teach boys his 6th satire, and

many paragraphs of several others, when he himself has charged us,

*Nil dictu fædum, visque hæc limina tangat  
Intra quæ puer est.*

Sat. 14.

Suffer no lewdness, nor indecent speech,  
Th' apartment of the tender youth to reach.....*Dryden.*

Thus far in answer to the foregoing question. But I retire ; for Mr. Clark, of Hull, in his treatise on Education, and Mr. Phillips, preceptor to the Duke of Cumberland, have given more excellent directions for learning Latin.

XIX. When a language is learnt, if it be of any use at all, it is a pity it should be forgotten again. It is proper, therefore, to take all just opportunities to read something frequently in that language, when other necessary and important studies will give you leave. As in learning any tongue, dictionaries which contain words and phrases should be always at hand, so they should be ever kept within reach by persons who would remember a tongue which they have learnt. Nor should we at any time content ourselves with a doubtful guess at the sense or meaning of any words which occur, but consult the dictionary, which may give us certain information, and thus secure us from mistake. It is mere sloth which makes us content ourselves with uncertain guesses ; and indeed this is neither safe nor useful for persons who would learn any language or science, or have a desire to retain what they have acquired.

XX. When you have learnt one or many languages ever so perfectly, take heed of priding yourself in these acquisitions ; they are but mere treasures of words, or instruments of true and solid knowledge ; and whose chief design is to lead us into an acquaintance with things, or to enable us more easily to convey those ideas of that knowledge to others. An acquaintance with the various tongues is nothing else but a relief against the mischief which the building of Babel introduced ; and were I master of as many languages as were spoken at Babel, I should make but a poor pretence to true learning or knowledge, if I had not clear and distinct ideas, and useful notions in my head, under the words which my tongue could pronounce. Yet so unhappy a thing is human nature, that this sort of knowledge of sounds and

syllables, is ready to puff up the mind with vanity, more than the most valuable and solid improvements of it. The pride of a grammarian or a critic, generally exceeds that of a philosopher.

### CHAP. VIII.

*Of inquiring into the Sense and Meaning of any Writer or Speaker, and especially the Sense of the Sacred Writings.*

**I**T is a great unhappiness that there is such an ambiguity in words and forms of speech, that the same sentence may be drawn into different significations; whereby it comes to pass, that it is difficult sometimes for the reader exactly to hit upon the ideas which the writer or speaker had in his mind. Some of the best rules to direct us herein are such as these:

I. Be well acquainted with the tongue itself, or language wherein the author's mind is expressed. Learn not only the true meaning of each word, but the sense which those words obtain when placed in such a particular situation and order. Acquaint yourself with the peculiar power and emphasis of the several modes of speech, and the various idioms of the tongue. The secondary ideas which custom has superadded to many words, should also be known, as well as the particular and primary meaning of them, if we would understand any writer. *See Logic, Part I. Chap. 4. § 3.*

II. Consider the signification of those words and phrases, more especially in the same nation, or near the same age in which that writer lived, and in what sense they are used by authors of the same nation, opinion, sect, party, &c.

Upon this account we may learn to interpret several phrases of the New Testament out of that version of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, which is called the Septuagint; for though that version be very imperfect and defective in many things, yet it seems to me evident, that the holy writers of the New Testament made use of that version many times in their citation of texts out of the Bible.

III. Compare the words and phrases in one place of an author with the same or kindred words and phrases

used in other places of the same author, which are generally called parallel places; and as one expression explains another which is like it, so sometimes a contrary expression will explain its contrary. Remember always, that a writer best interprets himself; and as we believe the Holy Spirit to be the supreme agent in the writings of the Old Testament and the New, he can best explain himself. Hence the theological rule arises, that scripture is the best interpreter of scripture; and therefore Concordances, which show us parallel places, are of excellent use for interpretation.

IV. Consider the subject of which the author is treating, and by comparing other places where he treats of the same subject, you may learn his sense in the place which you are reading, though sometimes the terms which he uses in those places may be very different.

And on the other hand, if the author use the same words where the subject of which he treats is not just the same, you cannot learn his sense by comparing those two places, though the mere words may seem to agree; for some authors, when they are treating of a quite different subject, may use perhaps the same words in a very different sense, as St. Paul does the words faith, and law, and righteousness.

V. Observe the scope and design of the writer; inquire into his aim and end in that book, or section, or paragraph, which will help to explain particular sentences; for we suppose a wise and judicious writer directs his expressions generally toward his designed end.

VI. When an author speaks of any subject occasionally, let his sense be explained by those places where he treats of it distinctly and professedly; where he treats of any subject in mystical or metaphorical terms, explain them by other places where he treats of the same subject in terms that are plain and literal; where he speaks in an oratorical, affecting, or persuasive way, let this be explained by other places where he treats of the same theme in a doctrinal or instructive way; where the author speaks more strictly, and particularly on any theme, it will explain the mere loose and general expressions; where he treats more largely, it will explain the shorter hints and brief intimations; and wheresoever he writes more obscurely, search out some more



perspicuous passages in the same writer, by which to determine the sense of that obscurer language.

VII. Consider not only the person who is introduced speaking, but the persons to whom the speech is directed, the circumstances of time and place, the temper and spirit of the speaker, as well as the temper and spirit of the hearers; in order to interpret scripture well, there needs a good acquaintance with the Jewish customs, some knowledge of the ancient Roman and Greek times and manners, which sometimes strike a strange and surprising light upon passages which before were very obscure.

VIII. In particular propositions, the sense of an author may be sometimes known by the inferences which he draws from them; and all those senses may be excluded, which will not allow of that inference.

NOTE. This rule indeed is not always certain in reading and interpreting human authors, because they may mistake in drawing their inferences; but in explaining scripture it is a sure rule; for the sacred and inspired writers always make just inferences from their own propositions. Yet even in them we must take heed we do not mistake an allusion for an inference, which is many times introduced almost in the same manner.

IX. If it be a matter of controversy, the true sense of the author is sometimes known by the objections that are brought against it. So we may be well assured, the Apostle speaks against our justification in the sight of God by our own works of holiness, in the 3d, 4th, and 5th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, because of the objection brought against him in the beginning of the 6th chapter, viz. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?* which objection could never have been raised, if he had been proving our justification by our own works of righteousness.

X. In matters of dispute take heed of warping the sense of the writer to your own opinion, by any latent prejudices of self love and party spirit. It is this reigning principle of prejudice and party that has given such a variety of senses both to the sacred writers and others, which would never have come into the mind of the reader, if he had not laboured under some such prepossessions.

XI. For the same reason take heed of the prejudices of passion, malice, envy, pride, or opposition to an author, whereby you may be easily tempted to put a false and invidious sense upon his words. Lay aside therefore a carping spirit, and read even an adversary with attention and diligence, with an honest design to find out his true meaning; do not snatch at little lapses and appearances of mistake, in opposition to his declared and avowed meaning; nor impute any sense or opinion to him which he denies to be his opinion, unless it be proved by the most plain and express language.

Lastly, Remember that you treat every author, writer, or speaker, just as you yourselves would be willing to be treated by others, who are searching out the meaning of what you write or speak; and maintain upon your spirit an awful sense of the presence of God, who is the judge of hearts, and will punish those who by a base and dishonest turn of mind wilfully pervert the meaning of the sacred writers, or even of common authors, under the influence of culpable prejudices. *See More's Logic, Part I. Chap. 6. § 3.* "Directions concerning the definition of Names."

## CHAP. IX.

### *Rules of Improvement by Conversation.*

**I**F we would improve our minds by conversation, it is a great happiness to be acquainted with persons wiser than ourselves. It is a piece of useful advice, therefore, to get the favour of their conversation frequently, as far as circumstances will allow; and if they happen to be a little reserved, use all obliging methods to draw out of them what may increase your own knowledge.

II. Whatsoever company you are in, waste not the time in trifle and impertinence. If you spend some hours amongst children, talk with them according to their capacity; mark the young buddings of infant reason; observe the different motions and distinct workings of the animal and the mind, as far as you can discern them; take notice by what degrees the little creature grows up to the use of his reasoning powers, and what early prejudices beset and endanger his understanding. By this means you will learn how to

address yourself to children for their benefit, and perhaps you may derive some useful philosophemes or theorems for your own entertainment.

III. If you happen to be in company with a merchant or a sailor, a farmer or a mechanic, a milk-maid or a spinster, lead them into a discourse of the matters of their own peculiar province or profession; for every one knows, or should know his own business best. In this sense a common mechanic is wiser than a philosopher. By this means you may gain some improvement in knowledge from every one you meet.

IV. Confine not yourself always to one sort of company, or to persons of the same party or opinion, either in matters of learning, religion, or the civil life, lest if you should happen to be nursed up or educated in early mistake, you should be confirmed and established in the same mistake, by conversing only with persons of the same sentiments. A free and general conversation with men of very various countries, and of different parties, opinions and practices, (so far as it may be done safely) is of excellent use to undeceive us in many wrong judgments which we may have framed, and to lead us into juster thoughts. It is said, when the King of Siam, near China, first conversed with some European merchants, who sought the favour of trading on his coast, he inquired of them some of the common appearances of summer and winter in their country; and when they told him of water growing so hard in their rivers, that men and horses and laden carriages passed over it, and that rain sometimes fell down as white and as light as feathers, and sometimes almost as hard as stones, he would not believe a word they said; for ice, snow, and hail, were names of things utterly unknown to him and to his subjects in that hot climate; he renounced all traffic with such shameful liars, and would not suffer them to trade with his people. See here the natural effects of gross ignorance.

Conversation with foreigners on various occasions has a happy influence to enlarge our minds, and to set them free from any errors and gross prejudices we are ready to imbibe concerning them. Domicillus has never travelled five miles from his mother's chimney, and he imagines all outlandish men are papishes, and

worship nothing but a cross. Tytirus, the shepherd, was bred up all his life in the country, and never saw Rome: he fancied it to be only a huge village, and was therefore infinitely surprised to find such palaces, such streets, such glittering treasures and gay magnificence, as his first journey to the city showed him, and with wonder confesses his folly and mistake. So Virgil introduces a poor shepherd:

*Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Melibæe, putavi  
Stultus ego huic nostræ similem, quo sæpe solemus  
Pastores ovium teneros depellere fætus, &c.*

THUS ENGLISHED :

Fool that I was, I thought imperial Rome  
Little market towns, where once a week we come,  
And thither drive our tender lambs from home.

Conversation would have given Tytirus a better notion of Rome, though he had never happened to travel thither.

V. In mixed company, among acquaintance and strangers, endeavour to learn something from all. Be swift to hear, but be cautious of your tongue, lest you betray your ignorance, and perhaps offend some of those who are present too. The scripture severely censures those who speak evil of the things which they know not. Acquaint yourself therefore sometimes with persons and parties which are far distant from your common life and customs; this is a way whereby you may form a wiser opinion of men and things. *Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good*, is a divine rule, and it comes from the Father of light and truth. But young persons should practice it indeed with due limitation, and under the eye of their elders.

VI. Be not frightened or provoked at opinions different from your own. Some persons are so confident they are in the right, that they will not come within the hearing of any notions but their own; they canton out to themselves a little province in the intellectual world, where they fancy the light shines, and all the rest is in darkness. They never venture into the ocean of knowledge, nor survey the riches of other minds, which are as solid, and as useful, and perhaps are finer gold than

what they ever possessed. Let not men imagine there is no certain truth but in the sciences which they study, and amongst that party in which they were born and educated.

VII. Believe that it is possible to learn something from persons much below yourself. We are all short sighted creatures; our views are also narrow and limited; we often see but one side of a matter, and do not extend our sight far and wide enough to reach every thing that has a connexion with the thing we talk of; we see but in part, and know but in part; therefore it is no wonder we form no right conclusions, because we do not survey the whole of any subject or argument. Even the proudest admirer of his own parts might find it useful to consult with others, though of inferior capacity and penetration. We have a different prospect of the same thing, if I may so speak, according to the different position of our understandings towards it; a weaker man may sometimes light on notions which have escaped a wiser, and which the wiser man might make a happy use of, if he would condescend to take notice of them.

VIII. It is of considerable advantage, when we are pursuing any difficult point of knowledge, to have a society of ingenious correspondents at hand, to whom we may propose it; for every man has something of a different genius and a various turn of mind, whereby the subject proposed will be shown in all its lights, it will be represented in all its forms, and every side of it be turned to view, that a juster judgment may be framed.

IX. To make conversation more valuable and useful, whether it be in a designed or accidental visit, among persons of the same or of different sexes, after the necessary salutations are finished, and the stream of common talk begins to hesitate, or runs flat and low, let some one person take a book which may be agreeable to the whole company, and by common consent let him read in it ten lines, or a paragraph or two, or a few pages, till some word or sentence gives an occasion for any of the company to offer a thought or two relating to that subject. Interruption of the reader should be no blame, for conversation is the business; whether

it be to confirm what the author says, or to improve it, to enlarge upon or to correct it, to object against it, or to ask any question that is akin to it, and let every one that pleases add his opinion, and promote the conversation. When the discourse sinks again or diverts to trifles, let him that reads pursue the page, and read on further paragraphs or pages till some occasion be given by a word or sentence for a new discourse to be started, and that with the utmost ease and freedom. Such a method as this would prevent the hours of a visit from running all to waste ; and by this means, even among scholars, they would seldom find occasion for that too just and bitter reflection, 'I have lost my time in the company of the learned.'

By such a practice as this, young ladies may very honourably and agreeably improve their hours ; while one applies herself to reading, the others employ their attention even among the various artifices of the needle ; but let all of them make their occasional remarks or inquiries. This will guard a great deal of that precious time from modish trifling, impertinence or scandal, which might otherwise afford matter for painful repentance.

Observe this rule in general, whensoever it lies in your power to lead the conversation, let it be directed to some profitable point of knowledge or practice, so far as may be done with decency ; and let not the discourse and the hours be suffered to run loose without aim or design ; and when a subject is started, pass not hastily to another, before you have brought the present theme of discourse to some tolerable issue, or a joint consent to drop it.

X. Attend with sincere diligence while any one of the company is declaring his sense of the question proposed ; hear the argument with patience, though it differ ever so much from your sentiments, for you yourself are very desirous to be heard with patience by others who differ from you. Let not your thoughts be active and busy all the while to find out something to contradict, and by what means to oppose the speaker, especially in matters that are not brought to an issue. This is a frequent and unhappy temper and practice. You should rather be intent and solicitous to take up the mind and meaning of the speaker, zealous to seize

and approve all that is true in his discourse; nor yet should you want courage to oppose where it is necessary; but let your modesty and patience, and a friendly temper be as conspicuous as your zeal.

XI. When a man speaks with much freedom and ease, and gives his opinion in the plainest language of common sense, do not presently imagine you shall gain nothing by his company. Sometimes you will find a person, who, in his conversation or his writings, delivers his thoughts in so plain, so easy, so familiar and perspicuous a manner, that you both understand and assent to every thing he saith, as fast as you read or hear it; hereupon some hearers have been ready to conclude in haste, 'Surely this man saith none but common things, I knew as much before, or, I could have said all this myself.' This is a frequent mistake. Pellucido was a very great genius; when he spoke in the senate, he was wont to convey his ideas in so simple and happy a manner, as to instruct and convince every hearer, and to enforce the conviction through the whole illustrious assembly; and that with so much evidence, that you would have been ready to wonder that every one who spoke had not said the same things; but Pellucido was the only man that could do it; the only speaker who had attained this art and honour. Such is the writer of whom Horace would say,

————— *Ut sibi quivis;*  
*Speret idem, sudet multum, frustra que laboret*  
*Ausus idem.* *De Art. Poet.*

Smoothe be your style, and plain and natural,  
 To strike the sons of Wapping or Whitehall.  
 While others think this easy to attain,  
 Let them but try, and with their utmost pain,  
 They'll sweat and strive to imitate in vain. }

XII. If any thing seem dark in the discourse of your companion, so that you have not a clear idea of what is spoken, endeavour to obtain a clearer conception of it by a decent manner of inquiry. Do not charge the speaker with obscurity, either in his sense or his words, but intreat his favour to relieve your own want of penetration, or to add an enlightening word or two, that you may take up his whole meaning.

If difficulties arise in your mind and constrain your dissent to the things spoken, represent what objections

some persons would be ready to make against the sentiments of the speaker, without telling him you oppose. This manner of address carries something more modest and obliging in it, than to appear to raise objections of your own by way of contradiction to him that spoke.

XIII. When you are forced to differ from him who delivers his sense on any point, yet agree as far as you can, and represent how far you agree; and if there be any room for it, explain the words of the speaker in such a sense to which you can in general assent, and so agree with him; or at least by a small addition or alteration of his sentiments show your own sense of things. It is the practice and delight of a candid hearer, to make it appear how unwilling he is to differ from him that speaks. Let the speaker know that it is nothing but truth constrains you to oppose him, and let that difference be always expressed in few, and civil, and chosen words, such as give the least offence.

And be careful always to take Solomon's rule with you, and let your correspondent fairly finish his speech before you reply; "for he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Prov. xviii. 13.

A little watchfulness, care, and practice, in younger life, will render all these things more easy, familiar, and natural to you, and will grow into habit.

XIV. As you should carry about with you a constant and sincere sense of your own ignorance, so you should not be afraid nor ashamed to confess this ignorance, by taking all proper opportunities to ask and inquire for farther information; whether it be the meaning of a word, the nature of a thing, the reason of a proposition, the custom of a nation, &c. never remain in ignorance for want of asking.

Many a person had arrived at some considerable degree of knowledge, if he had not been full of self conceit, and imagined that he had known enough already, or else was ashamed to let others know that he was unacquainted with it. God and man are ready to teach the meek, the humble, and the ignorant; but he that fancies himself to know any particular subject well, or that will not venture to ask a question about it, such an one will not put himself into the way of improvement by inquiry and diligence. A fool may be wiser in his



own conceit than ten men who can render a reason, and such an one is very likely to be an everlasting fool; and perhaps also it is a silly shame which renders his folly incurable.

*Stultorum incurata pudor malis ulcera celat.*

Hor. Epist. 16. Lib. 1.

IN ENGLISH THUS :

If fools have ulcers, and their pride conceal 'em,  
They must have ulcers still, for none can heal 'em.

XV. Be not too forward, especially in the younger part of life, to determine any question in company with an infallible and peremptory sentence, nor speak with assuming airs and with a decisive tone of voice. A young man in the presence of his elders should rather hear and attend, and weigh the arguments which are brought for the proof or refutation of any doubtful proposition, and when it is your turn to speak, propose your thoughts rather in the way of inquiry. By this means your mind will be kept in a fitter temper to receive truth, and you will be more ready to correct and improve your own sentiments, where you have not been too positive in affirming them. But if you have magisterially decided the point, you will find a secret unwillingness to retract, though you should feel an inward conviction that you were in the wrong.

XVI. It is granted indeed, that a season may happen, when some bold pretender to science may assume haughty and positive airs to assert and vindicate a gross and dangerous error, or to renounce and vilify some very important truth; and if he has a popular talent of talking, and there be no remonstrance made against him, the company may be tempted too easily to give their assent to the impudence and infallibility of the presumer. They may imagine a proposition so much vilified can never be true, and that a doctrine which is so boldly censured and renounced can never be defended. Weak minds are too ready to persuade themselves, that a man would never talk with so much assurance, unless he were certainly in the right, and could well maintain and prove what he said. By this means truth itself is in danger of being betrayed or lost, if there be no opposition made to such a pretending talker.

Now, in such a case, even a wise and a modest man may assume airs too, and repel insolence with its own weapons. There is a time, as Solomon the wisest of men teaches us, when a fool should be answered according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit, and lest others too easily yeild up their faith and reason to his imperious dictates. Courage and positivity are never more necessary than on such an occasion. But it is good to join some argument with them of real and convincing force, and let it be strongly pronounced too.

When such a resistance is made, you shall find some of these bold talkers will draw in their horns, when their fierce and feeble pushes against truth and reason are repelled with pushing and confidence. It is pity indeed that truth should ever need such sort of defences; but we know that a triumphant assurance hath sometimes supported gross falsehoods, and a whole company have been captivated to error, by this means, till some man with equal assurance hath rescued them. It is a pity that any momentous point of doctrine should happen to fall under such reproaches, and require such a mode of vindication; though if I happen to hear it, I ought not to turn my back, and to sneak off in silence, and leave the truth to lie baffled, bleeding, and slain. Yet I must confess, I should be glad to have no occasion ever given me to fight with any man at this sort of weapons, even though I should be so happy as to silence his insolence, and to obtain an evident victory.

XVII. Be not fond of disputing every thing *pro* and *con*, nor indulge to show your talent of attacking and defending. A logic which teaches nothing else is little worth. This temper and practice will lead you just so far out of the way of knowledge, and divert your honest inquiry after the truth which is debated or sought. In set disputes, every straw is often laid hold on to support our own cause; every thing that can be done in any way to give colour to our argument is advanced, and that perhaps with vanity and ostentation. This puts the mind out of a proper posture to seek and receive the truth.

XVIII. Do not bring a warm party spirit into a free conversation, which is designed for mutual improvement in the search of truth. Take heed of allowing yourself in those self satisfied assurances which keep the door of the understanding barred fast against the admission of

any new sentiments. Let your soul be ever ready to hearken to further discoveries, from a constant and ruling consciousness of our present fallible and imperfect state; and make it appear to your friends, that it is no hard task for you to learn and pronounce those little words, *I was mistaken*; how hard soever it be for the bulk of mankind to pronounce them.

XIX. As you may sometimes raise inquiries for your own instruction and improvement, and draw out the learning, wisdom, and fine sentiments of your friends, who perhaps may be too reserved or modest; so at other times, if you perceive a person unskilful in the matter of debate, you may by questions aptly proposed in the Socratic method, lead him into a clearer knowledge of the subject; then you become his instructor in such a manner as may not appear to make yourself his superior.

XX. Take heed of affecting always to shine in company above the rest, and to display the riches of your own understanding or your oratory, as though you would render yourself admirable to all that are present. This is seldom well taken in polite company; much less should you use such forms of speech as should insinuate the ignorance or dulness of those with whom you converse.

XXI. Though you should not affect to flourish in a copious harangue and diffusive style in company, yet neither should you rudely interrupt and reproach him that happens to use it. But when he has done speaking, reduce his sentiments into a more contracted form, not with a show of correcting, but as one who is doubtful whether you hit upon his true sentiments or no. Thus matters may be brought more easily from a wild confusion into a single point, questions may be sooner determined, and difficulties more readily removed.

XXII. Be not so ready to charge ignorance, prejudice, and mistake upon others, as you are to suspect yourself of it; and in order to show how free you are from prejudices, learn to bear contradiction with patience; let it be easy to you to hear your own opinion strongly opposed, especially in matters which are doubtful and disputable amongst men of sobriety and virtue. Give a patient hearing to arguments on all

sides, otherwise you give the company occasion to suspect that it is not the evidence of truth has led you into this opinion, but some lazy anticipation of judgment; some beloved presumption, some long and rash possession of a party scheme, in which you desire to rest undisturbed. If your assent has been established upon just and sufficient grounds; why should you be afraid to let the truth be put to the trial of argument?

**XXIII.** Banish utterly out of all conversation, and especially out of all learned and intellectual conference, every thing that tends to provoke passion, or raise a fire in the blood. Let no sharp language, no noisy exclamation, no sarcasms or biting jests, be heard among you; no perverse or invidious consequences be drawn from each other's opinions, and imputed to the person; let there be no wilful perversion of another's meaning; no sudden seizure of a lapsed syllable to play upon it, nor any abased construction of an innocent mistake; suffer not your tongue to insult a modest opponent that begins to yield; let there be no crowing or triumph, even where there is evident victory on your side. All these things are enemies to friendship, and the ruin of free conversation. The impartial search of truth requires all calmness and serenity, all temper and candour; mutual instruction can never be attained in the midst of passion, pride, and clamour, unless we suppose in the midst of such a scene there is a loud and penetrating lecture read by both sides on the folly and shameful infirmities of human nature.

**XXIV.** Whensoever therefore any unhappy word shall arise in company that might give you a reasonable disgust, quash the rising resentment, be it ever so just, and command your soul and your tongue into silence, lest you cancel the hopes of all improvement for that hour, and transform the learned conversation into the mean and vulgar form of reproaches and railing. The man who began to break the peace in such a society, will fall under the shame and conviction of such a silent reproof, if he has any thing ingenious about him. If this should not be sufficient, let a grave admonition, or a soft or gentle turn of wit, with an air

of pleasantry, give the warm disputer an occasion to stop the progress of his indecent fire, if not to retract the indecency, and quench the flame.

**XXV.** Inure yourself to a candid and obliging manner in all your conversation, and acquire the art of pleasing address, even when you teach as well as when you learn, and when you oppose as well as when you assert or prove. This degree of politeness is not to be attained without a diligent attention to such kind of directions as are here laid down, and a frequent exercise and practice of them.

**XXVI.** If you would know what sort of companions you should select for the cultivation and advantage of the mind, the general rule is, Choose such as by their brightness of parts, and their diligence in study, or by their superior advancement in learning, or peculiar excellency in any art, science, or accomplishment, divine or human, may be capable of administering to your improvement; and be sure to maintain and keep some due regard to their moral character always, lest while you wander in quest of intellectual gain, you fall into the contagion of irreligion and vice. No wise man would venture into a house infected with the plague in order to see the finest collections of any virtuoso in Europe.

**XXVII.** Nor is it every sober person of your acquaintance, no, nor every man of bright parts, or rich in learning, that is fit to engage in free conversation for the inquiry after truth. Let a person have ever so illustrious talents, yet he is not a proper associate for such a purpose, if he lie under any of the following infirmities:

(1.) If he be exceedingly reserved, and hath either no inclination to discourse, or no tolerable capacity of speech and language for the communication of his sentiments.

(2.) If he be haughty and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his airs, and is always fond of imposing his sentiment on all the company.

(3.) If he be positive and dogmatical in his own opinions, and will dispute to the end; if he will resist the brightest evidence of truth rather than suffer himself to be overcome, or yield to the plainest and strongest reasonings.

(4.) If he be one who always affects to outshine all the company,<sup>q</sup> and delights to hear himself talk and flourish upon a subject, and make long harangues, while the rest must be all silent and attentive.

(5.) If he be a person of a whiffling and unsteady turn of mind, who cannot keep close to a point of controversy, but wanders from it perpetually, and is always solicitous to say something, whether it be pertinent to the question or no.

(6.) If he be fretful and peevish, and given to resentment upon all occasions; if he knows not how to bear contradiction, or is ready to take things in a wrong sense; if he be swift to feel a supposed offence, or to imagine himself affronted, and then break out into a sudden passion, or retain silent and sullen wrath.

(7.) If he affect wit on all occasions, and is full of his conceits and puns, quirks or quibbles, jests and repartees; these may agreeably entertain and animate an hour of mirth, but they have no place in the search after truth.

(8.) If he carry always about him a sort of craft and cunning, and disguise, and act rather like a spy than a friend. Have a care of such an one as will make an ill use of freedom in conversation, and immediately charge heresy upon you, when you happen to differ from those sentiments which authority or custom has established.

In short, you should avoid the man in such select conversation, who practices any thing that is unbecoming the character of a sincere, free, and open searcher after truth.

Now, though you may pay all the relative duties of life to persons of these unhappy qualifications, and treat them with decency and love, so far as religion and humanity oblige you, yet take care of entering into a free debate on matters of truth or falsehood in their company, and especially about the principles of religion. I confess, if a person of such a temper, happens to judge and talk well on such a subject, you may hear him with attention, and derive what profit you can from his discourse; but he is by no means to be chosen for a free conference in matters of inquiry and knowledge.

XXVIII. While I would persuade you to beware of such persons, and abstain from too much freedom of

discourse amongst them, it is very natural to infer that you should watch against the working of these evil qualities in your own breast, if you happen to be tainted with any of them yourself. Men of learning and ingenuity will justly avoid your acquaintance, when they find such an unhappy and unsociable temper prevailing in you.

**XXIX.** To conclude: When you retire from company, then converse with yourself in solitude, and inquire what you have learned for the improvement of your understanding, or for the rectifying your inclination, for the increase of your virtues, or the ameliorating your conduct and behaviour in any future parts of life. If you have seen some of your company candid, modest and humble in their manner, wise and sagacious, just and pious in their sentiments, polite and graceful, as well as clear and strong in their expression, and universally acceptable and lovely in their behaviour, endeavour to impress the idea of all these upon your memory, and treasure them up for your imitation.

**XXX.** If the laws of reason, decency, and civility, have not been well observed among your associates, take notice of those defects for your own improvement; and from every occurrence of this kind, remark something to imitate or to avoid, in elegant, polite and useful conversation. Perhaps you will find that some persons present have really displeased the company by too excessive and visible a desire to please; i. e. by giving loose to servile flattery, or promiscuous praise; while others were as ready to oppose and contradict every thing that was said. Some have deserved just censure for a morose and affected taciturnity, and others have been anxious and careful lest their silence should be interpreted a want of sense, and therefore they have ventured to make speeches, though they had nothing to say which was worth hearing. Perhaps you will observe, that one was ingenious in his thoughts, and bright in his language, but he was so top full of himself, that he let it spill on all the company; that he spoke well indeed, but that he spoke too long, and did not allow equal time or liberty to his associates. You will remark, that another was full charged to let out his words before his friend had done speaking, or impatient of the least opposition to any thing he said.

You will remember that some persons have talked at large, and with great confidence, of things which they understood not; and others counted every thing tedious and intolerable that was spoken upon subjects out of their sphere, and they would fain confine the conference entirely within the limits of their own narrow knowledge and study. The errors of conversation are almost infinite.

XXXI. By a review of such irregularities as these, you may learn to avoid those follies and pieces of ill conduct which spoil good conversation, or make it less agreeable and less useful; and by degrees you will acquire that delightful and easy manner of address and behaviour in all useful correspondencies, which may render your company every where desired and beloved; and at the same time, among the best of your companions, you may make the highest improvement in your own intellectual acquisitions, that the discourse of mortal creatures will allow, under all our disadvantages in this sorry state of mortality. But there is a day coming, when we shall be seized away from this lower class in the school of knowledge, where we labour under the many dangers and darknesses, the errors and the incumbrances of flesh and blood; and our conversation shall be with angels and more illuminated spirits, in the upper regions of the universe.

## CHAP. X.

### *Of Disputes.*

I. **UNDER** the general head of conversation for the improvement of the mind, we may rank the practice of disputing; that is when two or more persons appear to maintain different sentiments, and defend their own, or oppose the other's opinion, in alternate discourse, by some methods of argument.

II. As these disputes often arise in good earnest, where the two contenders do really believe the different propositions which they support; so sometimes they are appointed as mere trials of skill in academies or schools, by the students; sometimes they are practised, and that with apparent fervour in courts of judicature by lawyers, in order to gain the fees of their differ-



ent clients, while both sides perhaps are really of the same sentiment with regard to the cause which is tried.

III. In common conversation, disputes are often managed without any forms of regularity or order, and they turn to good or evil purposes, chiefly according to the temper of the disputants. They may sometimes be successful to search out truth, sometimes be effectual to maintain truth, and convince the mistaken, but at other times a dispute is a mere scene of battle in order to victory and vain triumph.

IV. There are some few general rules which should be observed in all debates whatsoever, if we would find out truth by them, or convince a friend of his error, even though they be not managed according to any settled form of disputation. And as there are almost as many opinions and judgments of things as there are persons, so when several persons happen to meet and confer together upon any subject, they are ready to declare their different sentiments, and support them by such reasonings as they are capable of. This is called debating, or disputing, as is above described.

V. When persons begin a debate, they should always take care that they are agreed in some general principles or propositions, which either more nearly or remotely affect the question in hand ; for otherwise they have no foundation or hope of convincing each other ; they must have some common ground to stand upon while they maintain the contest.

When they find they agree in some remote proposition, then let them search farther, and inquire how near they approach to each other's sentiments ; and whatsoever propositions they agree in, let these lay a foundation for the mutual hope of conviction. Hereby you will be prevented from running at every turn to some original and remote propositions and axioms, which practice both entangles and prolongs a dispute. As for instance, if there was a debate proposed between a Protestant and a Papist, whether there be such a place as purgatory ; let them remember that they both agree in this point, that Christ has made satisfaction or atonement for sin, and upon this ground let them both stand, while they search out the controverted doctrine of purgatory, by way of conference or debate.

VI. The question should be cleared from all doubt-

ful terms and needless additions ; and all things that belong to the question, should be expressed in plain and intelligible language. This is so necessary a thing, that without it, men will be exposed to such sorts of ridiculous contests as was found one day between the two unlearned combatants, Sarto and Sutor, who assaulted and defended the doctrine of transubstantiation with much zeal and violence ; but Latino happening to come into their company, and inquiring the subject of their dispute, asked each of them what he meant by that long word transubstantiation. Sutor readily informed him, that he understood bowing at the name of Jesus ; but Sartor assured him that he meant nothing but bowing at the high altar : “ No wonder then,” said Latino, “ that you cannot agree, when you neither understand one another, nor the word about which you contend.” I think the whole family of the Sartors and Sutors would be wiser if they avoided such kind of debates till they understood the terms better. But alas ! even their wives carry on such conferences ; the other day one was heard in the street explaining to her less learned neighbour, the meaning of metaphysical science ; and she assured her, that as physic was medicine for the body, so metaphysics was medicine for the soul ; upon this they went on to dispute the point, how far the divine excelled the doctor.

*Auditum admissi risum teneatis amici ?*

*Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat ?.....HOR.*

Can it be faulty to repeat

A dialogue that walk'd the street ?

Or can my gravest friends forbear

A laugh when such disputes they hear ?

VII. And not only the sense and meaning of the words used in the question should be settled and adjusted between the disputants, but the precise point of inquiry should be distinctly fixed ; the question in debate should be limited precisely to its special extent, or declared to be taken in its more general sense. As for instance, if two men are contending whether civil government be of divine right or no ; here it must be observed, the question is not whether monarchy in one man, or a republic in multitudes of the people, or an aristocracy in a few of the chiefs, is appointed of God

as necessary ; but whether civil government in its most general sense, or in any form whatsoever, is derived from the will and appointment of God ? Again, the point of inquiry should be limited further. Thus, the question is not whether government comes from the will of God by the light of divine revelation, for that is granted ; but whether it be derived from the will of God by the light of reason too. This sort of specification or limitation of the question, hinders and prevents the disputers from wandering away from the precise point of inquiry.

It is this trifling humour or dishonest artifice of changing the question and wandering away from the first point of debate, which gives endless length to disputes, and causes both the disputants to part without any satisfaction. And one chief occasion of it is this ; when one of the combatants feels his cause run low and fail, and is just ready to be confuted and demolished, he is tempted to step aside to avoid the blow, and betakes him to a different question ; thus, if his adversary be not well aware of him, he begins to entrench himself in a new fastness and holds out the siege with a new artillery of thoughts and words. It is the pride of man which is the spring of this evil, and an unwillingness to yield up their own opinions even to be overcome by truth itself.

VIII. Keep this always therefore upon your mind as an everlasting rule of conduct in your debates to find out truth, that a resolute design, or even a warm affectation of victory, is the bane of all real improvement, and an effectual bar against the admission of the truth which you profess to seek. This works with a secret, but a powerful and mischievous influence in every dispute, unless we are much upon our guard. It appears in frequent conversation ; every age, every sex, and each party of mankind, are so fond of being in the right, that they know not how to renounce this unhappy prejudice, this vain love of victory.

When truth with bright evidence is ready to break in upon a disputant, and to overcome his objections and mistakes, how swift and ready is the mind to engage wit and fancy, craft and subtlety, to cloud and perplex and puzzle the truth if possible ! How eager is he to throw in some impertinent question to divert from the main

subject! How swift to take hold of some occasional word thereby to lead the discourse off from the point in hand! So much afraid is human nature of parting with its errors, and being overcome by truth. Just thus a hunted hare calls up all the shifts that nature hath taught her, she treads back her mazes, crosses and confounds her former track, and uses all possible methods to divert the scent, when she is in danger of being seized and taken. Let puss practise what nature teaches; but could one imagine, that any rational being should take such pains to avoid truth and to escape the improvement of its understanding?

IX. When you come to a dispute in order to find out truth, do not presume that you are certainly possessed of it beforehand. Enter the debate with a sincere design of yielding to reason on which side soever it appears. Use no subtle arts to cloud and entangle the question; hide not yourself in doubtful words and phrases; do not affect little shifts and subterfuges to avoid the force of an argument; take a generous pleasure to espy the first rising beams of truth, though it be on the side of your opponent; endeavour to remove the little obscurities that hang about it, and suffer and encourage it to break out into open and convincing light; that while your opponent perhaps may gain the better of your reasonings, yet you yourself may triumph over error, and I am sure that is a much more valuable acquisition and victory.

X. Watch narrowly in every dispute, that your opponent does not lead you unwardly to grant some principle of the proposition, which will bring with it a fatal consequence, and lead you insensibly into his sentiment, though it be far astray from the truth; and by this wrong step you will be, as it were, plunged into dangerous errors before you are aware. Polonides in free conversation, led Incauto to agree with him in this plain proposition, that the blessed God has too much justice in any case to punish\* any being who is in itself innocent; till he not only allowed it with an unthinking alacrity, but asserted it in most universal and unguarded terms. A little after, Polonides came in discourse to commend the virtues, the innocence,

\* The word punish here signifies, to bring some natural evil upon a person on account of moral evil done.

and the piety of our blessed Saviour; and thence inferred, it was impossible that God should ever punish so holy a person, who was never guilty of any crime; then Incauto espied the snare, and found himself robbed and defrauded of the great doctrine of the atonement by the death of Christ, upon which he had placed his immortal hopes, according to the gospel.

This taught him to bethink himself what a dangerous concession he had made in so universal a manner, that God would never punish any being who was innocent, and he saw it needful to recal his words, or to explain them better, by adding this restriction or limitation, viz. Unless this innocent being were some way involved in another's sin, or stood as a voluntary surety for the guilty; by this limitation, he secured the great and blessed doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men, and learnt to be more cautious in his concessions for time to come.

Two months ago, Fatalio had almost tempted his friend Fidens to leave off prayer, and to abandon his dependence on the Providence of God in the common affairs of life, by obtaining of him a concession of the like kind. Is it not evident to reason, says Fatalio, that God's immense scheme of transactions in the universe, was contrived and determined long before you and I were born? Can you imagine, my dear Fidens, that the blessed God changes his original contrivances, and makes new interruptions in the course of them, so often as you and I want his aid, to prevent the little accidents of life; or to guard us from them? Can you suffer yourself to be persuaded, that the great Creator of this world takes care to support a bridge which was quite rotten, and to make it stand firm a few minutes longer till you had rode over it? Or will he uphold a falling tower while we two were passing by it, that such worms as you and I are, might escape the ruin?

But you say you prayed for his protection in the morning, and he certainly hears prayer. I grant he knows it, but are you so fond and weak, said he, as to suppose that the universal Lord of all, had such a regard to a word or two of your breath, as to make alterations in his own eternal scheme, upon that account? Nor is there any other way whereby his providence can preserve you in answer to prayer, but by creating

such perpetual interruptions and changes in his own conduct according to your daily behaviour.

I acknowledge, says Fidens, there is no other way to secure the doctrine of divine providence, in all these common affairs, and therefore I begin to doubt whether God does or ever will exert himself so particularly in our little concerns.

Have a care, good Fidens, that you yield not too far; take heed lest you have granted too much to Fatalio. Pray let me ask of you, could not the great God, who grasps and surveys all future and distant things in one single view, could not he from the beginning, foresee your morning prayer for his protection, and appoint all second causes to concur for the support of that crazy bridge; or to make that old tower stand firm till you had escaped the danger? Or could not he cause all the mediums to work, so as to make it fall before you came near it? Can he not appoint all his own transactions in the universe, and every event in the natural world, in a way of perfect correspondence with his own foreknowledge of all events, actions, and appearances of the moral world in every part of it? Can he not direct every thing in nature, which is but his servant, to act in perfect agreement with his eternal prescience of our sins, or of our piety? And hereby all the glory of Providence, and our necessary dependence upon it by faith and prayer, are as well secured, as if he interposed to alter his own scheme every moment.

Let me ask again, did not he in his own counsels or decrees, appoint thunders, and lightnings, and earthquakes, to burn up and destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and turn them into a dead sea, just at the time when the iniquities of those cities were raised to their supreme height? Did he not ordain the fountains of the deep to be broken up, and overwhelming rains to fall down from Heaven, just when a guilty world deserved to be drowned; while he took care for the security of righteous Noah, by an ark which would float on that very deluge of waters? Thus he can punish the criminal when he pleases, and reward the devout worshipper in the proper season, by his original and eternal schemes of appointment, as well as if he interposed every moment anew. Take heed, Fidens, that you be not tempted away by such sophisms of Fatalio, to with-

hold prayer from God, and to renounce your faith in his providence.

Remember this short and plain caution of the subtle errors of men: Let a snake but once thrust in his head at some small unguarded fold of your garment, and he will insensibly and unavoidably wind his whole body into your bosom, and give you a pernicious wound.

XI. On the other hand, when you have found your opponent make any such concession as may turn to your real advantage in maintaining the truth, be wise and watchful to observe it, and make a happy improvement of it. Rhapsodus has taken a great deal of pains to detract from the honour of Christianity, by sly insinuations, that the sacred writers are perpetually promoting virtue and piety by promises and threatenings; whereas, neither the fear of future punishment, nor the hope of future reward, can possibly be called good affections, or such as are the acknowledged springs and sources of all actions truly good. He adds further, that this fear, or this hope, cannot consist in reality with virtue or goodness, if it either stands as essential to any moral performance, or as a considerable motive to any good action; and thus he would fain lead Christians to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because of its future and eternal promises and threatenings, as being inconsistent with his notion of virtue; for he supposes, that virtue should be so beloved and practised for the sake of its own beauty and loveliness, that all other motives arising from rewards or punishments, fear or hope, do really take away just so much from the very nature of virtue, as their influence reaches to; and no part of those good practices are really valuable, but what arises from the mere love of virtue itself, without any regard to punishment or reward.

But observe, in two pages afterwards, he grants, that this principle of fear of future punishment, and hope of future reward, how mercenary and servile soever it may be accounted, is yet in many circumstances a great advantage, security, and support to virtue; especially where there is danger of the violence of rage or lust, or any counter working passion to controul and overcome the good affections of the mind.

Now, the rule and practice of Christianity, or the gos-

pe!, as it is closely connected with future rewards and punishments, may be well supported by this concession. Pray, Rhapsodus, tell me, if every man in this present life, by the violence, of some counter working passion, may not have his good affections to virtue controled or overcome? May not, therefore, his eternal fears and hopes be a great advantage, security, and support to virtue in so dangerous a state and situation, as our journey through this world towards a better? And this is all that the defence of Christianity necessarily requires.

And yet further, let me ask our rhapsodist, if you have nothing else sir, but the beauty, and excellency, and loveliness of virtue, to preach and flourish upon, before such sorry and degenerate creatures, as the bulk of mankind are; and you have no future rewards or punishments, with which to address their hopes and fears, how many of these vicious wretches will you ever reclaim from all their varieties of profaneness, intemperance, and madness? How many have you ever actually reclaimed by this smooth, soft method, and these fine words? What has all that reasoning and rhetoric done, which have been displayed by your predecessors, the Heathen moralists, upon this excellency and beauty of virtue? What has it been able to do towards the reforming of a sinful world? Perhaps now and then, a man of better natural mould, has been a little refined, and perhaps also, there may have been here and there a man restrained or recovered from injustice and knavery, from drunkenness, and lewdness, and vile debaucheries, by this fair reasoning and philosophy; but have the passions of revenge and envy, of ambition and pride, and the inward secret vices of the mind, been mortified merely by this philosophical language? Have any of these men been made new creatures, men of real piety and love to God?

Go dress up all the virtues of human nature, in all the beauties of your oratory, and declaim aloud on the praise of social virtue, and the amiable qualities of goodness, till your heart or your lungs ache, among the looser heards of mankind, and you will ever find as your Heathen fathers have done before, that the wild passions and appetites of men are too violent to be restrained by such mild and silken language.



You may as well build up a fence of straw and feathers, to resist a cannon ball, or try to quench a flaming grenado with a shell of fair water, as hope to succeed in these attempts. But an eternal heaven, and an eternal hell, carry divine force and power with them ; this doctrine from the mouth of Christian preachers, has begun the reformation of multitudes ; this gospel has recovered thousands among the nations, from iniquity and death. They have been awakened by these awful scenes to begin religion, and afterwards, their virtue has improved itself into superior and more refined principles and habits by divine grace, and risen to high and eminent degrees, though not to a consummate state. The blessed God knows human nature much better than Rhapsodus doth, and has throughout his word appointed a more proper and more effectual method of address to it, by the passions of hope and fear, by punishments and rewards.

If you read on four pages further in these writings, you will find the author makes another concession. He allows that the master of a family, using proper rewards and gentle punishments towards his children, teaches them goodness, and by this help instructs them in a virtue, which afterwards they practise upon other grounds, and without thinking of a penalty or a bribe ; and this, says he, is what we call a liberal education, and a liberal service.

This new concession of that author may also be very happily improved in favour of Christianity. What are the best of men in this life ? They are by no means perfect in virtue : we are all but children here under the great Master of the family, and he is pleased, by hopes and fears, by mercies and corrections, to instruct us in virtue, and to conduct us onward towards the sublimer and more perfect practice of it in the future world, where it shall be performed, as in his own language, perhaps without thinking of penalties and bribes. And since he hath allowed that this conduct may be called a liberal education and a liberal service, let Christianity then be indulged the title of a liberal education also, and it is admirably fitted for such frail and sinful creatures, while they are training up towards the sublimer virtues of the heavenly state.

XII. When you are engaged in a dispute with a person of very different principles from yourself, and you

cannot find any ready way to prevail with him to embrace the truth by principles which you both freely acknowledge, you may fairly make use of his own principles to show him his mistake, and thus convince or silence him from his own concessions.

If your opponent should be a Stoic philosopher, or a Jew, you may pursue your argument in defence of some Christian doctrine or duty against such a disputant, by axioms or laws borrowed either from Zeno or Moses. And though you do not enter into the inquiry how many of the laws of Moses are abrogated, or whether Zeno was right or wrong in his philosophy, yet if from the principles and concession of your opponent, you can support your argument for the gospel of Christ, this has been always counted a fair treatment of an adversary, and it is called *argumentum ad hominem*, or *ratio et concessis*. St. Paul sometimes makes use of this sort of disputation when he talks with Jews or Heathen philosophers; and at least he silences if not convinces them, which is sometimes necessary to be done against an obstinate and clamorous adversary, that just honour might be paid to truths which he knew were divine, and that the only true doctrine of salvation might be confirmed and propagated among sinful and dying men.

XIII. Yet great care must be taken lest your debates break in upon your passions, and awaken them to take part in the controversy. When the opponent pushes hard, and gives just and mortal wounds to our opinions, our passions are very apt to feel the strokes, and to rise in resentment and defence. Self is so mingled with the sentiments which we have chosen, and has such a tender feeling of all the opposition which is made to them, that personal brawls are very ready to come in as seconds, to succeed and finish the dispute of opinions. Then noise and clamour and folly appear in all their shapes, and chase reason and truth out of sight.

How unhappy is the case of frail and wretched mankind in this dark and dusky state of strong passion and glimmering reason? How ready are we, when our passions are engaged in the dispute, to consider more what loads of nonsense and reproach we can lay upon our opponent, than what reason and truth require in the controversy itself. Dismal are the consequences man-

kind are too often involved in by this evil principle; it is this common and dangerous practice that carries the heart aside from all that is fair and honest in our search after truth, or the propagation of it in the world. One would wish from one's very soul, that none of the Christian fathers had been guilty of such follies as these.

But St. Jerome fairly confesses this evil principle, in his apology for himself to Pammachius, that he had not so much regarded what was exactly to be spoken in the controversy he had in hand, as what was fit to lay a load on Jovinian. And indeed, I fear this was the vile custom of many of the writers, even in the church affairs, of those times. But it will be a double scandal upon us in our more enlightened age, if we will allow ourselves in a conduct so criminal and dishonest. Happy souls, which keep such a sacred dominion over their inferior and animal powers, and all the influences of pride and secular interest, that the sensitive tumults, or these vicious influences, never rise to disturb the superior and better operations of the reasoning mind!

XIV. These general directions are necessary, or at least useful, in all debates whatsoever, whether they arise in occasional conversation, or are appointed at any certain time or place; whether they are managed with or without any formal rules to govern them. But there are three sorts of disputation, in which there are some forms and orders observed, and which are distinguished by these three names, viz. *Socratic*, *Forensic*, and *Academic*, i. e. the disputes of the schools.

Concerning each of these it may not be improper to discourse a little, and give a few particular directions or remarks about them.

## CHAP. XI.

### *The Socratical Way of Disputation.*

1. **THIS** method of dispute derives its name from Socrates, by whom it was practised, and by other philosophers in his age, long before Aristotle invented the particular forms of syllogism in mood and figure, which are now used in scholastic disputations.

II. The Socratical way is managed by questions and answers in such a manner as this, viz. If I would lead a person into the belief of a heaven and a hell, or a future state of rewards and punishments, I might begin in some such manner of inquiry, and suppose the most obvious and easy answers.

*Quest.* Does not God govern the world?

*Ans.* Surely he that made it governs it.

*Quest.* Is not God both a good and righteous governor.

*Ans.* Both these characters doubtless belong to him.

*Quest.* What is the true notion of a good and righteous Governor?

*Ans.* That he punishes the wicked and rewards the good.

*Quest.* Are the good always rewarded in this life?

*Ans.* No surely, for many virtuous men are miserable here, and greatly afflicted.

*Quest.* Are the wicked always punished in this life?

*Ans.* No certainly, for many of them live without sorrow, and some of the vilest of men are often raised to great riches and honour.

*Quest.* Wherein then doth God make it appear that he is good and righteous?

*Ans.* I own there is but little appearance of it on earth.

*Quest.* Will there not be a time then when the tables shall be turned, and the scene of things changed, since God governs mankind righteously?

*Ans.* Doubtless, there must be a proper time, wherein God will make that goodness and that righteousness to appear.

*Quest.* If this be not before their death, how can it be done?

*Ans.* I can think of no other way but by supposing man to have some existence after this life.

*Quest.* Are you not convinced then that there must be a state of reward and punishment after death?

*Ans.* Yes, surely, I now see plainly that the goodness and righteousness of God, as Governor of the world, necessarily require it.

III. Now the advantages of this method are very considerable.

(1.) It represents the form of a dialogue or common

conversation, which is a much more easy, more pleasant, and a more sprightly way of instruction, and more fit to excite the attention, and sharpen the penetration of the learner, than solitary reading, or silent attention to a lecture. Man being a sociable creature, delights more in conversation, and learns better this way, if it could always be wisely and happily practised.

(2.) This method has something very obliging in it, and carries a very humble and condescending air, when he that instructs seems to be the inquirer, and seeks information from him who learns.

(3.) It leads the learner into the knowledge of truth as it were by his own invention, which is a very pleasing thing to human nature; and by questions pertinently and artificially proposed, it does as effectually draw him on to discover his own mistakes, which he is much more easily persuaded to relinquish when he seems to have discovered them himself.

(4.) It is managed in a great measure in the form of the most easy reasoning, always arising from something asserted or known in the foregoing answer, and so proceeding to inquire something unknown in the following question, which again makes way for the next answer. Now such an exercise is very alluring and entertaining to the understanding, while its own reasoning powers are all along employed; and that without labour or difficulty, because the querist finds out and proposes all the intermediate ideas or middle terms.

IV. There is a method very near akin to this, which has much obtained of late, viz. writing controversies by questions only, or confirming or refuting any position, or persuading to or dehorting from any practice, by the mere proposal of queries. The answer to them is supposed to be so plain and so necessary, that they are not expressed, because the query itself carries a convincing argument in it, and seems to determine what the answer must be.

V. If Christian catechisms could be framed in the manner of a Socratical dispute by question and answer, it would wonderfully enlighten the minds of children, and it would improve their intellectual and reasoning powers, at the same time that it leads them into the knowledge of religion; and it is upon one account well suited to the capacity of children; for the questions

may be pretty numerous, and the querist must not proceed too swiftly towards the determination of his point proposed, that he may with more ease, with brighter evidence, and with surer success, draw the learner on to assent to those principles, step by step, from whence the final conclusion will naturally arise. The only inconvenience would be this, that if children were to reason out all their way, entirely into the knowledge of every part of their religion, it would draw common catechisms into too large a volume for their leisure, attention, or memory.

Yet those who explain their catechisms to them may, by due application and forethought, instruct them in this manner.

## CHAP. XII.

### *Of Forensic Disputes.*

**I.** THE Forum was a public place in Rome where lawyers and orators made their speeches before the proper judge in matters of property, or in criminal cases, to accuse or excuse, to complain or defend; thence all sorts of disputations in public assemblies or courts of justice, where several persons make their distinct speeches for or against any person or thing whatsoever, but more especially in civil matters, may come under the name of Forensic Disputes.

**II.** This is practised not only in the courts of judicature, where a single person sits to judge of the truth or goodness of any cause, and to determine according to the weight of reasons on either side; but it is used also in political senates or parliaments, ecclesiastical synods, and assemblies of various kinds.

In these assemblies, generally one person is chosen chairman, or moderator, not to give a determination to the controversy, but chiefly to keep the several speakers to the rules of order and decency in their conduct; but the final determination of the questions arises from the majority of opinions or votes in the assembly, according as they are or ought to be swayed by the superior weight of reason appearing in the several speeches that are made.

III. The method of proceeding is usually in some such form as this. The first person who speaks when the court is set, opens the case either more briefly or at large, and proposes the case to the judge or the chairman, or moderator of the assembly, and gives his own reasons for his opinion in the case proposed.

IV. This person is succeeded by one, or perhaps two, or several more, who paraphrase on the same subject, and argue on the same side of the question; they confirm what the first has spoken, and urge new reasons to enforce the same; then those who are of a different opinion stand up and make their several speeches in a succession, opposing the cause which others have maintained, giving their reasons against it, and endeavouring to refute the arguments whereby the first speakers have supported it.

V. After this, one and another rises up to make their replies, to vindicate or to condemn, to establish or to confute what has been offered before, on each side of the question; till at last according to the rules, orders, or customs of the court or assembly, the controversy is decided, either by a single judge, or the suffrage of the assembly.

VI. Where the question or matter in debate consists of several parts, after it is once opened by the first or second speaker, sometimes those who follow take each of them a particular part of the debate, according to their inclination or their prior agreement, and apply themselves to argue upon that single point only, that so the whole complexion of the debate may not be thrown into confusion by the variety of subjects, if every speaker should handle all the subjects of debate.

VII. Before the final sentence of determination is given, it is usual to have the reasons and arguments which have been offered on both sides, summed up and represented in a more compendious manner; and this is done either by the appointed judge of the court, or the chairman, or some noted person in the assembly, that so judgment may proceed upon the fullest survey of the whole subject, that as far as possible in human affairs, nothing may be done contrary to truth or justice.

VIII. As this is a practice in which multitudes of gentlemen, besides those of the learned professions,

may be engaged, at least in their maturer years of life, so it would be a very proper and useful thing to introduce this custom into our academies, viz. to propose cases, and let the students debate them in a Forensic manner in the presence of their tutors. There was something of this kind practised by the Roman youth in their schools, in order to train them up for orators, both in the forum and in the senate. Perhaps Juvenal gives some hints of it when he says,

..... *et nos*  
*Consilium dedimus Syllæ, privatus ut altum*  
*Dormiret* ..... Sat. 1.

Where with men-boys I strove to get renown,  
 Advising Sylla to a private gown,  
 That he might sleep the sounder.

Sometimes these were assigned to the boys as single subjects of a theme or declamation; so the same poet speaks sarcastically to Hannibal,

.....*I dentens, et sævas curre per Alpes,*  
*Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias.* Sat. 10.

Go climb the rugged Alps, ambitious fool,  
 To please the boys, and be a theme at school.

See more of this matter in Kennet's antiquities of Rome, in the second Essay on the Roman Education.

### CHAP. XIII.

#### *Of Academic or Scholastic Disputation.*

**T**HE common methods in which disputes are managed in schools of learning are these, viz.

I. The tutor appoints a question in some of the sciences, to be debated amongst his students; one of them undertakes to affirm or deny the question, and defend his assertion or negation, and to answer all objections against; he is called the respondent; and the rest of the students in the same class, or who pursue the same science, are the opponents, who are appointed to dispute or raise objections against the propositions thus affirmed or denied.



II. Each of the students successively in their turn becomes the respondent or the defender of that proposition, while the rest oppose it also successively in their turns.

III. It is the business of the respondent to write a thesis in Latin, or short discourse on the question proposed; and he either affirms or denies the question according to the opinion of the tutor, which is supposed to be the truth, and he reads it at the beginning of the dispute.

IV. In his discourse, (which is written with as great accuracy as the youth is capable of) he explains the terms of the question, frees them from all ambiguity, fixes their sense, declares the true intent and meaning of the question itself, separates it from other questions with which it may have been complicated, and distinguishes it from other questions which may happen to be akin to it, and then pronounces in the negative or affirmative concerning it.

V. When this is done, then in the second part of his discourse, he gives his own strongest arguments to confirm the proposition he has laid down, *i. e.* to vindicate his own side of the question; but he does not usually proceed to represent the objections against it, and to solve or answer them; for it is the business of the other students to raise objections in disputing.

VI. Note. In some schools the respondent is admitted to talk largely upon the question, with many flourishes and illustrations, to introduce great authorities from ancient and modern writings for the support of it, and to scatter Latin reproaches in abundance on all those who are of a different sentiment. But this is not always permitted, nor should it indeed be ever indulged, lest it teach youth to reproach, instead of reasoning.

VII. When the respondent has read over his thesis in the school, the junior student makes an objection, and draws it up in the regular form of a syllogism; the respondent repeats the objection, and either denies the major or minor proposition directly, or he distinguishes upon some word or phrase in the major or minor, and shows in what sense the proposition may be true, but that sense does not affect the question; and then declares that in the sense which affects the present

question, the proposition is not true, and consequently he denies it.

VIII. Then the opponent proceeds by another syllogism to vindicate the proposition that is denied ; again the respondent answers by denying or distinguishing.

Thus the disputation goes on in a series of succession of syllogisms and answers, till the objector is silenced, and has no more to say.

IX. When he can go no further, the next student begins to propose his objection, and then the third and the fourth, even to the senior, who is the last opponent.

X. During this time, the tutor sits in the chair as president or moderator, to see that the rules of disputation and decency be observed on both sides ; and to admonish each disputant of any irregularity in their conduct. His work is also to illustrate and explain the answer or distinction of the respondent where it is obscure, to strengthen it where it is weak, and to correct it where it is false ; and when the respondent is pinched with a strong objection, and is at a loss for an answer, the moderator assists him, and suggests some answer to the objection of the opponent, in defence of the question, according to his own opinion or sentiment.

XI. In public disputes, where the opponents and respondents choose their own side of the question, the moderator's work is not to favour either disputant ; but he only sits as president to see that the laws of disputation be observed, and a *decorum* maintained.

XII. Now the laws of disputation relate either to the opponent, or to the respondent, or to both.

The laws obliging the opponent are these :

1. That he must directly contradict the propositions of the respondent, and not merely attack any of the arguments whereby the respondent has supported that proposition ; for it is one thing to confute a single argument of the respondent, and another to confute the thesis itself.

2. (Which is akin to the former.) He must contradict or oppose the very sense and intention of the proposition as the respondent has stated it, and not merely oppose the words of the thesis in any other sense ; for this would be the way to plunge the dispute into ambiguity and darkness, to talk beside the question, to

wrangle about words, and to attack a proposition different from what the respondent has espoused, which is called *ignoratio elenchi*.

3. He must propose his *argumenta* in a plain, short, and syllogistic form, according to the rules of logic, without flying to fallacies or sophisms; and as far as may be, he should use categorical syllogisms.

4. Though the respondent may be attacked either upon a point of his own concession, which is called *argumentum ex concessis*, or by reducing him to an absurdity, which is called *reductio ad absurdum*, yet it is the neatest, the most useful, and the best sort of disputation, where the opponent draws his objections from the nature of the question itself.

5. Where the respondent denies any proposition, the opponent, if he proceed, must directly vindicate and confirm that proposition, *i. e.* he must make that proposition the conclusion of his next syllogism.

6. Where the respondent limits or distinguishes any proposition, the opponent must directly prove his own proposition in that sense, and according to that member of the distinction in which the respondent denied it.

XIII. The laws that oblige the respondent are these:

1. To repeat the argument of the opponent in the very same words in which it was proposed, before he attempts to answer it.

2. If the syllogism be false in the logical form of it, he must discover the fault according to the rules of logic.

3. If the argument does not directly and effectually oppose his thesis, he must show this mistake, and make it appear that his thesis is safe, even though the argument of the opponent be admitted; or at least, that the argument does only aim at it collaterally, or at a distance, and not directly overthrow it, or conclude against it.

4. Where the matter of the opponent's objection is faulty in any part of it, the respondent must grant what is true in it, he must deny what is false, he must distinguish or limit the proposition which is ambiguous or doubtful; and then granting the sense in which it is true, he must deny the sense in which it is false.

5. If a hypothetic proposition be false, the respon-

dent must deny the consequence; if a disjunctive, he must deny the disjunction; if a categoric or relative, he must simply deny it.

6. It is sometimes allowed for the respondent to use an indirect answer after he has answered directly; and he may also show how the opponent's argument may be retorted against himself.

**XIV.** The laws that oblige both disputants are these:

1. Sometimes it is necessary there should be a mention of certain general principles, in which they both agree, relating to the question, that so they may not dispute on those things which either are or ought to have been first granted on both sides.

2. When the state of the controversy is well known, and plainly determined and agreed, it must not be altered by either dsputant in the course of the disputation; and the respondent especially should keep a watchful eye on the opponent, in this matter.

3. Let neither party invade the province of the other; especially let the respondent take heed that he does not turn opponent, except in retorting the argument upon his adversary after a direct response; and even this is allowed only as an illustration or confirmation of his own response.

4. Let each wait with patience till the other has done speaking. It is a piece of rudeness to interrupt another in his speech.

Yet though the disputants have not this liberty, the moderator may do it, when either of the disputants break the rules, and he may interpose so far as to keep them in order.

**XV.** It must be confessed, there are some advantages to be attained by academical disputations. It gives vigour and briskness to the mind thus exercised, and relieves the languor of private study and meditation. It sharpens the wit and all the inventive powers. It makes the thoughts active, and sends them on all sides to find arguments and answers both for opposition and defence. It gives opportunity of viewing the subject of discourse on all sides, and of learning what inconveniences, difficulties, and objections, attend particular opinions. It furnishes the soul with various occasions of starting such thoughts as otherwise would

never have come into the mind. It makes a student more expert in attacking and refuting an error, as well as in vindicating a truth. It instructs the scholar in the various methods of warding off the force of objections, and of discovering and refelling the subtle tricks of sophisters. It procures also a freedom and readiness of speech, and raises the modest and diffident genius to a due degree of courage.

XVI. But there are some very grievous inconveniences that may sometimes overbalance all these advantages. For many young students, by a constant habit of disputing, grow impudent and audacious, proud and disdainful, talkative and impertinent, and render themselves intolerable by an obstinate humor of maintaining whatever they have asserted, as well as by a spirit of contradiction, opposing almost every thing that they hear. The disputation itself often awakens the passions of ambition, emulation, and anger; it carries away the mind from that calm and sedate temper which is so necessary to contemplate truth.

XVII. It is evident also, that by frequent exercises of this sort, wherein opinions true and false are argued, supported, and refuted, on both sides, the mind of man is led by insensible degrees to an uncertain and fluctuating temper, and falls into danger of a sceptical humour, which never comes to an establishment in any doctrines. Many persons by these means become much more ready to oppose whatsoever is offered in searching out truth; they hardly wait till they have read or heard the sentiment of any person, before their heads are busily employed to seek out arguments against it. They grow naturally sharp in finding out difficulties; and by indulging this humour, they converse with the dark and doubtful parts of a subject so long, till they almost render themselves incapable of receiving the full evidence of a proposition and acknowledging the light of truth. It has some tendency to make a youth a carping critic, rather than a judicious man.

XVIII. I would add yet further, that in these disputations the respondent is generally appointed to maintain the supposed truth, that is, the tutor's opinion. But all the opponents are busy and warmly engaged in finding arguments against the truth. Now if a sprightly

young genius happens to imagine his argument so well as to puzzle and gravel the respondent, and perhaps to perplex the moderator a little too, he is soon tempted to suppose his argument unanswerable, and the truth entirely to lie on his side. The pleasure which he takes in having found a sophism which has great appearances of reason, and which he himself has managed with such success, becomes perhaps a strong prejudice to engage his inward sentiments in favour of his argument, and in opposition to the supposed truth.

XIX. Yet perhaps it may be possible to reduce scholastic disputations under such a guard as may in some measure prevent most of the abuses of them, and the unhappy events that too often attend them; for it is a pity that an exercise which has some valuable benefits attending it should be utterly thrown away, if it be possible to secure young minds against the abuse of it; for which purpose, some of these directions may seem proper:

XX. General directions for scholastic disputes:

1. Never dispute upon mere trifles, things that are utterly useless to be known, under a vain pretence of sharpening the wit; for the same advantage may be derived from solid and useful subjects, and thus two happy ends may be attained at once. Or if such disputations are always thought dangerous in important matters, let them be utterly abandoned.

2. Do not make infinite and unsearchable things the matter of dispute, nor such propositions as are made up of mere words without ideas, lest it lead young persons into a most unhappy habit of talking without a meaning, and boldly to determine upon things that are hardly within the reach of human capacity.

3. Let no obvious and known truths, or some of the most plain and certain propositions be bandied about in a disputation, for a mere trial of skill; for he that opposes them in this manner will be in danger of contracting a habit of opposing all evidence, will acquire a spirit of contradiction, and pride himself in the power of resisting the brightest light, and fighting against the strongest proofs; this will insensibly injure the mind, and tends greatly to an universal scepticism.

Upon the whole, therefore, the most proper subjects

of dispute seems to be, those questions which are not of the very highest importance and certainty, nor of the meanest and trifling kind; but rather the intermediate questions between these two; and there is a large sufficiency of them in the sciences. But this I put as a mere proposal, to be determined by the more learned and prudent.

4. It would be well if every dispute could be so ordered as to be a means of searching out truth, and not to gain a triumph. Then each disputant might come to the work without bias and prejudice, with a desire of truth, and not with ambition of glory and victory.

Nor should the aim and design of the disputant be to avoid artfully and escape the difficulties which the opponent offers, but to discuss them thoroughly, and solve them fairly, if they are capable of being solved.

Again, let the opponent be solicitous not to darken and confound the responses that are given him by fresh subtilities; but let him bethink himself whether they are not a just answer to the objection, and be honestly ready to perceive and accept them, and yield to them.

5. For this end let both the respondent and opponent use the clearest and most distinct and expressive language in which they can clothe their thoughts. Let them seek and practise brevity and perspicuity on both sides, without long declamations, tedious circumlocutions, and rhetorical flourishes.

If there happen to be any doubt or obscurity on either side, let neither the one nor the other ever refuse to give a fair explication of the words they use.

6. They should not indulge ridicule, either of persons or things, in their disputations. They should abstain from all banter and jest, laughter and merriment. These are things that break in upon that philosophical gravity, sedateness and serenity of temper, which ought to be observed in every search after truth. However an argument on some subjects may be sometimes clothed with a little pleasantry, yet a jest or witticism should never be used instead of an argument, nor should it ever be suffered to pass for a real and solid proof.

But especially if the subject be sacred or divine, and have nothing in it comical or ridiculous, all ludicrous turns, and jocose or comical airs, should be entirely excluded, lest young minds become tinctured with a

silly and profane sort of ridicule, and learn to jest and trifle with the awful solemnities of religion.

7. Nor should sarcasm and reproach, or insolent language, ever be used among fair disputants. Turn not off from things to speak of persons. Leave all noisy contests, all immodest clamours, brawling language, and especially all personal scandal and scurrility to the meanest part of the vulgar world. Let your manner be all candour and gentleness, patient and ready to hear, humbly zealous to inform and be informed; you should be free and pleasant in every answer and behaviour, rather like well bred gentlemen in polite conversation, than like noisy and contentious wranglers.

8. If the opponent sees victory to incline to his side, let him be content to show the force of his argument to the intelligent part of the company, without too importunate and petulant demands of an answer, and without insulting over his antagonist, or putting the modesty of the respondent to the blush. Nor let the respondent triumph over the opponent when he is silent and replies no more. On which side soever victory declares itself, let neither of them manage with such unpleasing and insolent airs, as to awaken those evil passions of pride, anger, shame, or resentment, on either side, which alienate the mind from truth, render it obstinate in the defence of an error, and never suffer it to part with any of its old opinions.

In short, when truth evidently appears on either side, let them learn to yield to conviction. When either party is at a *nonplus*, let them confess the difficulty, and desire present assistance, or further time and retirement to consider of the matter, and not rack their present invention to find out little shifts to avoid the force and evidence of truth.

9. Might it not be a fairer practice, in order to attain the best ends of disputation, and to avoid some of the ill effects of it, if the opponents were sometimes engaged on the side of truth, and produced their arguments in opposition to error? And what if the respondent was appointed to support the error, and defend it as well as he could, till he was forced to yield, at least to those arguments of the opponents which appear to be really just, strong, and unanswerable?

In this practice the thesis of the respondent should



only be a fair stating of the question, with some of the chief objections against the truth proposed and solved.

Perhaps this practice might not so easily be perverted and abused to raise a cavilling, disputative, and sceptical temper in the minds of youth.

I confess, in this method which I now propose, there would be one among the students, viz. the respondent, always engaged in the support of supposed error; but all the rest would be exercising their talents in arguing for the supposed truth; whereas, in the common methods of disputation in the schools, especially where the students are numerous, each single student is perpetually employed to oppose the truth, and vindicate error, except once in a long time, when it comes to his turn to be respondent.

10. Upon the whole, it seems necessary that these methods of disputation should be learnt in the schools, in order to teach students better to defend truth, and to refute error, both in writing and conversation, where the scholastic forms are utterly neglected.

But after all, the advantage which youth may gain by disputation depends much on the tutor or moderator; he should manage with such prudence, both in the disputation and at the end of it, as to make all the disputants know the very point of controversy wherein it consists; he should manifest the fallacy of sophistical objections, and confirm the solid arguments and answers. This might teach students how to make the art of disputation useful for the searching out the truth and the defence of it, that it may not be learned and practised only as an art of wrangling, which reigned in the schools several hundred years, and divested the growing reason of youth of its best hopes and improvements.

## CHAP. XIV.

### *Of Study, or Meditation.*

I. **IT** has been proved and established in some of the foregoing chapters, that neither our own observations, nor our reading the labours of the learned, nor the attendance on the best lectures of instruction, nor enjoying the brightest conversation, can ever make a

man truly knowing and wise, without the labours of his own reason in surveying, examining, and judging, concerning all subjects, upon the best evidence he can acquire. A good genius, or sagacity of thought, a happy judgment, a capacious memory, and large opportunities of observation and converse, will do much of themselves toward the cultivation of the mind, where they are well improved ; but where, to the advantage of learned lectures, living instructions, and well chosen books, diligence and study are superadded, this man has all human aids concurring to raise him to a superior degree of wisdom and knowledge.

Under the preceeding heads of discourse, it has been already declared how our own meditation and reflection should examine, cultivate, and improve, all other methods and advantages of enriching the understanding. What remains in this chapter, is to give some further occasional hints how to employ our own thoughts, what sort of subjects we should meditate on, and in what manner we should regulate our studies, and how we may improve our judgment, so as in the most effectual and compendious way to attain such knowledge as may be most useful for every man in his circumstances of life, and particularly for those of the learned professions.

II. The first direction for youth is this, learn betimes to distinguish between words and things. Get clear and plain ideas of the things you are set to study. Do not content yourselves with mere words and names, lest your laboured improvements only amass a heap of unintelligible phrases, and you feed upon husks instead of kernels. This rule is of unknown use in every science.

But the greatest and most common danger, is in the sacred science of theology, where settled terms and phrases have been pronounced divine and orthodox, which yet have had no meaning in them. The scholastic divinity would furnish us with numerous instances of this folly ; and yet for many ages, all truth and all heresy have been determined by such senseless tests, and by words without ideas ; such Shibboleth's as these have decided the secular fates of men ; and bishoprics, or burning mitres, or faggots, have been the rewards of different persons, according as they

pronounced these consecrated syllables, or not pronounced them. To defend them was all piety, and pomp, and triumph; to despise them, to doubt or deny them, was torture and death. A thousand thank offerings are due to that Providence, which has delivered our age and our nation from these absurd iniquities! O that every specimen and shadow of this madness were banished from our schools and churches in every shape!

III. Let not young students apply themselves to search out deep, dark, and abstruse matters, far above their reach, or spend their labour in any peculiar subjects, for which they have not the advantages of necessary antecedent learning, or books, or observations. Let them not be too hasty to know things above their present powers, nor plunge their inquiries at once into the depths of knowledge, nor begin to study any science in the middle of it; this will confound rather than enlighten the understanding; such practices may happen to discourage and jade the mind by an attempt above its power, it may balk the understanding, and create an aversion to future diligence, and perhaps by despair may forbid the pursuit of that subject for ever afterwards; as a limb overstrained by lifting a weight above its power, may never recover its former agility and vigour; or if it does, the man may be frightened from ever exerting its strength again.

IV. Nor yet let any student on the other hand, fright himself at every turn with unsurmountable difficulties, nor imagine that the truth is wrapt up in impenetrable darkness. These are formidable spectres which the understanding raises sometimes to flatter its own laziness. Those things which, in a remote and confused view, seem very obscure and perplexed, may be approached by gentle and regular steps, and may then unfold and explain themselves at large to the eye. The hardest problems in geometry, and the most intricate schemes or diagrams, may be explicated and understood step by step; every great mathematician bears a constant witness to this observation.

V. In learning any new thing, there should be as little as possible first proposed to the mind at once, and that being understood and fully mastered, proceed then to the next adjoining part yet unknown. This is a slow,

but safe and sure way to arrive at knowledge. If the mind apply itself at first to easier subjects, and things near akin to what is already known, and then advance to the more remote and knotty parts of knowledge by slow degrees, it would be able in this manner to cope with great difficulties, and prevail over them with amazing and happy success.

Mathon happened to dip into the two last chapters of a new book of geometry and mensuration as soon as he saw it, and was frightened with the complicated diagrams which he found there, about the frustums of cones and pyramids, &c. and some deep demonstrations among conic sections; he shut the book again in despair, and imagined none but a Sir Isaac Newton was ever fit to read it. But his tutor happily persuaded him to begin the first pages about lines and angles, and he found such surprising pleasure in three weeks time in the victories he daily obtained, that at last he became one of the chief geometers of his age.

VI. Engage not the mind in the intense pursuit of too many things at once; especially such as have no relation to one another. This will be ready to distract the understanding, and hinder it from attaining perfection in any one subject of study. Such a practice gives a slight smattering of several sciences, without any solid and substantial knowledge of them, and without any real and valuable improvement; and though two or three sorts of study may be usually carried on at once, to entertain the mind with variety, that it may not be over tired with one sort of thoughts; yet a multitude of subjects will too much distract the attention, and weaken the application of the mind to any one of them.

Where two or three sciences are pursued at the same time, if one of them be dry, abstracted, and unpleasant, as logic, metaphysics, law, languages, let another be more entertaining and agreeable, to secure the mind from weariness and aversion to study. Delight should be intermingled with labour as far as possible, to allure us to bear the fatigue of dry studies the better. Poetry, practical mathematics, history, &c. are generally esteemed entertaining studies, and may be happily used for this purpose. Thus while we relieve a dull and heavy hour by some alluring employments of the mind, our very diversions enrich our understandings, and our pleasure is turned into profit.

VII. In the pursuit of every valuable subject of knowledge, keep the end always in your eye, and be not diverted from it by every petty trifle you meet with in the way. Some persons have such a wandering genius, that they are ready to pursue every incidental theme or occasional idea, till they have lost sight of their original subject. These are the men who, when they are engaged in conversation, prolong their story by dwelling on every incident, and swell their narrative with long parentheses, till they have lost their first design; like a man who is sent in quest of some great treasure, but he steps aside to gather every flower he finds, or stands still to dig up every shining pebble he meets with in his way, till the treasure is forgotten and never found.

VIII. Exert your care, skill, and diligence, about every subject and every question in a just proportion to the importance of it, together with the danger and bad consequences of ignorance or error therein. Many excellent advantages flow from this one direction.

I. This rule will teach you to be very careful in gaining some general and fundamental truths in philosophy, in religion, and in human life; because they are of the highest moment, and conduct our thoughts with ease into a thousand inferior and particular propositions. Such is that great principle in natural philosophy, the doctrine of gravitation, or mutual tendency of all bodies towards each other, which Sir Isaac Newton has so well established, and from which he has drawn the solution of a multitude of appearances in the heavenly bodies as well as on earth.

Such is that golden principle of morality which our blessed Lord has given us, "Do that to others which you think just and reasonable that others should do to you;" which is almost sufficient in itself to solve all cases of conscience which relate to our neighbour.

Such are those principles in religion, that a rational creature is accountable to his Maker for all his actions; that the soul of man is immortal; that there is a future state of happiness and of misery depending on our behaviour in the present life, on which all our religious practices are built or supported.

We should be very curious in examining all propositions that pretend to this honour of being general

principles ; and we should not without just evidence admit into this rank mere matters of common fame, or commonly received opinions ; no, nor the general determinations of the learned, or the established articles of any church or nation, &c. for there are many learned presumptions, many synodical and national mistakes, many established falsehoods, as well as many vulgar errors, wherein multitudes of men have followed one another for whole ages almost blindfold. It is of great importance for every man to be careful that these general principles are just and true ; for one error may lead us into thousands, which will naturally follow, if once a leading falsehood be admitted.

2. This rule will direct us to be more careful about practical points than mere speculations, since they are commonly of much greater use and consequence ; therefore the speculations of algebra, the doctrine of infinities, and the quadrature of curves in mathematical learning, together with all the train of theorems in natural philosophy, should by no means intrench upon our studies of morality and virtue. Even in the science of divinity itself, the sublimest speculations of it are not of that worth and value, as the rules of duty towards God and towards man.

3. In matters of practice we should be most careful to fix our end right, and wisely determine the scope at which we aim ; because that is to direct us in the choice and use of all the means to attain it. If our end be wrong, all our labour in the means will be vain, or perhaps so much the more pernicious, as they are better suited to attain that mistaken end. If mere sensible pleasure, or human grandeur, or wealth, be our chief end, we should choose means contrary to piety and virtue, and proceed apace toward real misery.

4. This rule will engage our best powers and deepest attention in the affairs of religion, and things that relate to a future world ; for those propositions which extend only to the interest of the present life, are but of small importance when compared with those that have influence upon our everlasting concernments.

5. And even in the affairs of religion, if we walk by the conduct of this rule, we shall be much more laborious in our inquiries into the necessary and fundamental articles of faith and practice than the lesser appendices

of Christianity. The doctrines of repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with love to men and universal holiness, will employ our best and brightest hours and meditations; while the mint, annise, and cummin, the gestures, vestures, and fringes of religion, will be regarded no further than they have a plain and evident connexion with faith and love, with holiness and peace.

6. This rule will make us solicitous not only to avoid such errors, whose influence will spread wide into the whole scheme of our own knowledge and practice, and such mistakes whose influence would be yet more extensive and injurious to others, as well as to ourselves; perhaps to many persons or many families; to a whole church, a town, a country, or a kingdom. Upon this account, persons who are called to instruct others, who are raised to any eminence either in church or state, ought to be careful in settling their principles in matters relating to the civil, the moral, or the religious life, lest a mistake of theirs should diffuse wide mischief, should draw along with it most pernicious consequences, and perhaps extend to following generations.

These are some of the advantages which arise from the eighth rule, viz. Pursue every inquiry and study in proportion to its real value and importance.

IX. Have a care lest some beloved notion, or some darling science, so far prevail over your mind, as to give a sovereign tincture to all your other studies, and discolour all your ideas; like a person in the jaundice, who spreads a yellow scene with his eyes over all the objects which he meets. I have known a man of peculiar skill in music, and much devoted to that science, who found out a great resemblance of the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity in every single note, and he thought it carried something of argument in it to prove that doctrine. I have read of another, who accommodated the seven days of the first week of creation to seven notes of music, and thus the whole creation become harmonious.

Under this influence, derived from mathematical studies, some have been tempted to cast all their logical, their metaphysical, and their theological, and moral learning into the method of mathematicians, and bring every thing relating to the abstracted, or those prac-

fical sciences, under theorems, problems, postulates, scholiums, corollaries, &c. whereas the matter ought always to direct the method ; for all subjects or matters of thought, cannot be moulded or subdued to one form. Neither the rules for the conduct of the understanding, nor the doctrines nor the duties of religion and virtue, can be exhibited naturally in figures and diagrams. Things are so to be considered as they are in themselves ; their natures are inflexible, and their natural relations unalterable ; and therefore, in order to conceive them aright, we must bring our understandings to things, and not pretend to bend and strain things to comport with our fancies and forms.

X. Suffer not any beloved study to prejudice your mind so far in favour of it as to despise all other learning. This is a fault of some little souls who have got a smattering of astronomy, chemistry, metaphysics, history, &c. and for want of a due acquaintance with other sciences, make a scoff at them all in comparison of their favourite science. Their understandings are hereby cooped up in narrow bounds, so that they never look abroad into other provinces of the intellectual world, which are more beautiful perhaps, and more fruitful than their own ; if they would search a little into other sciences, they might not only find treasures of new knowledge, but might be furnished also with rich hints of thought, and glorious assistances to cultivate that very province to which they have confined themselves.

Here I would always give some grains of allowance to the sacred science of theology, which is incomparably superior to all the rest, as it teaches us the knowledge of God, and the way to his eternal favour. This is that noble study which is every man's duty, and every one who can be called a rational creature is capable of it. This is that science which would truly enlarge the minds of men, were it studied with that freedom, that unbiassed love of truth, and that sacred charity which it teaches ; and if it were not made, contrary to its own nature, the occasion of strife, faction, malignity, a narrow spirit and unreasonable impositions on the mind and practice. Let this therefore stand always chief.

XI. Let every particular study have due and proper time assigned it, and let not a favourite science prevail with you to lay out such hours upon it as ought to be employed upon the more necessary and more important



affairs or studies of your profession. When you have, according to the best of your discretion, and according to the circumstances of your life, fixed proper hours for particular studies, endeavour to keep to those rules; not indeed with a superstitious preciseness, but with some good degrees of a regular constancy. Order and method in a course of study saves much time, and makes large improvements; such a fixation of certain hours will have a happy influence to secure you from trifling and wasting away your minutes in impertinence.

XII. Do not apply yourself to any one study at one time longer than the mind is capable of giving a close attention to it without weariness or wandering. Do not over fatigue the spirits at any time, lest the mind be seized with a lassitude, and thereby be tempted to nauseate and grow tired of a particular subject before you have finished it.

XIII. In the beginning of your application to any new subject be not too uneasy under present difficulties that occur, nor too importunate and impatient for answers and solutions to any questions that arise. Perhaps a little more study, a little further acquaintance with the subject, a little time and experience, will solve those difficulties, untie the knot, and make your doubts vanish; especially if you are under the instruction of a tutor, he can inform you that your inquiries are perhaps too early, and that you have not yet learned those principles upon which the solution of such a difficulty depends.

XIV. Do not expect to arrive at certainty in every subject which you pursue. There are a hundred things wherein we mortals in this dark and imperfect state must be content with probability, where our best light and reasonings will reach no further. We must balance arguments as justly as we can, and where we cannot find weight enough on either side to determine the scale with sovereign force and assurance, we must content ourselves perhaps with a small preponderation. This will give us a probable opinion, and those probabilities are sufficient for the daily determination of a thousand actions in human life, and many times even in matters of religion.

It is admirably well expressed by a late writer, "When there is a great strength of argument set before us, if

we will refuse to do what appears most fit for us, until every little objection be removed, we shall never take one wise resolution as long as we live."

Suppose I had been honestly and long searching what religion I should choose, and yet I could not find that the arguments in defence of Christianity arose to complete certainty, but went only so far as to give me a probable evidence of the truth of it; though many difficulties still remained, yet I should think myself obliged to receive and practice that religion; for the God of nature and reason has bound us to assent, and act according to the best evidence we have, even though it be not absolute and complete; and as he is our supreme Judge his abounding goodness and equity will approve and acquit the man whose conscience honestly and willingly seeks the best light, and obeys it as far as he can discover it.

But in matters of great importance in religion, let him join all due diligence with earnest and humble prayer for divine aid in his inquiries; such prayer and such diligence as eternal concerns require, and such as he may plead with courage before the Judge of all.

XV. Endeavour to apply every speculative study, as far as possible, to some practical use, that both yourself and others may be the better for it. Inquiries even in natural philosophy should not be mere amusements, and much less in the affairs of religion. Researches into the springs of natural bodies and their motions should lead men to invent happy methods for the ease and convenience of human life; or at least they should be improved to awaken us to admire the wondrous wisdom and contrivance of God our Creator, in all the works of nature.

If we pursue mathematical speculations, they will inure us to attend closely to any subject, to seek and gain clear ideas, to distinguish truth from falsehood, to judge justly, and to argue strongly; and these studies do more directly furnish us with all the various rules of those useful arts of life, viz. measuring, building, sailing, &c.

Even our inquiries and disputations about vacuum or space, and atoms, about incommensurable quantities, and infinite divisibility of matter, and eternal duration, which seem to be purely speculative, will show us some good practical lessons, will lead us to see the weakness

of our nature, and should teach us humility in arguing upon divine subjects and matters of sacred revelation. This should guard us against rejecting any doctrine which is expressly and evidently revealed, though we cannot fully understand it. It is good sometimes to lose and bewilder ourselves in such studies for this very reason, and to attain this practical advantage, this improvement in true modesty of spirit.

XVI. Though we should always be ready to change our sentiments of things upon just conviction of their falsehood, yet there is not the same necessity of changing our accustomed methods of reading, or study and practice, even though we have not been led at first into the happiest method. Our thoughts may be true, though we may have hit upon an improper order of thinking. Truth does not always depend upon the most convenient method. There may be a certain form and order in which we have long accustomed ourselves to range our ideas and notions, which may be best for us now, though it was not originally best in itself. The inconveniences of changing may be much greater than the conveniences we could obtain by a new method.

As for instance; if a man in his younger days has ranged all his sentiments in theology in the method of Ames' *Medulla Theologiæ*, or Bishop Usher's body of Divinity, it may be much more natural and easy for him to continue to dispose all his further acquirements in the same order, though perhaps neither of those treatises are in themselves written in the most perfect method. So when we have long fixed our cases of shelves in a library, and ranged our books in any particular order, viz. according to their languages, or according to their subjects, or according to the alphabetical names of the authors, &c. we are perfectly well acquainted with the order in which they now stand, and we can find any particular book which we seek, or add a new book which we have purchased with much greater ease than we can do in finer cases of shelves, where the books are ranged in any different manner whatsoever; any different position of the volumes would be new, and strange, and troublesome to us, and would not countervail the inconveniences of a change.

So if a man of forty years old has been taught to

hold his pen awkwardly in his youth, and yet writes sufficiently well for all the purposes of his station, it is not worth while to teach him now the most accurate methods of handling that instrument; for this would create him more trouble without equal advantage, and perhaps he might never attain to write better after he has placed his fingers perfectly right with this new accuracy.

## CHAP. XV.

### *Of Fixing the Attention.*

**A STUDENT** should labour by all proper methods to acquire a steady fixation of thought. Attention is a very necessary thing in order to improve our minds. The evidence of truth does not always appear immediately, nor strike the soul at first sight. It is by long attention and inspection that we arrive at evidence, and it is for want of it we judge falsely of many things. We make haste to determine upon a slight and a sudden view, we confirm our guesses which arise from a glance, we pass a judgment while we have but a confused or obscure perception, and thus plunge ourselves into mistakes. This is like a man, who walking in a mist, or being at a great distance from any visible object, (suppose a tree, a man, a horse, or a church,) judges much amiss of the figure and situation and colours of it, and sometimes takes one for the other; whereas if he would but withhold his judgment till he come nearer to it, or to stay till clearer light comes, and then would fix his eyes longer upon it, he would secure himself from those mistakes.

Now, in order to gain a greater facility of attention, we may observe these rules:

I. Get a good liking to the study or knowledge you would pursue. We may observe, that there is not much difficulty in confining the mind to contemplate what we have a great desire to know; and especially if they are matters of sense, or ideas which paint themselves upon the fancy. It is but acquiring an hearty good will and resolution to search out and survey the various properties and parts of such objects, and our attention will be engaged if there be any delight or

diversion in the study or contemplation of them. Therefore mathematical studies have a strange influence towards fixing the attention of the mind, and giving a steadiness to a wandering disposition, because they deal much in lines, figures, and numbers; which affect and please the sense and imagination. Histories have a strong tendency the same way, for they engage the soul by a variety of sensible occurrences; when it hath begun it knows not how to leave off; it longs to know the final event, through a natural curiosity that belongs to mankind. Voyages and travels, and accounts of strange countries and strange appearances, will assist in this work. This sort of study detains the mind by the perpetual occurrence and expectation of something new, and that which may gratefully strike the imagination.

II. Sometimes we may make use of sensible things and corporeal images for the illustration of those notions which are more abstracted and intellectual. Therefore diagrams greatly assist the mind in astronomy and philosophy; and the emblems of virtues and vices may happily teach children, and pleasingly impress those useful moral ideas on young minds, which perhaps might be conveyed to them with much more difficulty by mere moral and abstracted discourses.

I confess, in this practice of representing moral subjects by pictures, we should be cautious lest we so far immerse the mind in corporeal images, as to render it unfit to take in an abstracted and intellectual idea, or cause it to form wrong conceptions of immaterial things. This practice therefore, is rather to be used at first in order to get a fixed habit of attention, and in some cases only; but it can never be our constant way and method of pursuing all moral, abstracted, and spiritual themes.

III. Apply yourself to those studies, and read those authors who draw out their subjects into a perpetual chain of connected reasonings, wherein the following parts of the discourse are naturally and easily derived from those which go before. Several of the mathematical sciences, if not all, are happily useful for this purpose. This will render the labour of study delightful to a rational mind, and will fix the powers of the understanding with strong attention to their proper operations by the very pleasure of it. *Labor ipse vo-*

*luptas*, is a happy proposition wheresoever it can be applied.

IV. Do not choose your constant place of study by the finery of the prospects, or the most various and entertaining scenes of sensible things. Too much light, or a variety of objects which strike the eye, or the ear, especially while they are ever in motion, or often changing, have a natural and powerful tendency to steal away the mind too often, from its steady pursuit of any subject which we contemplate; and thereby the soul gets a habit of silly curiosity and impertinence, of trifling and wandering. Vagerio thought himself furnished with the best closet for his study among the beauties, gaieties, and diversions of Kensington or Hampton Court; but after seven years professing to pursue learning, he was a mere novice still.

V. Be not in too much haste to come to the determination of a difficult or important point. Think it worth your waiting to find out truth. Do not give your assent up to either side of a question too soon, merely on this account, that the study of it is long and difficult. Rather be contented with ignorance for a season, and continue in suspense till your attention, and meditation, and due labour, have found out sufficient evidence on one side. Some are so fond to know a great deal at once, and love to talk of things with freedom and boldness before they thoroughly understand them, that they scarcely ever allow themselves attention enough to search the matter through and through.

VI. Have a care of indulging the more sensual passions and appetites of animal nature; they are great enemies to attention. Let not the mind of a student be under the influence of any warm affection to things of sense when he comes to engage in the search of truth or the improvement of his understanding. A person under the power of love, or fear, or anger, great pain, or deep sorrow, hath so little government of his soul, that he cannot keep it attentive to the proper subject of his meditation. The passions call away the thoughts with incessant importunity towards the object that excited them; and if we indulge the frequent rise and roving of passions, we shall thereby procure an unsteady and inattentive habit of mind.

Yet this one exception must be admitted, viz. If we

can be so happy as to engage any passion of the soul on the side of the particular study which we are pursuing, it may have great influence to fix the attention more strongly to it.

VII. It is therefore very useful to fix and engage the mind in the pursuit of any study, by a consideration of the divine pleasures of truth and knowledge, by a sense of our duty to God, by a delight in the exercise of our intellectual faculties, by the hope of future service to our fellow creatures, and glorious advantage to ourselves, both in this world and that which is to come. These thoughts, though they may move our affections, yet they do it with a proper influence ; these will rather assist and promote our attention than disturb or divert it from the subject of our present and proper meditations. A soul inspired with the fondest love of truth, and the warmest aspirations after sincere felicity and celestial beatitude, will keep all its powers attentive to the incessant pursuit of them ; passion is then refined and consecrated to its divinest purposes.

## CHAP. XVI.

### *Of Enlarging the Capacity of the Mind.*

**T**H**ERE** are three things which in an especial manner go to make up that amplitude or capacity of mind, which is one of the noblest characters belonging to the understanding ; (1.) When the mind is ready to take in great and sublime ideas without pain or difficulty. (2.) When the mind is free to receive new and strange ideas, upon just evidence, without great surprise or aversion. (3.) When the mind is able to conceive or survey many ideas at once without confusion, and to form a true judgment derived from that extensive survey. The person who wants either of these characters, may in that respect be said to have a narrow genius. Let us diffuse our meditations a little upon this subject.

I. That is an ample and capacious mind which is ready to take in vast and sublime ideas without pain or difficulty. Persons who have never been used to converse with any thing but the common, little, and obvious affairs of life, have acquired a narrow or contracted habit of soul, that they are not able to stretch their intellects

wide enough to admit large and noble thoughts; they are ready to make their domestic, daily, and familiar images of things, the measure of all that is, and all that can be.

Talk to them of the vast dimensions of the planetary worlds; tell them that the star called Jupiter is a solid globe, two hundred and twenty times bigger than our earth; that the sun is a vast globe of fire above a thousand times bigger than Jupiter; and that is two hundred and twenty thousand times bigger than the earth; that the distance from the earth to the sun is eighty-one millions of miles; and that a cannon bullet shot from the earth would not arrive at the nearest of the fixed stars in some hundred of years; they cannot bear the belief of it, but hear all these glorious labours of astronomy as a mere idle romance.

Inform them of the amazing swiftness of the motion of some of the smallest or the biggest bodies in nature; assure them, according to the best philosophy, that the planet Venus, *i. e.* our morning or evening star, which is near as big as our earth,) though it seems to move from its place but a few yards in a month, does really fly seventy thousand miles in an hour; tell them that the rays of light shoot from the sun to our earth at the rate of one hundred and eighty thousand miles in the second of a minute; they stand aghast at such sort of talk, and believe it no more than the tales of giants fifty yards high, and the rabbinical fables of Leviathan, who every day swallows a fish of three miles long, and is thus preparing himself to be the food and entertainment of the blessed at the feast of Paradise.

These unenlarged souls are in the same manner disgusted with the wonders which the microscope has discovered concerning the shape, the limbs and motions of ten thousand little animals, whose united bulk would not equal a peppercorn; they are ready to give the lie to all the improvements of our senses by the invention of a variety of glasses, and will scarcely believe any thing beyond the testimony of their naked eye, without the assistance of art.

Now if we would attempt in a learned manner to relieve the minds that labour under this defect:

(1.) It is useful to begin with some first principles of geometry, and lead them onward by degrees to the



doctrine of quantities which are incommensurable, or which will admit of no common measure, though it be never so small. By this mean they will see the necessity of admitting the infinite divisibility of quantity or matter.

This same doctrine may also be proved to their understandings, and almost to their senses, by some easier arguments in a more obvious manner. As the very opening and closing of a pair of compasses will evidently prove, that, if the smallest supposed part of matter and quantity, be put between the points, there will be still less and less distances or quantities all the way between the legs, till they come to the head or joint; wherefore there is no such thing possible as the smallest quantity. But a little acquaintance with true philosophy and mathematical learning would soon teach them, that there are no limits either as to the extension of space, or to the division of body, and would lead them to believe there are bodies amazingly great or small beyond their present imagination.

(2.) It is proper also to acquaint them with the circumference of our earth, which may be proved by very easy principles of geometry, geography, and astronomy, to be about twenty four thousand miles round, as it has been actually found to have this dimension by mariners who have sailed round it. Then let them be taught, that in every twenty four hours, either the sun and stars must all move round this earth, or the earth must turn round upon its own axis. If the earth itself revolves thus, then each house or mountain near the equator, must move at the rate of a thousand miles in an hour; but if (as they generally suppose) the sun or stars move round the earth, then (the circumference of their several orbits or spheres being vastly greater than this earth) they must have a motion prodigiously swifter than a thousand miles an hour. Such a thought as this will by degrees enlarge their minds; and they will be taught, even upon their own principle of the diurnal revolutions of the heavens, to take in some of the vast dimensions of the heavenly bodies, their spaces and motions.

(3.) To this should be added the use of telescopes, to help them to see the distant wonders in the skies; and microscopes, which discover the minutest parts of little animals, and reveal some of the finer and more

curious works of nature. They should be acquainted also with some other noble inventions of modern philosophy, which have a great influence to enlarge the human understanding, of which I shall take occasion to speak more under the next head.

(4.) For the same purpose they may be invited to read those parts of Milton's admirable poem entitled *Paradise Lost*, where he describes the armies and powers of angels, the wars and the senate of devils, the creation of this earth, together with the descriptions of heaven, hell, and paradise.

It must be granted that poesy often deals in these vast and sublime ideas. And even if the subject or matter of the poem doth not require such amazing and extensive thoughts, yet tropes and figures, which are some of the main powers and beauties of poesy, do so gloriously exalt the matter, as to give a sublime imagination its proper relish and delight.

So when a boar is chased in hunting,

—————His nostrils flames expire,

And his red eye balls roll with living fire.—*Dryden.*

When Ulysses withholds and suppresses his resentment,

—————His wrath comprest,

Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.—*Pope.*

But especially where the subject is grand, the poet fails not to represent it in all its grandeur.

So when the supremacy of a God is described :

He sees with equal eye, as God of all,

A hero perish, or a sparrow fall :

Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd ;

And now a bubble burst, and now a world.—*Pope.*

These sorts of writing have a natural tendency to enlarge the capacity of the mind, and make sublime ideas familiar to it. And instead of running always to the ancient Heathen poesy with this design, we may with equal, if not superior advantage, apply ourselves to converse with some of the best of our modern poets, as well as with the writings of the prophets, and the poetical parts of the Bible, viz. the book of Job and the Psalms, in which sacred authors we shall find sometimes more sublime ideas, more glorious descriptions, more elevated language, than the fondest critics have

ever found in any of the Heathen versifiers either of Greece or Rome ; for the eastern writers use and allow much stronger figures and tropes than the western.

Now there are many great and sacred advantages to be derived from this sort of enlargement of the mind.

It will lead us into more exalted apprehensions of the great God our Creator than ever we had before. It will entertain our thoughts with holy wonder and amazement, while we contemplate that Being who created these various works of surprising greatness and surprising smallness ; who has displayed most inconceivable wisdom in the contrivance of all the parts, powers, and motions of these little animals, invisible to the naked eye ; who has manifested a most divine extent of knowledge, power, and greatness, in forming, moving, and managing the most extensive bulk of the heavenly bodies, and in surveying and comprehending all those immeasurable spaces in which they move. Fancy, with all her images, is fatigued and overwhelmed in following the planetary worlds through such immense stages, such astonishing journies as these are, and resigns its place to the pure intellect, which learns by degrees to take in such ideas as these, and to adore its Creator with new and sublime devotion.

And not only are we taught to form juster ideas of the great God by these methods, but this enlargement of the mind carries us on to nobler conceptions of his intelligent creatures. The mind that deals only in vulgar and common ideas, is ready to imagine the nature and powers of man to come something too near to God his Maker, because we do not see or sensibly converse with any beings superior to ourselves. But when the soul has obtained a greater amplitude of thought, it will not then immediately pronounce every thing to be God which is above man. It then learns to suppose there may be as many various ranks of beings in the invisible world, in a constant gradation superior us, as we ourselves are superior to all the ranks of beings beneath us in this visible world ; even though we descend downward far below the ant and the worm, the snail and the oyster, to the least and to the dullest animate atoms which are discovered to us by microscopes.

By this means we shall be able to suppose what prodigious power angels, whether good or bad, must be

furnished with, and prodigious knowledge, in order to oversee the realms of Persia and Græcia of old, or if any such superintended the affairs of Great Britain, France, Ireland, Germany, &c. in our days: What power and speed is necessary to destroy one hundred and eighty five thousand armed men in one night in the Assyrian camp of Sennacherib, and all the first born in the land of Egypt in another, both which are attributed to an angel.

By these steps we shall ascend to form more just ideas of the knowledge and grandeur, the power and glory, of the Man Jesus Christ, who is intimately united to God, and is one with him. Doubtless he is furnished with superior powers to all the angels in heaven, because he is employed in superior work, and appointed to be the sovereign Lord of all the visible and invisible worlds. It is his human nature, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, that is advanced to these honours and to this empire; and perhaps there is little or nothing in the government of the kingdoms of nature and grace, but what is transacted by the Man Jesus, inhabited by the divine power and wisdom, and employed as a medium or conscious instrument of this extensive gubernation.

II. I proceed now to consider the next thing wherein the capacity or amplitude of the mind consists, and that is, when the mind is free to receive new and strange ideas and propositions upon just evidence, without any great surprise or aversion. Those who confine themselves within the circle of their own hereditary ideas and opinions, and who never give themselves leave so much as to examine or believe any thing beside the dictates of their own family, or sect, or party, are justly charged with a narrowness of soul. Let us survey some instances of this imperfection, and then direct to the cure of it.

(1.) Persons who have been bred up all their days within the smoke of their father's chimney, or within the limits of their native town and village, are surprised at every new sight that appears, when they travel a few miles from home. The plowman stands amazed at the shops, the trade, the crowds of people, the magnificent buildings, the pomp, and riches, and equipage of the court and city, and would hardly believe what

was told him before he saw it. On the other hand, the cockney, travelling into the country, is surprised at many actions of the quadruped and winged animals in the field, and at many common practices of rural affairs.

If either of these happen to hear an account of the familiar and daily customs of foreign countries, they pronounce them at once indecent and ridiculous; so narrow are their understandings, and their thoughts so confined, that they know not how to believe any thing wise and proper, besides what they have been taught to practice.

This narrowness of mind should be cured by hearing and reading the accounts of different parts of the world, and the histories of past ages, and of nations and countries distant from our own, especially the more polite parts of mankind. Nothing tends in this respect so much to enlarge the mind as travelling, *i. e.* making a visit to other towns, cities, or countries, besides those in which we were born and educated; and where our condition of life does not grant us this privilege, we must endeavour to supply the want of it by books.

(2.) It is the same narrowness of mind that awakens the surprise and aversion of some persons, when they hear of doctrines and schemes in human affairs, or in religion, quite different from what they have embraced. Perhaps they have been trained up from their infancy in one set of notions, and their thoughts have been confined to one single tract both in the civil and religious life, without ever hearing or knowing what other opinions are current among mankind; or at least they have seen all other notions besides their own represented in a false and malignant light, whereupon they judge and condemn at once every sentiment but what their own party receives, and they think it a piece of justice and truth to lay heavy censures upon the practice of every different sect in Christianity or politics. They have so rooted themselves in the opinions of their party, that they cannot hear an objection with patience, nor can they bear a vindication, or so much as an apology, for any set of principles beside their own; all the rest is nonsense or heresy, folly or blasphemy.

This defect also is to be relieved by free conversation with persons of different sentiments; this will teach

us to bear with patience a defence of opinions contrary to our own. If we are scholars, we should also read the objections against our own tenets, and view the principles of other parties, as they are represented in their own authors, and not merely in the citations of those who would confute them. We should take an honest and unbiassed survey of the force of reasoning on all sides, and bring all to the test of unprejudiced reason and divine revelation. Note, this is not to be done in a rash and self-sufficient manner, but with a humble dependence on divine wisdom and grace, while we walk among snares and dangers.

By such a free converse with persons of different sects (especially those who differ only in particular forms of Christianity, but agree in the great and necessary doctrines of it,) we shall find that there are persons of good sense and virtue, persons of piety and worth, persons of much candour and goodness, who belong to different parties and have imbibed sentiments opposite to each other. This will soften the roughness of an unpolished soul, and enlarge the avenues of our charity towards others, and incline us to receive them into all the degrees of unity and affection, which the word of God requires.

(3.) I might borrow further illustrations, both of this freedom and this aversion to receive new truths, from modern astronomy and natural philosophy. How much is the vulgar part of the world surprised, at the talk of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth! They have ever been taught by their senses and their neighbours to imagine the earth stands fixed in the centre of the universe, and that the sun, with all the planets and fixed stars are whirled round this little globe once in twenty four hours; not considering that such a diurnal motion, by reason of the distance of some of those heavenly bodies, must be almost infinitely swifter and more inconceivable than any which the modern astronomers attribute to them. Tell these persons that the sun is fixed in the centre, that the earth with all the planets roll round the sun in their several periods, and that the moon rolls round the earth in a lesser circle, while together with the earth she is carried round the sun; they cannot admit a syllable of this new and strange doctrine, and they pronounce it utterly contrary to all sense and reason.

Acquaint them that there are four moons also perpetually rolling round the planet Jupiter, and carried along with him in his periodical circuit round the sun, which little moons were never known till the year 1610, when Galilio discovered them with his telescope; inform them that Saturn has five moons of the same kind attending him; and that the body of that planet is encompassed with a broad, flat, circular ring, distant from the planet twenty one thousand miles, and twenty one thousand miles broad; they look upon these things as tales and fancies, and will tell you that the glasses do but delude your eyes with vain images; and even when they themselves consult their own eye sight in the use of these tubes, the narrowness of their mind is such, that they will scarce believe their senses when they dictate ideas so new and strange.

And if you proceed further, and attempt to lead them into a belief that all these planetary worlds are habitable, and it is probable they are replenished with intellectual beings dwelling in bodies, they will deride the folly of him that informs them; for they resolve to believe there are no habitable worlds but this earth, and no spirits dwelling in bodies besides mankind; and it is well if they do not fix the brand of heresy on the man who is leading them out of their long imprisonment and loosing the fetters of their souls.

There are many other things relating to mechanical experiments, and to the properties of the air, water, fire, iron, the loadstone, and other minerals and metals, as well as the doctrine of the sensible qualities, viz. colours, sounds, tastes, &c. which this rank of men cannot believe for want of a greater amplitude of mind.

The best way to convince them, is by giving them some acquaintance with the various experiments in philosophy, and proving by ocular demonstration the multiform and amazing operations of the air pump, the loadstone, the chemical furnace, optical glasses, and mechanical engines. By these means the understanding will stretch itself by degrees, and when they have found there are so many new and strange things that are most evidently true, they will not be so forward to condemn every new proposition in any of the other sciences, or in the affairs of religion or civil life.

III. The capacity of the understanding includes yet another qualification in it, and that is, an ability to receive many ideas at once without confusion. The ample mind takes a survey of several objects with one glance, keeps them all within sight, and presents to the soul, that they may be compared together in their mutual respects; it forms just judgments, and it draws proper inferences from this comparison, even to a great length of argument, and a chain of demonstrations.

The narrowness that belongs to human souls in general, is a great imperfection and impediment to wisdom and happiness. There are but few persons who can contemplate or practice several things at once; our faculties are very limited, and while we are intent upon one part or property of a subject, we have but a slight glimpse of the rest, or we lose it out of sight. But it is a sign of a large and capacious mind, if we can with one single view take in a variety of objects; or at least when the mind can apply itself to several objects with so swift a succession, and in so few moments, as attains almost the same ends as if it were all done in the same instant.

This is a necessary qualification in order to great knowledge and good judgment; for there are several things in human life, in religion, and in the sciences, which have various circumstances, appendices, and relations attending them; and without a survey of all those ideas which stand in connexion with, and relation to each other, we are often in danger of passing a false judgment on the subject proposed. It is for this reason there are so numerous controversies found among the learned and unlearned world, in matters of religion as well as in the affairs of civil government. The notions of sin and duty to God and our fellow creatures; of law, justice, authority, and power; of covenant, faith, justification, redemption, and grace; of church, bishop, presbyter, ordination, &c. contain in them such complicated ideas, that when we are to judge of any thing concerning them, it is hard to take into our view at once all the attendants or consequents that must and will be concerned in the determination of a single question; and yet without a due attention to many, or most of these, we are in danger of determining that question amiss.



It is owing to the narrowness of our minds, that we are exposed to the same peril in the matters of human duty and prudence. In many things which we do, we ought not only to consider the mere naked action itself, but the persons who act, the persons towards whom, the time when, the place where, the manner how, the end for which the action is done, together with the effects that must, or that may follow, and all other surrounding circumstances; these things must necessarily be taken into our view, in order to determine whether the action, which is indifferent in itself, be either lawful or unlawful, good or evil, wise or foolish, decent or indecent, proper or improper, as it is so circumstantiated.

Let me give a plain instance for the illustration of this matter. Mario kills a dog, which, considered merely in itself, seems to be an indifferent action; now the dog was Timon's, and not his own; this makes it look unlawful. But Timon bid him do it; this gives it an appearance of lawfulness again. It was done at church, and in time of divine service; these circumstances added, cast on it an air of irreligion. But the dog flew at Mario, and put him in danger of his life; this relieves the seeming impiety of the action. Yet Mario might have escaped by flying thence; therefore the action appears to be improper. But the dog was known to be mad; this further circumstance makes it almost necessary that the dog should be slain, lest he might worry the assembly, and do much mischief. Yet again, Mario killed him with a pistol, which he happened to have in his pocket, since yesterday's journey, now hereby the whole congregation was terrified and discomposed, and divine service was broken off; this carries an appearance of great indecency and impropriety in it; but after all, when we consider a further circumstance, that Mario being thus violently assaulted by a mad dog, had no way of escape, and had no other weapon about him, it seems to take away all the colours of impropriety, indecency, or unlawfulness, and to allow that the preservation of one or many lives will justify the act as wise and good. Now all these concurrent appendices of the action ought to be surveyed, in order to pronounce with justice and truth concerning it.

There are a multitude of human actions in private life, in domestic affairs, in traffic, in civil government, in courts of justice, in schools of learning, &c. which have so many complicated circumstances, aspects, and situations, with regard to time and place, persons and things, that it is impossible for any one to pass a right judgment concerning them, without entering into most of these circumstances, and surveying them extensively, and comparing and balancing them all aright.

Whence, by the way, I may take occasion to say, How many thousands are there who take upon them to pass their censures on the personal and the domestic actions of others, who pronounce boldly on the affairs of the public, and determine the justice or madness, the wisdom or folly of national administrations, of peace and war, &c. whom neither God nor men ever qualified for such a post of judgment! They were not capable of entering into the numerous concurring springs of action, nor had they ever taken a survey of the twentieth part of the circumstances which were necessary for such judgments or censures.

It is the narrowness of our minds, as well as the vices of the will, that oftentimes prevents us from taking a full view of all the complicated and concurring appendices that belong to human actions; thence it comes to pass, that there is so little right judgment, so little justice, prudence, or decency, practised among the bulk of mankind; thence arise infinite reproaches and censures, alike foolish and unrighteous. You see therefore how needful and happy a thing it is to be possessed of some measure of this amplitude of soul, in order to make us very wise, or knowing, or just, or prudent, or happy.

I confess this sort of amplitude or capacity of mind is in a great measure the gift of nature, for some are born with much more capacious souls than others.

The genius of some persons is so poor and limited, that they can hardly take in the connexion of two or three propositions, unless it be in matters of sense, and which they have learnt by experience; they are utterly unfit for speculative studies; it is hard for them to discern the difference betwixt right and wrong in matters of reason, on any abstracted subjects; these ought never to set up for scholars, but apply themselves to

those arts and professions of life which are to be learned at an easier rate, by slow degrees, and daily experience.

Others have a soul a little more capacious, and they can take in the connexion of a few propositions pretty well ; but if the chain of consequences be a little prolix, here they stick and are confounded. If persons of this make ever devote themselves to science, they should be well assured of a solid and strong constitution of body, and well resolved to bear the fatigue of hard labour and diligence in study ; if the iron be blunt, king Solomon tells us we must put more strength.

But, in the third place, there are some of so bright and happy a genius, and so ample a mind, that they can take in a long train of propositions, if not at once, yet in a very few moments, and judge well concerning the dependence of them. They can survey a variety of complicated ideas without fatigue or disturbance ; and a number of truths offering themselves as it were in one view to their understanding, doth not perplex or confound them. This makes a great man.

Now, though there may be much owing to nature in this case, yet experience assures us, that even a lower degree of this capacity and extent of thought, may be increased by diligence and application, by frequent exercise, and the observation of such rules as these :

I. Labour by all means to gain an attentive and patient temper of mind, a power of confining and fixing your thoughts so long on any one appointed subject, till you have surveyed it on every side and in every situation, and run through the several powers, parts, properties, and relations, effects and consequences of it. He whose thoughts are very fluttering and wandering, and cannot be fixed attentively to a few ideas successively, will never be able to survey many and various objects distinctly at once, but will certainly be overwhelmed and confounded with the multiplicity of them. The rules for fixing the attention in the former chapter are proper to be consulted here.

II. Accustom yourself to clear and distinct ideas in every thing you think of. Be not satisfied with obscure and confused conceptions of things, especially where clearer may be obtained ; for one obscure or confused idea, especially if it be of great importance in the question, intermingled with many clear ones, and

placed in its variety of aspects towards them, will be in danger of spreading confusion over the whole scene of ideas, and thus may have an unhappy influence to overwhelm the understanding with darkness, and pervert the judgment. A little black paint will shamefully tincture and spoil twenty gay colours.

Consider yet further, that if you content yourself frequently with words instead of ideas, or with cloudy and confused notions of things, how impenetrable will that darkness be, and how vast and endless that confusion which must surround and involve the understanding, when many of these obscure and confused ideas come to be set before the soul at once? And how impossible will it be to form a clear and just judgment about them?

III. Use all diligence to acquire and treasure up a large store of ideas and notions; take every opportunity to add something to your stock, and by frequent recollection fix them in your memory; nothing tends to confirm and enlarge the memory like a frequent review of its possessions. Then the brain being well furnished with various traces, signatures, and images, will have a rich treasure always ready to be proposed, or offered to the soul when it directs its thought towards any particular subject. This will gradually give the mind a faculty of surveying many objects at once; as a room that is richly adorned and hung round with a great variety of pictures strikes the eye almost at once with all that variety, especially if they have been well surveyed one by one at first; this makes it habitual and more easy to the inhabitants to take in many of those painted scenes with a single glance or two.

Here note, that by acquiring a rich treasure of notions, I do not mean only single ideas, but also propositions, observations, and experiences, with reasonings and arguments upon the various subjects that occur among natural and moral, common or sacred affairs; that when you are called to judge concerning any question, you will have some principles of truth, some useful axioms and observations, always ready at hand to direct and assist your judgment.

IV. It is necessary that we should as far as possible entertain and lay up our daily new ideas in a regular order, and range the acquisitions of our souls under

proper heads, whether of divinity, law, physics, mathematics, morality, politics, trade, domestic life, civility, decency, &c. whether of cause, effect, substance, mode, power, property, body, spirit, &c. We should inure our minds to method and order continually; and when we take in any fresh ideas, occurrences, and observations, we should dispose of them in their proper places, and see how they stand and agree with the rest of our notions on the same subject; as a scholar would dispose of a new book on a proper shelf among its kindred authors; or as an officer at the post house in London disposes of every letter he takes in, placing it in the box that belongs to the proper road or county.

In any of these cases, if things lay all in a heap, the addition of any new object would increase the confusion; but method gives a speedy and short survey of them with ease and pleasure. Method is of admirable advantage to keep our ideas from a confused mixture, and to preserve them ready for every use. The science of ontology which distributes all beings, and all the affections of being, whether absolute or relative, under proper classes, is of good service to keep our intellectual acquisitions in such order as that the mind may survey them at once.

V. As method is necessary for the improvement of the mind, in order to make your treasure of ideas most useful; so in all your further pursuits of truth, and acquisitions of rational knowledge, observe a regular progressive method. Begin with the most simple, easy, and obvious ideas; then by degrees join two, and three, and more of them together; thus the complicated ideas growing up under your eye and observation, will not give the same confusion of thought as they would do if they were all offered to the mind at once, without your observing the original and formation of them.

An eminent example of this appears in the study of arithmetic. If a scholar just admitted into the school observes his master performing an operation in the rule of division, his head is at once disturbed and confounded with the manifold comparisons of the numbers of the divisor and dividend, and the multiplication of the one and subtraction of it from the other; but if he begin regularly at addition, and so proceed by subtrac-

tion and multiplication, he will then in a few weeks be able to take an intelligent survey of all those operations in division, and to practice them himself with ease and pleasure, each of which at first seemed all intricacy and confusion.

An illustration of the like nature may be borrowed from geometry and algebra, and other mathematical practices. How easily does an expert geometrician with one glance of his eye take in a complicated diagram made up of many lines and circles, angles and arches? How readily does he judge of it, whether the demonstration designed by it be true or false? It was by degrees he arrived at this stretch of understanding; he began with a single line or a point; he joined two lines in an angle: he advanced to triangles and squares, polygons and circles; thus the powers of his understanding were stretched and augmented daily, till by diligence and regular application, he acquired this extensive faculty of mind.

But this advantage does not belong only to mathematical learning. If we apply ourselves at first in any science to clear and single ideas, and never hurry ourselves on to the following and more complicated parts of knowledge, till we thoroughly understand the foregoing, we may practice the same method of enlarging the capacity of the soul with success in any one of the sciences, or in the affairs of life and religion.

Beginning with A, B, C, and making syllables out of letters, and words out of syllables, has been the foundation of all that glorious superstructure of arts and sciences which have enriched the minds and libraries of the learned world in several ages. These are the first steps by which the ample and capacious souls among mankind have arrived at that prodigious extent of knowledge which renders them the wonder and glory of the nation where they live. Though Plato and Cicero, Descartes and Mr. Boyle, Mr. Locke and Sir Isaac Newton, were doubtless favoured by nature with a genius of uncommon amplitude, yet in their early years and first attempts of science, this was but limited and narrow in comparison of what they attained at last. But how vast and capacious were those powers which they afterwards acquired by patient attention and watchful observation, by the pursuit of clear ideas and a regular method of thinking!

VI. Another means of acquiring this amplitude and capacity of mind, is a perusal of difficult entangled questions, and of the solution of them in any science. Speculative and casuistical divinity will furnish us with many such cases and controversies. There are some such difficulties in reconciling several parts of the Epistles of St. Paul, relating to the Jewish law and the Christian gospel, a happy solution whereof will require such an extensive view of things, and the reading of these happy solutions will enlarge this faculty in younger students.

In moral and political subjects, Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations, and several determinations therein, will promote the same amplitude of mind. An attendance on public trials and arguments in the civil courts of justice, will be of good advantage for this purpose; and after a man has studied the general principles of the law of nature and the laws of England in proper books, the reading the reports of adjudged cases, collected by men of great sagacity and judgment, will richly improve his mind toward acquiring this desirable amplitude and extent of thought, and more especially in persons of that profession.

## CHAP. XVII.

### *Of Improving the Memory.*

**MEMORY** is a distinct faculty of the mind of man, very different from the perception, judgment, and reasoning, and its other powers. Then we are said to remember any thing, when the idea of it arises in the mind with a consciousness at the same time that we have had this idea before. Our memory is our natural power of retaining what we learn, and of recalling it on every occasion. Therefore we can never be said to remember any thing, whether it be ideas or propositions, words or things, notions or arguments, of which we have not had some former idea or perception, either by sense or imagination, thought or reflection; but whatsoever we learn from observation, books, or conversation, &c. it must all be laid up and preserved in the memory, if we would make it really useful.

So necessary and so excellent a faculty is the memo-

ry of man, that all other abilities of the mind borrow from hence their beauty and perfection; for the other capacities of the soul are almost useless without this. To what purpose are all our labours in knowledge and wisdom, if we want memory to preserve and use what we have acquired? What signify all other intellectual or spiritual improvements, if they are lost as soon as they are obtained? It is memory alone that enriches the mind, by preserving what our labour and industry daily collect. In a word, there can be neither knowledge, nor arts, nor sciences, without memory; nor can there be any improvement of mankind in virtue or morals, or the practice of religion, without the assistance and influence of this power. Without memory the soul of man would be but a poor, destitute, naked being, with an everlasting blank spread over it, except the fleeting ideas of the present moment.

Memory is very useful to those who speak, as well as to those who learn. It assists the teacher and the orator, as well as the scholar or the hearer. The best speeches and instructions are almost lost, if those who hear them immediately forget them. And those who are called to speak in public are much better heard and accepted, when they can deliver their discourse by the help of a lively genius and a ready memory, than when they are forced to read all that they would communicate to their hearers. Reading is certainly a heavier way of the conveyance of our sentiments; and there are very few mere readers who have a felicity of penetrating the soul, and awakening the passions of those who hear, by such a grace and power of oratory, as the man who seems to talk every word from his very heart, and pours out the riches of his own knowledge upon the people round about him by the help of a free and copious memory. This gives life and spirit to every thing that is spoken, and has a natural tendency to make a deeper impression on the minds of men; it awakens the dullest spirits, causes them to receive a discourse with more affection and pleasure, and adds a singular grace and excellency both to the person and his oration.

A good judgment and a good memory are very different qualifications. A person may have a very strong, capacious, and retentive memory, where the judgment is very poor and weak; as sometimes it happens in



those who are but one degree above an idiot, who have manifested an amazing strength and extent of memory, but have hardly been able to join or disjoin two or three ideas in a wise and happy manner, to make a solid, rational proposition.

There have been instances of others who have had but a very tolerable power of memory, yet their judgment has been of a much superior degree, just and wise, solid and excellent.

Yet it must be acknowledged that where a happy memory is found in any person, there is one good foundation laid for a wise and just judgment of things, wheresoever the natural genius has any thing of sagacity and brightness to make a right use of it. A good judgment must always in some measure depend upon a survey and comparison of several things together in the mind, and determining the truth of some doubtful proposition by that survey and comparison. When the mind has, as it were, set all those various objects present before it, which are necessary to form a true proposition or judgment concerning any thing, it then determines that such and such ideas are to be joined or disjoined, to be affirmed or denied, and this in a consistency and correspondence with all those other ideas or propositions which in any way relate or belong to the same subject. Now there can be no such comprehensive survey of many things without a tolerable degree of memory; it is by reviewing things past we learn to judge of the future; and it happens sometimes that if one needful or important object or idea be absent, the judgment concerning the thing inquired will thereby become false or mistaken.

You will inquire then, how comes it to pass that there are some persons who appear in the world of business, as well as in the world of learning, to have a good judgment, and have acquired the just character of prudence and wisdom, and yet have neither a very bright genius or sagacity of thought, nor a very happy memory, so that they cannot set before their minds at once a large scene of ideas in order to pass a judgment?

Now we may learn from Penseroso some accounts of this difficulty. You shall scarcely ever find this man forward in judging and determining things proposed to him, but he always takes time, and delays, and suspends,

and ponders things maturely, before he passes his judgment; then he practises a slow meditation, ruminates on the subject, and thus perhaps in two or three nights and days rouses and awakens those several ideas one after another as he can, which are necessary in order to judge aright of the thing proposed, and makes them pass before his review in succession; this he doth to relieve the want both of a quick sagacity of thought, and of a ready memory and speedy recollection; and this caution and practice lays the foundation of his just judgment and wise conduct. He surveys well before he judges.

Whence I cannot but take occasion to infer one good rule of advice to persons of higher as well as lower genius, and of large as well as narrow memories, viz. That they do not too hastily pronounce concerning matters of doubt or inquiry, where there is not an urgent necessity of present action. The bright genius is ready to be so forward as often betrays itself into great errors in judgment, speech, and conduct, without a continual guard upon itself, and using the bridle of the tongue. And it is by this delay and precaution that many a person of much lower natural abilities shall often excel persons of the brightest genius in wisdom and prudence.

It is often found that a fine genius has but a feeble memory, for where the genius is bright, and the imagination vivid, the power of memory may be too much neglected, and lose its improvement. An active fancy readily wanders over a multitude of objects, and is continually entertaining itself with new flying images; it runs through a number of new scenes or new pages with pleasure, but without due attention, and seldom suffers itself to dwell long enough upon any one of them to make a deep impression thereof upon the mind, and commit it to lasting remembrance. This is one plain and obvious reason why there are some persons of very bright parts and active spirits who have but short and narrow powers of remembrance; for, having riches of their own, they are not solicitous to borrow.

And, as such a quick and various fancy and invention may be some hindrance to the attention and memory, so a mind of a good retentive ability, and which is ever

crowding its memory with things which it learns and reads continually, may prevent, restrain, and cramp, the invention itself. The memory of Lectorides is very ready upon all occasions to offer to his mind something out of other men's writings or conversations, and is presenting him with the thoughts of other persons perpetually; thus the man who had naturally a good flowing invention, does not suffer himself to pursue his own thoughts. Some persons who have been blessed by nature with sagacity, and no contemptible genius, have too often forbid the exercise of it, by tying themselves down to the memory of the volumes they have read, and the sentiments of other men contained in them.

Where the memory has been almost constantly employing itself in scraping together new acquirements, and where there has not been a judgment sufficient to distinguish what things were fit to be recommended and treasured up in the memory, and what things were idle, useless, or needless, the mind has been filled with a wretched heap and hotch potch of words or ideas, and the soul may be said to have had large possessions, but no true riches.

I have read in some of Mr. Milton's writings a very beautiful simile, whereby he represents the books of the Fathers, as they are called in the Christian church. Whatsoever, saith he, Old Time with his huge drag net has conveyed down to us along the stream of ages, whether it be shells or shell fish, jewels or pebbles, sticks or straws, sea weeds or mud, these are the ancients, these are the fathers. The case is much the same with the memorial possessions of the greatest part of mankind. A few useful things perhaps, mixed and confounded with many trifles and all manner of rubbish, fill up their memories and compose their intellectual possessions. It is a great happiness therefore to distinguish things aright, and to lay up nothing in the memory but what has some just value in it, and is worthy to be numbered as a part of our treasure.

Whatsoever improvements arise to the mind of man from the wise exercise of his own reasoning powers, these may be called his proper manufactures; and whatsoever he borrows from abroad, these may be termed his foreign treasures; both together make a wealthy and happy mind.

How many excellent judgments and reasonings are framed in the mind of a man of wisdom and study in a length of years? How many worthy and admirable notions has he been possessed of in life, both by his own reasonings, and by his prudent and laborious connexions in the course of his reading? But, alas! how many thousands of them vanish away again and are lost in empty air, for want of a stronger and more retentive memory? When a young practitioner in the law was once said to contest a point of debate with that great lawyer in the last age, Sergeant Maynard, he is reported to have answered him, Alas! young man, I have forgot much more law than ever thou hast learnt or read.

What an unknown and unspeakable happiness would it be to a man of judgment, and who is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, if he had but a power of stamping all his own best sentiments upon his memory in some indelible characters; and if he could but imprint every valuable paragraph and sentiment of the most excellent authors he has read upon his mind with the same speed and facility with which he read them? If a man of good genius and sagacity could but retain and survey all those numerous, those wise and beautiful ideas at once which have ever passed through his thoughts upon any one subject, how admirably would he be furnished to pass a just judgment about all present objects and occurrences? What a glorious entertainment and pleasure would fill and felicitate his spirit, if he could grasp all these in a single survey; as the skilful eye of a painter runs over a fine and complicate piece of history wrought by the hand of Titian or a Raphael, views the whole scene at once, and feeds himself with the extensive delight? But these are joys that do not belong to mortality.

Thus far I have indulged some loose and unconnected thoughts and remarks with regard to the different powers of wit, memory, and judgment; for it was very difficult to throw them into a regular form or method without more room. Let us now with more regularity treat of the memory alone.

Though the memory be a natural faculty of the mind of man, and belongs to spirits which are not incarnate, yet it is greatly assisted or hindered, and much diversified

by the brain or the animal nature, to which the soul is united in this present state. But what part of the brain that is, wherein the images of things lie treasured up, is very hard for us to determine with certainty. It is most probable that those very fibres, pores, or traces of the brain, which assist at the first idea or perception of any object, are the same which assist also at the recollection of it; and then it will follow that the memory has no special part of the brain devoted to its own service, but uses all those parts in general which subserve our sensations, as well as our thinking and reasoning powers.

As the memory grows and improves in young persons from their childhood, and decays in old age, so it may be increased by art and labour, and proper exercise; or it may be injured or quite spoiled by sloth, or by a disease, or a stroke on the head. There are some reasonings on this subject which make it evident, that the goodness of a memory depends in a great degree upon the consistence and the temperature of that part of the brain which is appointed to assist the exercise of all our sensible and intellectual faculties.

So for instance, in children; they perceive and forget a hundred things in an hour; the brain is so soft that it receives immediately all impressions like water or liquid mud, and retains scarcely any of them; all the traces, forms, or images which are drawn there, are immediately effaced or closed up again, as though you wrote with your finger on the surface of a river, or on a vessel of oil.

On the contrary in old age, men have a very feeble remembrance of things that were done of late; *i. e.* the same day, or week, or year; the brain is grown so hard that the present images or strokes make little or no impression, and therefore they immediately vanish: Prisco in his seventy-eighth year, will tell long stories of things done when he was in the battle of the Boyne, almost fifty years ago, and when he studied at Oxford, seven years before; for those impressions were made when the brain was more susceptible of them; they have been deeply engraven at the proper season and therefore they remain. But words or things which he lately spoke or did, they are immediately forgotten,

because the brain is now grown more dry and solid in its consistence, and receives not much more impression than if you wrote with your finger on a floor of clay, or a plastered wall.

But in the middle stage of life, or it may be from fifteen to fifty years of age, the memory is generally in its happiest state ; the brain easily receives and long retains the images and traces which are impressed upon it ; and the natural spirits are more active to range these little infinite unknown figures of things in their proper cells or cavities, to preserve and recollect them.

Whatsoever therefore keeps the brain in its best temper and consistence, may be a help to preserve the memory ; but excess of wine or luxury of any kind, as well as excess in the studies of learning or the business of life, may overwhelm the memory, by overstraining and weakening the fibres of the brain, overwasting the spirits, injuring the true consistence of that tender substance, and confounding the images that are laid up there.

A good memory has these several qualifications : (1.) It is ready to receive and admit with great ease the various ideas both of words and things which are learned or taught. (2.) It is large and copious to treasure up these ideas in great number and variety. (3.) It is strong and durable to retain for a considerable time those words or thoughts, which are committed to it. (4.) It is faithful and active to suggest and recollect, upon every proper occasion, all those words or thoughts which have been recommended to its care, or treasured up in it.

Now in every one of these qualifications, a memory may be injured or may be improved ; yet I shall not insist distinctly on these particulars, but only in general propose a few rules or directions, whereby this noble faculty of memory, in all its branches and qualifications, may be preserved or assisted, and show what are the practices that both by reason and experience have been found of happy influence to this purpose.

There is one great and general direction which belongs to the improvement of other powers as well as of the memory, and that is, to keep it always in due and proper exercise. Many acts by degrees form a habit, and thereby the ability or power is strengthened and

made more ready to appear again in action. Our memories should be used and inured from childhood to bear a moderate quantity of knowledge let into them early, and they will thereby become strong for use and service. As any limb well and duly exercised, grows stronger, the nerves of the body are corroborated thereby. Milo took up a calf, and daily carried it on his shoulders; as the calf grew, his strength grew also, and he at last arrived at firmness of joints enough to bear the bull.

Our memories will be in a great measure moulded and formed, improved or injured, according to the exercise of them, if we never use them, they will be almost lost. Those who are wont to converse or read about a few things only, will retain but a few in their memory. Those who are used to remember things but for an hour, and charge their memories with it no longer, will retain them but an hour before they vanish. And let words be remembered as well as things, that so you may acquire a *copia verborum* as well as *rerum*, and be more ready to express your mind on all occasions.

Yet there should be a caution given in some cases; the memory of a child, or any infirm person, should never be overburdened; for a limb or a joint may be overstrained by being too much loaded, and its natural power never be recovered. Teachers should wisely judge of the power and constitution of youth, and impose no more on them than they are able to bear with cheerfulness and improvement.

And particularly they should take care that the memory of the learner be not too much crowded with a tumultuous heap or overbearing multitude of documents or ideas at one time; this is the way to remember nothing; one idea effaces another. An overgreedy grasp does not retain the largest handful. But it is the exercise of memory with a due moderation, that is one general rule towards the improvement of it.

The particular rules are such as these:

1. Due attention and diligence to learn and know things which we should commit to our remembrance, is a rule of great necessity in this case. When the attention is strongly fixed to any particular subject, all that is said concerning it makes a deeper impression upon the mind. There are some persons who complain they cannot remember divine or human discourses

which they hear, when in truth their thoughts are wandering half the time, or they hear with such coldness and indifference, and a trifling temper of spirit, that it is no wonder the things which are read or spoken make but a slight impression on the brain, and get no firm footing in the seat of memory, but soon vanish and are lost.

It is needful therefore if we would retain a long remembrance of the things which we read or hear, that we should engage our delight and pleasure in those subjects, and use the other methods which are before prescribed, in order to fix the attention. Sloth, indolence, and idleness, will no more bless the mind with intellectual riches, than they will fill the hand with gain, the field with corn, or the purse with treasure.

Let it be added also, that not only the slothful and the negligent deprive themselves of proper knowledge for the furniture of their memory, but such as appear to have active spirits, who are ever skimming over the surface of things with a volatile temper, will fix nothing in their mind. Vario will spend whole mornings in running over loose and unconnected pages, and with fresh curiosity is ever glancing over new words and ideas that strike his present fancy; he is fluttering over a thousand objects of arts and science, and yet treasures up but little knowledge. There must be the labour and diligence of close attention to particular subjects of thought and inquiry, which only can impress what we read or think of upon the remembering faculty of man.

2. Clear and distinct apprehensions of the things which we commit to memory is necessary, in order to make them stick and dwell there. If we would remember words or learn the names of persons or things, we should have them recommended to our memory, by a clear and distinct pronunciation, spelling, or writing. If we would treasure up the ideas of things, notions, propositions, arguments, and sciences, these should be recommended also to our memory, by a clear and distinct perception of them. Faint, glimmering, and confused ideas, will vanish like images seen in twilight. Every thing which we learn should be conveyed to the understanding in the plainest expressions, without any ambiguity, that we may not mistake what we desire to



remember. This is a general rule, whether we would employ the memory about words or things, though it must be confessed, that mere sounds and words are much harder to get by heart, than the knowledge of things and real images.

For this reason, take heed, (as I have often before warned) that you do not take up with words instead of things, nor mere sounds instead of real sentiments and ideas. Many a lad forgets what has been taught him, merely because he never well understood it; he never clearly and distinctly took in the meaning of those sounds and syllables which he was required to get by heart.

This is one true reason why boys make so poor a proficiency in learning the Latin tongue, under masters who teach them by grammars and rules written in Latin, of which I have spoken before. And this is a common case with children when they learn their catechisms in their early days. The language and the sentiments conveyed in those catechisms are far above the understanding of youth of that age, and they have no tolerable ideas under the words. This makes the answers much harder to be remembered, and in truth they learn nothing but words without ideas; and if they are ever so perfect in repeating the words, yet they know nothing of divinity.

And for this reason it is a necessary rule in teaching children the principles of religion, that they should be expressed in very plain, easy, and familiar words, brought as low as possible down to their understandings, according to their different ages and capacities; and thereby they will obtain some useful knowledge when the words are treasured up in their memory, because at the same time they will treasure up those divine ideas too.

3. Method and regularity in the things we commit to memory is necessary in order to make them take more effectual possession of the mind, and abide there long. As much as systematical learning is decried by some vain and humorous triflers of the age, it is certainly the happiest way to furnish the mind with a variety of knowledge.

Whatsoever you would trust to your memory, let it be disposed in a proper method, connected well together, and referred to distinct and particular heads or classes, both general and particular. An

apothecary's boy will much sooner learn all the medicines in his master's shop when they are ranged in boxes or on shelves according to their distinct natures, whether herbs, drugs, or minerals, whether leaves or roots, whether chemical or galenical preparations, whether simple or compound, &c. and when they are placed in some order according to their nature, their fluidity, or their consistence, &c. in phials, bottles, gallipots, cases, drawers, &c. So the genealogy of a family is more easily learnt when you begin at some great grandfather as the root, and distinguish the stock, the large boughs, the lesser branches, the twigs, and the buds till you come down to the present infants of the house. And indeed all sorts of arts and sciences, taught in a method something of this kind, are more happily committed to the mind or memory.

I might give another plain simile to confirm the truth of this. What horse or carriage can take up and bear away all the various, rude, and unwieldy loppings of a branchy tree at once? But if they are divided yet further, so as to be laid close, and bound up in a more uniform manner into several faggots, perhaps those loppings may be all carried at one single load or burden.

The mutual dependence of things on each other helps the memory of both. A wise connexion of the parts of a discourse in a rational method, gives great advantage to the reader or hearer in order to his remembrance of it. Therefore many mathematical demonstrations in a long train, may be remembered much better than a heap of sentences which have no connexion. The book of Proverbs, at least from the tenth chapter and onwards, is much harder to remember than the book of Psalms, for this reason; and some Christians have told me that they remember what is written in the epistle to the Romans, and that to the Hebrews, much better than many others of the sacred epistles, because there is more exact method and connexion observed in them.

He that would learn to remember a sermon which he hears, should acquaint himself by degrees with the method in which the several important parts of it are delivered. It is a certain fault in a multitude of preachers, that they utterly neglect method in their harangues; or at least they refuse to render their method visible and sensible to the hearers. One would be

tempted to think it was for fear lest their auditors should remember too much of their sermons, and prevent their preaching them three or four times over; but I have candour enough to persuade myself that the true reason is, they imagine it to be a more modish way of preaching without particulars: I am sure it is a much more useless one. And it would be of great advantage both to the speaker and hearer, to have discourses for the pulpit cast into a plain and easy method, and the reasons or inferences ranged in a proper order, and that under the words *first, secondly, and thirdly*; however they may be now fancied to sound unpolite or unfashionable; but Archbishop Tillotson did not think so in his days.

4. A frequent review and careful repetition of the things we would learn, and an abridgment of them in a narrow compass for this end, has a great influence to fix them in the memory; therefore it is that the rules of grammar, and useful examples of the variation of words, and the peculiar forms of speech in any language, are so often appointed by the master as lessons for the scholar, to be frequently repeated; and they are contracted into tables for frequent review, that what is not fixed in the mind at first, may be stamped upon the memory by a perpetual survey and rehearsal.

Repetition is so very useful a practice, that Mnemon; even from his youth to his old age, never read a book without making some small points, dashes, or hooks, in the margin, to mark what parts of the discourse were proper for a review, and when he came to the end of the section or chapter, he always shut his book and recollected all the sentiments or expressions he had remarked, so that he could give a tolerable analysis and abstract of every treatise he had read, just after he had finished it. Thence he became so well furnished with a rich variety of knowledge.

Even when a person is hearing a sermon or a lecture, he may give his thoughts leave now and then to step back so far as to recollect the several heads of it from the beginning, two or three times before the lecture or sermon is finished; the omission or the loss of a sentence or two among the amplifications is richly compensated by preserving in the mind the method and order of the whole discourse in the most important branches of it.

If we would fix in the memory the discourses we hear, or what we design to speak, let us abstract them into brief compends, and review them often. Lawyers and divines have need of such assistances; they write down short notes or hints of the principal heads of what they desire to commit to their memory, in order to preach or plead; for such abstracts and epitomes may be reviewed much sooner, and the several amplifying sentiments or sentences will be more easily invented or recollected in their proper places. The art of short hand is of excellent use for this as well as for other purposes. It must be acknowledged, that those who scarcely ever take a pen in their hand to write short notes or hints of what they are to speak or learn, who never try to cast things into method, or to contract the survey of them in order to commit them to their memory, had need to have a double degree of that natural power of retaining and recollecting what they read or hear, or intend to speak.

Do not plunge yourself into other business or studies, amusements or recreations, immediately after you have attended upon instruction, if you can well avoid it. Get time if possible, to recollect the things you have heard, that they may not be washed all away from the mind by a torrent of other occurrences or engagements, nor lost in the crowd or clamour of other loud and important affairs.

Talking over the things which you have read with your companions, on the first proper opportunity you have for it, is a most useful manner of review or repetition, in order to fix them upon the mind. Teach them your younger friends, in order to establish your own knowledge, while you communicate it to them. The animal powers of your tongue and of your ear, as well as your intellectual faculties, will all join together to help the memory. Hermitas studied hard in a remote corner of the land, and in solitude, yet he became a very learned man. He seldom was so happy as to enjoy suitable society at home, and therefore he talked over to the fields and the woods in the evening, what he had been reading in the day, and found so considerable advantage by this practice, that he recommended it to all his friends, since he could set his *probatum* to it for seventeen years.

5. Pleasure and delight in the things we learn, give great assistance towards the remembrance of them. Whatsoever therefore we desire that a child should commit to his memory, make it as pleasant to him as possible; endeavour to search his genius and his temper; and let him take in the instructions you give him, or the lessons you appoint him, as far as may be, in a way suited to his natural inclination. Fabellus would never learn any moral lessons till they were moulded into the form of some fiction or fable like those of Æsop, or till they put on the appearance of a parable, like those wherein our blessed Saviour taught the ignorant world. Then he remembered well the emblematical instructions that were given him, and learnt to practise the moral sense and meaning of them. Young Spectorius was taught virtue by setting before him a variety of examples of the various good qualities in human life; and he was appointed daily to repeat some story of this kind out of Valerius Maximus. The same lad was early instructed to avoid the common vices and follies of youth in the same manner. This is akin to the method whereby the Lacedæmonians trained up their children to hate drunkenness and intemperance, viz. by bringing a drunken man into their company, and showing them what a beast he had made of himself. Such visible and sensible forms of instruction will make long and useful impressions upon the memory.

Children may be taught to remember many things in a way of sport and play. Some young children have learnt their letters and syllables, and the pronouncing and spelling of words, by having them pasted or written upon many little flat tablets or dies. Some have been taught vocabularies of different languages, having a word in one tongue written on one side of these tablets, and the same word in another tongue on the other side of them.

There might be also many entertaining contrivances for the instruction of children in several things relating to geometry, geography, and astronomy, in such alluring and illusory methods, which would make a most agreeable and lasting impression on their minds.

6. The memory of useful things may receive considerable aid if they are thrown into verse; for the numbers, and measures, and rhyme, according to the

poesy of different languages, have a considerable influence upon mankind, both to make them receive with more ease the things proposed to their observation, and preserve them longer in their remembrance. How many are there of the common affairs of human life which have been taught in early years by the help of rhyme, and have been like nails fastened in a sure place, and rivited by daily use?

So the number of the days of each month are engraven on the memory of thousands by these four lines :

Thirty days hath September,  
April, June, and November ;  
February twenty-eight alone,  
And all the rest have thirty-one.

So lads have been taught frugality by surveying and judging of their own expences by these three lines :

Compute the pence but of one day's expence,  
So many pounds and angels, groats, and pence,  
Are spent in one whole year's circumference.

For the number of days in a year is three hundred sixty-five, which number of pence makes one pound, one angel, one groat, and one penny.

So have rules of health been prescribed in the book called Schola Salernitani, and many a person has preserved himself doubtless from evening gluttony, and the pains and diseases consequent upon it, by these two lines :

*Ex magna cæna stomacho fit maxima pæna :  
Ut sis nocte levis, fit tibi cæna brevis.*

ENGLISHED :

To be easy all night,  
Let your supper be light,  
Or else you'll complain  
Of a stomach in pain.

And a hundred proverbial sentences in various languages are formed into rhyme or a verse, whereby they are made to stick upon the memory of old and young.

It is from this principle that moral rules have been cast into a poetic mould from all antiquity. So the golden verses of the Pythagoreans in Greek ; Cato's

distichs *De Moribus* in Latin; Lilly's precepts to scholars called *Qui mihi*, with many others, and this has been done with very good success. A line or two of this kind recurring on the memory, have often guarded youth from a temptation to vice and folly, as well as put them in mind of their present duty.

It is for this reason also that the genders, declensions, and variations, of nouns and verbs have been taught in verse, by those who have complied with the prejudice of long custom, to teach English children the Latin tongue by rules written in Latin; and, truly, those rude heaps of words and terminations of an unknown tongue would have never been so happily learnt by heart, by a hundred thousand boys without this smoothing artifice; nor indeed do I know any thing else can be said with good reason to excuse or relieve the obvious absurdities of this practice.

When you would remember new things or words, endeavour to associate and connect them with some words or things which you have well known before, and which are fixed and established in your memory. This association of ideas is of great importance and force, and may be of excellent use in many instances of human life. One idea which is familiar to the mind, connected with others which are new and strange, will bring those new ideas into easy remembrance. Maronides had got the first hundred lines of Virgil's *Æneis* printed upon his memory so perfectly, that he knew not only the order and number of every verse from one to a hundred in perfection, but the order and number of every word in each verse also; and by this means he would undertake to remember two or three hundred names of persons or things by some rational or fantastic connexion between some word in the verse, and some letter, syllable, property, or accident of the name or thing to be remembered, even though they had been repeated but once or twice at most in his hearing. Animatio practised much the same art of memory, by getting the Latin names of twenty two animals into his head according to the alphabet, viz. *asinus, basiliscus, canis, draco, elephas, felis, gryphus, hircus, juvenis, leo, mulus, noctua, ovis, panthera, quadrupes, rhinoceros, simia, taurus, ursus, xiphias, hyæna* or *yæna, zibetta*. Most of these he also divided into

four parts, viz. head and body, feet, fins or wings, and tail, and by some arbitrary or chimerical attachment of each of these to a word or thing which he desired to remember, he committed them to the care of his memory, and that with good success.

It is also by this association of ideas that we may better imprint any new idea upon the memory, by joining with it some circumstance of the time, place, company, &c. wherein we first observed, heard, or learnt it. If we would recover an absent idea, it is useful to recollect those circumstances of time, place, &c. The substance will many times be recovered and brought to the thoughts by recollecting the shadow; a man recurs to our fancy by remembering his garment, his size, or stature, his office, or employment, &c. A beast, bird, or fish, by its colour, figure, or motion, by the cage, court yard, or cistern wherein it was kept.

To this head also we may refer that remembrance of names and things which may be derived from our recollection of their likeness to other things which we know; either their resemblance in name, character, form, accident, or any thing that belongs to them. An idea or word which has been lost or forgotten, has often been recovered by hitting upon some other kindred word or idea, which has the nearest resemblance to it, and that in the letters, syllables, or sound of the name, as well as properties of the thing.

If we would remember Hippocrates, or Galen, or Paracelsus, think of a physician's name, beginning with H, G, or P. If we shall remember Ovidius Naso, we may represent a man with a great nose; if Plato, we may think upon a person with large shoulders; if Crispus, we shall fancy another with curled hair; and so of other things.

And sometimes a new or strange idea, may be fixed in the memory, by considering its contrary or opposite. So if we cannot hit upon the word Goliath, the remembrance of David may recover it; or the name of a Trojan may be recovered by thinking of a Greek, &c.

7. In such cases, wherein it may be done, seek after a local memory, or a remembrance of what you have read by the side or page where it is written or printed; whether the right or left, whether at the top, the mid-



die, or the bottom; whether at the beginning of a chapter or paragraph, or the end of it. It has been some advantage, for this reason, to accustom one's self to books of the same edition; and it has been a constant and special use to divines and private Christians, to be furnished with several Bibles of the same edition, that wheresoever they are, whether in their chamber, parlour, or study, in the younger or elder years of life, they may find the chapters and verses standing in the same parts of the page.

This is also a great conveniency to be observed by printers in the new editions of grammars, Psalms, Testaments, &c. to print every chapter, paragraph, or verse, in the same part of the page as the former, that so it may yield an happy assistance to those young learners, who find, and even feel, the advantage of a local memory.

8. Let every thing we desire to remember be fairly and distinctly written and divided into periods, with large characters in the beginning, for by this means we shall the more readily imprint the matter and words on our minds, and recollect them with a glance, the more remarkable the writing appears to the eye. This sense conveys the ideas to the fancy better than any other; and what we have seen is not so soon forgotten as what we have only heard. What Horace affirms of the mind or passions may be said also of the memory.

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator.*

APPLIED THUS IN ENGLISH :

Sounds which address the ear are lost and die  
In one short hour; but that which strikes the eye  
Lives long upon the mind; the faithful sight  
Engraves the knowledge with a beam of light.

For the assistance of weak memories, the first letters or words of every period, in every page, may be written in distinct colours; yellow, green, red, black, &c. and if you observe the same order of colours in the following sentences, it may be still the better. This will make a great impression, and may much aid the memory.

Under this head we may take notice of the advantage which the memory gains, by having the several objects of our learning drawn out into schemes and tables; matters of mathematical science and natural philosophy are not only let into the understanding, but preserved in the memory by figures and diagrams. The situation of the several parts of the earth are better learnt by one day's conversing with a map or sea chart, than by mere reading the description of their situation a hundred times over in books of geography. So the constellations in astronomy, and their positions in the heavens, are more easily remembered by hemispheres of the stars well drawn. It is by having such sort of memorials, figures, and tables hung round our studies, or places of residence or resort, that our memory of these things will be greatly assisted and improved, as I have shown at large in the twentieth chapter of the Use of the Sciences.

I might add here also, that once writing over what we design to remember, and giving due attention to what we write, will fix it more in the mind than reading it five times. And in the same manner, if we had a plan of the naked lines of longitude and latitude, projected on the meridian printed for this use, a learner might more speedily advance himself in the knowledge of geography by his own drawing the figures of all the parts of the world upon it by imitation, than by many days survey of the map of the world so printed. The same also may be said concerning the constellations of heaven, drawn by the learner on a naked projection of the circles of the sphere upon the plane of the equator.

9. It has sometimes been the practice of men to imprint names or sentences on their memory, by taking the first letters of every word of that sentence, or of those names, and making a new word out of them. So the name of the Maccabees is borrowed from the first letters of the Hebrew words which make that sentence, *Mi Camoka Bealim Jehovah*, i. e. who is like thee among the gods? Which was written on their banners. Jesus Christ our Saviour, hath been called a fish, in Greek *IXOYX*, by the fathers, because these are the first letters of those Greek words, *Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Saviour.* So the word *Vibgyor* teaches us to remem-

ber the order of the seven original colours, as they appear by the sun beams cast through a prism on white paper, or formed by the sun in a rainbow, according to the different refrangibility of the rays, viz. violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.

In this manner the Hebrew grammarians teach their students to remember the letters which change their natural pronunciation by the inscription of a *dagesh*, by gathering these six letters, beth, gimel, dalet, caph, pe, and thau, into the word *Begadchepat*; and that they might not forget the letters named Quiescent, viz. *a, h, v, and i*, they are joined in the word *ahevi*. So the universal and particular propositions in logic, are remembered by the words *barbara, celarent, Darii, &c.*

Other artificial helps to memory may be just mentioned here.

Dr. Grey, in his book called *Memoria Technica*, has exchanged the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, for some consonants, b, d, t, f, l, y, p, k, n, and some vowels, a, e, i, o, u, and several diphthongs, and thereby formed words that denote numbers, which may be more easily remembered; and Mr. Lowe has improved his scheme, in a small pamphlet called *Mnemonics delineated*, whereby in seven leaves, he has comprised almost an infinity of things in science and in common life, and reduced them to a sort of measure like Latin verse; though the words may be supposed to be very barbarous, being such a mixture of vowels and consonants as are very unfit for harmony.

But after all, the very writers on this subject have confessed, that several of these artificial helps of memory are so cumbersome as not to be suitable to every temper or person; nor are they of any use for the delivery of a discourse by memory, nor of much service in learning the sciences; but they may be sometimes practised for the assisting our remembrance of certain sentences, numbers, and names.

## CHAP. XVIII.

### *Of Determining a Question.*

1. **WHEN** a subject is proposed to your thoughts, consider whether it be knowable at all, or no; and then

whether it be not above the reach of your inquiry and knowledge in the present state; and remember that it is a great waste of time to busy yourselves too much among unsearchables; the chief use of these studies is to keep the mind humble, by finding its own ignorance and weakness.

II. Consider again whether the matter be worthy of your inquiry at all; and then, how far it may be worthy of your present search and labour according to your age, your time of life, your station in the world, your capacity, your profession, your chief design and end. There are many things worth inquiry to one man, which are not so to another; and there are things that may deserve the study of the same person in one part of life, which would be improper or impertinent at another. To read books of the art of preaching, or disputes about church discipline, are proper for a theological student in the end of his academical studies, but not at the beginning of them. To pursue mathematical studies very largely, may be useful for a professor of philosophy, but not for a divine.

III. Consider whether the subject of your inquiry be easy or difficult; whether you have sufficient foundation or skill, furniture and advantages, for the pursuit of it. It would be madness for a young statuary to attempt at first to carve a Venus or a Mercury, and especially without proper tools. And it is equally folly for a man to pretend to make great improvements in natural philosophy without due experiments.

IV. Consider whether the subject be any ways useful or no, before you engage in the study of it; often put this question to yourselves, *Cui bono?* To what purpose? What end will it attain? Is it for the glory of God, for the good of men, for your own advantage, for the removal of any natural or moral evil, for the attainment of any natural or moral good? Will the profit be equal to the labour? There are many subtle impertinencies learnt in the schools, many painful trifles even among the mathematical theorems and problems, many *difficiles nugæ*, or laborious follies of various kinds, which some ingenious men have been engaged in. A due reflection upon these things will call the mind away from vain amusements, and save much time.

V. Consider what tendency it has to make you wiser and better, as well as to make you more learned; and those questions which tend to wisdom and prudence in our conduct among men, as well as piety toward God, are doubtless more important, and preferable beyond all those inquiries which only improve our knowledge in mere speculations.

VI. If the question appear to be well worth your diligent application, and you are furnished with the necessary requisites to pursue it, then consider whether it be drest up and entangled in more words than is needful, and contain or include more complicated ideas than is necessary; and if so, endeavour to reduce it to a greater simplicity and plainness, which will make the inquiry and argument easier and plainer all the way.

VII. If it be stated in an improper, obscure, or irregular form, it may be meliorated by changing the phrase, or transposing the parts of it; but be careful always to keep the grand and important point of inquiry the same in your new stating the question. Little tricks and deceits of sophistry, by sliding in, or leaving out such words as entirely change the question, should be abandoned and renounced by all fair disputants and honest searchers after truth.

The stating a question with clearness and justness goes a great way many times toward the answering it. The greatest part of true knowledge lies in a distinct perception of things which are in themselves distinct; and some men give more light and knowledge by the bare stating of the question with perspicuity and justice, than others by talking of it in gross confusion for whole hours together. To state a question is but to separate and disentangle the parts of it from one another, as well as from every thing which doth not concern the question, and then to lay the disentangled parts of the question in due order and method; oftentimes without more ado this fully resolves the doubt, and shows the mind where the truth lies, without argument or dispute.

VIII. If the question relate to an axiom or first principle of truth, remember that a long train of consequences may depend upon it, therefore it should not be suddenly admitted or received.

It is not enough to determine the truth of a proposition, much less to raise it to the honour of an axiom

or first principle, to say, that it has been believed through many ages, that it has been received by many nations, that it is almost universally acknowledged, or nobody denies it, and that it is established by human laws, or that temporal penalties or approaches will attend the disbelief of it.

IX. Nor is it enough to forbid any proposition the title of an axiom, because it has been denied by some persons, and doubted by others ; for some persons have been unreasonably credulous, and others have been as unreasonably sceptical. Then only should a proposition be called an axiom or a self-evident truth, when, by a moderate attention to the subject and predicate, their connexion appears in so plain a light, and so clear an evidence, as needs no third idea, or middle term, to prove them to be connected.

X. While you are in search after truth in questions of a doubtful nature, or such as you have not yet thoroughly examined, keep up a just indifference to either side of the question, if you would be led honestly into the truth ; for a desire or inclination leaning to either side, biases the judgment strangely ; whereas by this indifference for every thing but truth, you will be excited to examine fairly instead of presuming, and your assent will be secured from going beyond your evidence.

XI. For the most part people are born to their opinions, and never question the truth of what their family, or their country, or their party profess. They clothe their minds as they do their bodies, after the fashion in vogue, nor one of a hundred ever examines their principles. It is suspected of lukewarmness to suppose examination necessary, and it will be charged as a tendency to apostacy if we go about to examine them. Persons are applauded for presuming they are in the right, and (as Mr. Locke saith) he that considers and inquires into the reason of things is counted a foe to orthodoxy, because possibly he may deviate from some of the received doctrines. And thus men without any industry or acquisition of their own (lazy and idle as they are) inherit local truths, *i. e.* the truths of that place where they live, and are inured to assent without evidence.

This hath a long and unhappy influence ; for if a man can bring his mind once to be positive and fierce for

propositions whose evidence he hath never examined, and that in matters of the greatest concernment, he will naturally follow this short and easy way of judging and believing in cases of less moment, and build all his opinions upon insufficient grounds.

XII. In determining a question, especially when it is a matter of difficulty and importance, do not take up with partial examination, but turn your thoughts on all sides, to gather in all the light you can toward the solution of it. Take time, and use all the helps that are to be attained before you fully determine, except only where present necessity of action calls for speedy determination.

If you would know what may be called a partial examination, take these instances, viz.

When you examine an object of sense, or inquire into some matter of sensation at too great a distance from the object, or in an inconvenient situation of it, or under any indisposition of the organs, or any disguise whatsoever relating to the medium or the organ of the object itself; or when you examine it by one sense only, where others might be employed; or when you inquire into it by sense only, without the use of the understanding, and judgment, and reason.

If it be a question which is to be determined by reason and argument, then your examination is partial, when you turn the question only in one light, and do not turn it on all sides; when you look upon it only in its relations and aspects to one sort of objects, and not to another; when you consider only the advantages of it, and the reasons for it, and neglect to think of the reasons against it, and never survey its inconveniences too; when you determine on a sudden, before you have given yourself a due time for weighing all circumstances, &c.

Again, If it be a question of fact depending upon the report or testimony of men, your examination is but partial, when you inquire only what one man or a few say, and avoid the testimony of others; when you only ask what those report who were not eye or ear witnesses, and neglect those who saw and heard it; when you content yourself with mere loose and general talk about it, and never enter into particulars; or when there are many who deny the fact, and you never

concern yourself about their reasons for denying it, but resolve to believe only those who affirm it.

There is yet further a fault in your partial examination of any question when you resolve to determine it by natural reason only, where you might be assisted by supernatural revelation; or when you decide the point by some word or sentence, or by some part of revelation, without comparing it with other parts, which might give further light and better help to determine the meaning.

It is also a culpable partiality if you examine some doubtful or pretended vision or revelation without the use of reason; or without the use of that revelation, which is undoubted and sufficiently proved to be divine. These are all instances of imperfect examination, and we should never determine a question by one or two lights, where we may have the advantage of three or four.

XIII. Take heed lest some darling notion, some favourite hypothesis, some beloved doctrine, or some common but unexamined opinion, be made a test of the truth or falsehood of all other propositions about the same subject. Dare not build much upon such a notion or doctrine till it be very fully examined, accurately adjusted, and sufficiently confirmed. Some persons, by indulging such a practice, have been led into long ranks of error; they have found themselves involved in a train of mistakes, by taking up some petty hypothesis or principle, either in philosophy, politics, or religion, upon slight and insufficient grounds, and establishing that as a test and rule by which to judge of all other things.

XIV. For the same reason, have a care of suddenly determining any one question on which the determination of any kindred or parallel cases will easily or naturally follow. Take heed of receiving any wrong turn in your early judgment of things; be watchful as far as possible, against any false bias which may be given to the understanding, especially in younger years. The indulgence of some one silly opinion, or the giving credit to one foolish fable, lays the mind open to be imposed upon by many. The ancient Romans were taught to believe that Romulus and Remus, the founders of their state and empire, were exposed in the



woods, and nursed by a wolf: This story prepared their minds for the reception of tales of the like nature relating to other countries. Trogus Pompeius would enforce the belief, that one of the ancient kings of Spain was also nursed and suckled by a hart, from the fable of Romulus and Remus. It was by the same influence they learned to give up their hopes and fears to omens and soothsaying, when they were once persuaded that the greatness of their empire, and the glory of Romulus their founder, were predicted by the happy omen of twelve vultures appearing to him when he sought where to build the city. They readily received all the following legends of prodigies, auguries, and prognostics, for many ages together, with which Livy has furnished his huge history.

So the child who is once taught to believe any one occurrence to be a good or evil omen, or any day of the month or week to be lucky or unlucky, hath a wide inroad made on the soundness of his understanding in the following judgments of his life; he lies ever open to all the silly impressions, and idle tales of nurses, and imbibes many a foolish story with greediness, which he must unlearn again, if ever he becomes acquainted with truth and wisdom.

XV. Have a care of interesting your warm and religious zeal in those matters which are not sufficiently evident in themselves, or which are not fully and thoroughly examined and proved; for this zeal, whether right or wrong, when it is once engaged, will have a powerful influence to establish your own minds in those doctrines which are really doubtful, and to stop up all the avenues of further light. This will bring upon the soul a sort of sacred awe and dread of heresy; with a divine concern to maintain whatever opinion you have espoused as divine, though perhaps you have espoused it without any just evidence, and ought to have renounced it as false and pernicious.

We ought to be zealous for the most important points of our religion, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; but we ought not to employ this sacred fervour of spirit in the service of any article, till we have seen it made out with plain and strong conviction, that it is a necessary or important point of faith or practice, and is either an evident dic-

fate of the light of nature, or an assured article of revelation. Zeal must not reign over the powers of our understanding, but obey them: God is the God of light and truth, a God of reason and order, and he never requires mankind to use their natural faculties amiss for the support of his cause. Even the most mysterious and sublime doctrines of revelation are not to be believed without a just reason for it; nor should our pious affections be engaged in the defence of them, till we have plain and convincing proof that they are certainly revealed, though perhaps we may never in this world attain to such clear and distinct ideas of them as we desire.

XVI. As a warm zeal ought never to be employ'd in the defence of any revealed truth, till our reason be well convinced of the revelation; so neither should wit and banter, jest and ridicule, ever be indulg'd to oppose or assault any doctrines of professed revelation, till reason has proved they are not really revealed; and even then these methods should be used but very seldom, and with the utmost caution and prudence. Raillery and wit were never made to answer our inquiries after truth, and to determine a question of rational controversy; though they may sometimes be serviceable to expose to contempt those inconsistent follies which have been first abundantly refuted by argument; they serve indeed only to cover nonsense with shame, when reason has first proved it to be mere nonsense.

It is therefore a silly and most unreasonable test which some of our deists have introduced to judge of divine revelation, viz. to try if it will bear ridicule and laughter. They are effectually beaten in all their combats at the weapons of men, that is, reason and argument; and it would not be unjust (though it is a little uncourtly) to say, that they would now attack our religion with the talents of a vile animal; that is, grin and grimace.

I cannot think that a jester or a monkey, a droll or a puppet, can be proper judges or deciders of controversy. That which dresses up all things in disguise, is not likely to lead us into any just sentiments about them. Plato or Socrates, Cæsar or Alexander, might have a fool's coat clapt upon any of them, and perhaps in this disguise, neither the wisdom of the one, nor the

majesty of the other, would secure them from a sneer ; this treatment would never inform us whether they were kings or slaves, whether they were fools or philosophers. The strongest reasoning, the best sense, and the politest thoughts, may be set in a most ridiculous light by this grinning faculty ; the most obvious axioms of eternal truth may be dressed in a very foolish form, and wrapped up in artful absurdities by this talent ; but they are truth and reason, and good sense still. Euclid, with all his demonstrations, might be so covered and overwhelmed with banter, that a beginner in the mathematics might be tempted to doubt whether his theorems were true or no, and to imagine they could never be useful. So weaker minds might be easily prejudiced against the noblest principle of truth and goodness ; and the younger part of mankind might be beat off from the belief of the most serious, the most rational, and important points, even of natural religion, by the impudent jests of a profane wit. The moral duties of the civil life, as well as the articles of Christianity, may be painted over with the colours of folly, and exposed upon a stage, so as to ruin all social and personal virtue among the gay and thoughtless part of the world.

XVII. It should be observed also, that these very men cry out loudly against the use of all severe railing and reproach in debates, and all penalties and persecutions of the state, in order to convince the minds and consciences of men, and determine points of truth and error. Now I renounce these penal and smarting methods of conviction as much as they do, and yet I think still these are every whit as wise, as just, and as good for this purpose, as banter and ridicule. Why should public mockery in print, or a merry joke upon a stage, be a better test of truth, than severe railing sarcasms, and public persecutions and penalties ? Why should more light be derived to the understanding, by a song of scurrilous mirth, or a witty ballad, than there is by a rude cudgel ? When a professor of any religion is set up to be laughed at, I cannot see how this should help us to judge of the truth of his faith any better than if we were scourged. The jeers of a theatre, the pillory, and the whipping post, are very near akin. When the person or his opinion is made the jest of the mob, or

his back the shambles of the executioner, I think there is no more conviction in the one than in the other.

XVIII. Besides supposing it is but barely possible that the great God should reveal his mind and will to men by miracle, vision, or inspiration, it is a piece of contempt and profane insolence to treat any tolerable or rational appearance of such a revelation with jest and laughter, in order to find whether it be divine or not. And yet if this be a proper test of revelation, it may be properly applied to the true as well as the false, in order to distinguish it. Suppose a royal proclamation were sent to a distant part of the kingdom, and some of the subjects should doubt whether it came from the king or no: Is it possible that wit and ridicule should ever decide the point? Or would the prince ever think himself treated with just honour to have his proclamation canvassed in this manner on a public stage, and become the sport of buffoons, in order to determine the question, whether it is the word of a king or no?

Let such sort of writers go on at their dearest peril, and sport themselves in their own deceivings; let them at their peril make a jest of the Bible, and treat the sacred articles of Christianity with scoff and merriment: but then let them lay aside all their pretences to reason as well as religion; and as they expose themselves by such writings to the neglect and contempt of men, so let them prepare to meet the majesty and indignation of God without timely repentance.

XIX. In reading philosophical, moral, or religious controversies, never raise your esteem of any opinion by the assurance and zeal wherewith the author asserts it, nor by the highest praises he bestows upon it; nor on the other hand, let your esteem of an opinion be abated, nor your aversion to it raised by the supercilious contempt cast upon it by a warm writer, nor by the sovereign heirs with which he condemns it. Let the force of argument alone influence your assent or dissent. Take care that your soul be not warped or biassed on one side or the other, by any strains of flattering or abusive language; for there is no question whatsoever, but hath some such sort of defenders and opposers. Leave those writers to their own follies, who practice thus upon the weakness of their readers without argu-  
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ment; leave them to triumph in their own fancied possessions and victories; it is oftentimes found that their possessions are but a heap of errors, and their boasted victories are but overbearing noise and clamour to silence the voice of truth.

In philosophy and religion, the bigots of all parties are generally the most positive, and deal much in this sort of argument. Sometimes these are the weapons of pride; for a haughty man supposes all his opinions to be infallible, and imagines the contrary sentiments are ever ridiculous, and not worthy of notice. Sometimes these ways of talking are the mere arms of ignorance: The men who use them know little of the opposite side of the question, and therefore they exult in their own vain pretences to knowledge, as though no man of sense could oppose their opinions. They rail at an objection against their own sentiments, because they can find no other answer to it but railing. And men of learning, by their excessive vanity, have been sometimes tempted into the same insolent practice, as well as the ignorant.

Yet let it be remembered too, that there are some truths so plain and evident, that the opposition to them is strange, unaccountable, and almost monstrous; and in vindication of such truths, a writer of good sense may sometimes be allowed to use a degree of assurance, and pronounce them strongly with an air of confidence, while he defends them with reasons of convincing force.

XX. Sometimes a question may be proposed which is of so large and extensive a nature, and refers to such a multitude of subjects, as ought not in justice to be determined at once by a single argument or answer; as if one should ask me, Are you a professed disciple of the Stoics or the Platonists? Do you receive and assent to the principles of Gassendus, Descartes, or Sir Isaac Newton? Have you chosen the hypothesis of Tycho or Copernicus? Have you devoted yourself to the sentiments of Arminius or Calvin? Are your notions Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent? &c. I think it may be very proper in such cases not to give an answer in the gross, but rather to enter into a detail of particulars, and explain one's own sentiments.

Perhaps there is no man, nor set of men, upon earth, whose sentiments I entirely follow. God has given me reason to judge for myself, and though I may see sufficient ground to agree to the greatest part of the opinions of one person or party, yet it does by no means follow that I should receive them all. Truth does not always go by the lump, nor does error tincture and spoil all the articles of belief that some one party professes.

Since there are difficulties attend every scheme of human knowledge, it is enough for me in the main to incline to that side which has the fewest difficulties; and I would endeavour, as far as possible, to correct the mistakes or the harsh expressions of one party, by softening and reconciling methods, by reducing the extremes, and by borrowing some of the best principles or phrases from another. Cicero was one of the greatest men of antiquity, and gives us an account of the various opinions of philosophers in his age; but he himself was of the eclectic sect, and chose out of each of them such positions as in his wisest judgment came nearest to the truth.

XXI. When you are called in the course of life or religion to judge and determine concerning any question, and to affirm or deny it, take a full survey of the objections against it, as well as of the arguments for it, as far as your time and circumstances admit, and see on which side the preponderation falls. If either the objections against any proposition, or the arguments for the defence of it, carry in them most undoubted evidence, and are plainly unanswerable, they will and ought to constrain the assent, though there may be many seeming probabilities on the other side, which at first sight would flatter the judgment to favour it. But where the reasons on both sides are very near of equal weight, there suspension, or doubt is our duty, unless in cases wherein present determination or practice is required, and there we must act according to the present appearing preponderation of reasons.

XXII. In matters of moment and importance, it is our duty indeed to seek after certain and conclusive arguments, (if they can be found) in order to determine a question; but where the matter is of little conse-

quence it is not worth our labour to spend much time in seeking after certainties ; it is sufficient here, if probable reasons offer themselves. And even in matters of greater importance, especially where daily practice is necessary, and where we cannot attain any sufficient or certain grounds to determine a question on either side, we must then take up with such probable arguments as we can arrive at. But this general rule should be observed, viz. to take heed that our assent be no stronger, or rise no higher in the degree of it, than the probable argument will support.

XXIII. There are many things, even in religion, as well as in philosophy and civil life, which we believe with very different degrees of assent ; and this is or should be always regulated according to the different degrees of evidence which we enjoy ; and perhaps there are a thousand gradations in our assent to the things we believe, because there are thousands of circumstances relating to different questions, which increase or diminish the evidence we have concerning them, and that in matters both of reason and revelation.

I believe there is a God, and that obedience is due to him from every reasonable creature ; this I am most fully assured of, because I have the strongest evidence, since it is the plain dictate both of reason and revelation.

Again, I believe there is a future resurrection of the dead, because scripture tells us so in the plainest terms, though reason says nothing of it. I believe also that the same matter of our bodies which died (in part at least) shall arise ; but I am not so fully assured of this circumstance, because the revelation of it is not quite so clear and express. Yet further I believe, that the good men who were acquainted here on earth shall know each other in heaven ; but my persuasion of it is not absolutely certain, because my assent to it arises only from circumstantial reasonings of men upon what God has told us, and therefore my evidences are not strong beyond a possibility of mistake. This direction cannot be too often repeated, that our assent ought always to keep pace with our evidence ; and our belief of any proposition should never rise higher than the proof, or evidence we have to support it, nor should our faith run faster than right reason can encourage it.

**XXIV.** Perhaps it will be objected here, why then does our Saviour, in the histories of the Gospel, so much commend a strong faith, and lay out both his miraculous benefits and his praises upon some of those poor creatures of little reasoning, who professed an assured belief of his commission and power to heal them?

I answer, the God of nature has given every man his own reason, to be the judge of evidence to himself, in particular, and to direct his assent in all things about which he is called to judge; and even the matters of revelation are to be believed by us, because our reason pronounces the revelation to be true. Therefore the great God will not, or cannot, in any instance, require us to assent to any thing without reasonable or sufficient evidence, nor to believe any proposition more strongly than what our evidence for it will support. We have therefore abundant ground to believe that those persons of whom our Saviour requires such strong faith, or whom he commends for their strong faith, had as strong and certain evidence of his power and commission from the credible and incontestible reports they had heard of his miracles, which were wrought on purpose to give evidence to his commission.\* Now in such a case, both this strong faith and the open profession of it, were very worthy of public encouragement and praise from our Saviour, because of the great and public opposition which the magistrates and the priests, and the doctors of the age, made against Jesus, the man of Nazareth, when he appeared as the Messiah.

And besides all this, it may be reasonably supposed, with regard to some of those strong exercises of faith which are required and commended, that these believers had some further hints of inward evidence and immediate revelation from God himself; as when St. Pe-

\* When our Saviour gently reproves Thomas for his unbelief, (*John XX. 29.*) he does it in these words: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed," *i. e.* "Blessed are they who, though they have not been favoured with the evidence of their senses as thou hast been, yet have been convinced by the reasonable and sufficient moral evidence of the well grounded report of others, and have believed in me upon that evidence." Of this moral evidence Mr. Ditton writes exceedingly well in his book of the Resurrection of Christ.



ter confesses Christ to be the Son of God, Matt. xvi. 16, 17, our blessed Saviour commends him, saying, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona:" But he adds, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

And the same may be said respecting the faith of miracles, the exercise of which was sometimes required of the disciples and others; *i. e.* when by inward and divine influences, God assured them such miracles should be wrought, their obedience to and compliance with these divine illuminations was expected and commended. Now this supernatural inspiration carried sufficient evidence with it to them, as well as to the ancient prophets, though we who never felt it are not so capable to judge and distinguish it.

XXV. What is said before concerning truth or doctrines may be also affirmed concerning duties; the reason of both is the same; as the one are truths for our speculation, the others are truths for our practice. Duties which are expressly required in the plain language of scripture, or dictated by the most evident reasoning upon first principles, ought to bind our consciences more than those which are but dubiously inferred, and that only from occasional occurrences, incidents, and circumstances; as for instance, I am certain that I ought to pray to God; my conscience is bound to this, because there are most evident commands for it to be found in scripture, as well as to be derived from reason. I believe also that I may pray to God, either by a written form, or without one, because neither reason nor revelation expressly requires either of these modes of prayer at all times, or forbids the other. I cannot therefore bind my conscience to practise the one so as utterly to renounce the other; but I would practise either of them as my reason and other circumstances direct me.

Again, I believe that Christians ought to remember the death of Christ by the symbols of bread and wine; and I believe there ought to be pastors in a Christian church some way ordained or set apart to lead the worship, and to bless and distribute these elements; but the last of these practices is not so expressly directed, prescribed, and required in scripture as the former;

and therefore I feel my conscience evidently bound to remember the death of Christ with some society of Christians or other, since it is a most plain command, though their methods of ordaining a pastor be very different from other men, or from my own opinion; or whether the person who distributes these elements be only an occasional or a settled administrator; since none of these things are plainly determined in scripture. I must not omit or neglect an express command, because some unnecessary circumstances are dubious. And I trust I shall receive approbation from the God of nature, and from Jesus my Judge at the last day, if I have endeavoured in this manner to believe and practice every thing in proportion to the degree of evidence which God has given me about it, or which he has put me into a capacity to seek and obtain in the age and nation wherein I live.

*Query.* Whether the obstinate Deists, and Fatalists of Great Britain, will find sufficient apology from this principle? But I leave them to venture the awful experiment.

XXVI. We may observe these three rules, in judging of probabilities which are to be determined by reason, relating either to things past, or things to come.

1. That which agrees most with the constitution of nature carries the greatest probability in it, where no other circumstance appears to counterpoise it; as, if I let loose a greyhound within sight of a hare upon a large plain, there is great probability that the greyhound will seize her; that a thousand sparrows will fly away at the sight of a hawk among them.

2. That which is most conformable to the constant observations of men, or to experiments frequently repeated, is most likely to be true; as, that a winter will not pass away in England without some frost and snow; that if you deal out great quantities of strong liquor to the mob, there will be many drunk; that a large assembly of men will be of different opinions in any doubtful point; that a thief will make his escape out of prison, if the doors of it are unguarded at midnight.

3. In matters of fact, which are past or present, where neither nature, nor observation, nor custom, gives us any sufficient information on either side of the

question, there we may derive a probability from the attestation of wise and honest men by word or writing, or the concurring witnesses of multitudes who have seen and known what they relate, &c. This testimony in many cases will arise to the degree of moral certainty. So we believe that the plant tea grows in China; and that the Emperor of the Turks lives at Constantinople; that Julius Cæsar conquered France, and that Jesus our Saviour lived and died in Judea; that thousands were converted to the Christian faith in a century after the death of Christ; and that the books which contain the religion are certain histories and epistles which were written above a thousand years ago. There is an infinite variety of such propositions which can admit of no reasonable doubt, though they are not matters which are directly evident to our own senses, or our mere reasoning powers.

XXVII. When a point hath been well examined, and our own judgment settled upon just arguments in our manly age, and after a large survey of the merits of the cause, it would be a weakness for us always to continue fluttering in suspense. We ought therefore to stand firm in such well-established principles, and not be tempted to change and alter for the sake of every difficulty, and every occasional objection. We are not to be carried about with every flying doctrine, like children tossed to and fro, and wavering with the wind. It is a good thing to have the heart established with grace, not with meats, that is, in the great doctrines of the gospel of grace, and in Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; but it is not so necessary in the more minute matters of religion, such as meats and drinks, forms and ceremonies, which are of less importance, and for which scripture has not given such express directions. This is the advice of the great Apostle, Eph. iv. 14. Heb. xiii. 8, 9.

In short, those truths which are the springs of daily practice should be settled as soon as we can with the exercise of our best powers, after the state of manhood; but those things wherein we may possibly mistake, should never be so absolutely and finally established and determined, as though we were infallible. If the Papists of Great Britain had maintained such a resolute

establishment and assurance in the days of King Henry the VIII, or Queen Elizabeth, there never had been a reformation; nor would any Heathen have been converted even under the ministry of St. Paul, if their obstinate settlement in their idolatries had kept their eyes shut against all further light. Yet this should not hinder us from settling our most important principles of faith and practice, where reason shines with its clearest evidence, and the word of God plainly determines truth and duty.

XXVIII. But let us remember also, that though the gospel be an infallible revelation, we are but fallible interpreters, when we determine the sense even of some important propositions written there; and therefore, though we seem to be established in the belief of any particular sense of scripture, and though there may be just calls of Providence to profess and subscribe it, yet there is no need that we should resolve or promise, subscribe or swear, never to change our mind; since it is possible, in the nature and course of things, we may meet with such a solid and substantial objection, as may give us quite a different view of things from what we once imagined, and may lay before us sufficient evidence of the contrary. We may happen to find a fairer light cast over the same scriptures, and see reason to alter our sentiments even in some points of moment. *Sic sentio, sic sentiam*, i. e. So I believe, and so I will believe, is the prison of the soul for life-time, and a bar against all the improvements of the mind. To impose such a profession on other men in matters not absolutely necessary, and not absolutely certain, is a criminal usurpation and tyranny over faith and conscience, and none has power to require it but an infallible dictator.

## CHAP. XIX.

### *Of Inquiring into Causes and Effects.*

**SOME** effects are found out by their causes, and some causes by their effects. Let us consider both these.

I. When we are inquiring into the causes of any particular effect or appearance, either in the world of

nature, or in the civil or moral concerns of men, we may follow this method:

1. Consider what effects or appearances you have known of a kindred nature, and what have been the certain and real causes of them; for like effects have generally like causes, especially when they are found in the same sort of subjects.

2. Consider what are the several possible causes which may produce such an effect; and find out by some circumstances how many of those possible causes are excluded in this particular case; thence proceed by degrees to the probable causes, till a more close attention and inspection shall exclude some of them also, and lead you gradually to the real and certain cause.

3. Consider what things preceded such an event or appearance, which might have any influence upon it; and though we cannot certainly determine the cause of any thing only from its going before the effect, yet among the many forerunners, we may probably light upon the true cause by further and more particular inquiry.

4. Consider whether one cause be sufficient to produce the effect, or whether it does not require a concurrence of several causes; and then endeavour as far as possible to adjust the degrees of influence that each cause might have in producing the effect, and the proper agency and influence of each of them therein.

So in natural philosophy, if I would find what are the principles or causes of that sensation which we call heat when I stand near the fire; here I shall find it is necessary that there be an agency of the particles of fire on my flesh, either immediately by themselves, or at least by the intermediate air; there must be a particular sort of motion and vellication imprest upon my nerves; there must be a derivation of that motion to the brain; and there must be an attention of my soul to this motion; if either of these are wanting, the sensation of heat will not be produced.

So in the moral world, if I inquire into the revolution of a state or kingdom, perhaps I find it brought about by the tyranny or folly of a prince, or by the disaffection of his own subjects; and this disaffection and opposition may arise, either upon the account of

impositions in religion, or injuries relating to their civil rights; or the revolution may be effected by the invasion of a foreign army, or by the opposition of some person at home or abroad, that lays claim to the government, &c. or a hero who would guard the liberties of the people; or by many of these concurring together; then we must adjust the influences of each as wisely as we can, and not ascribe the whole event to one of them alone.

II. When we are inquiring into the effects of any particular cause or causes, we may follow this method:

1. Consider diligently the nature of every cause apart, and observe what effect every part, or property of it will tend to produce.

2. Consider the causes united together in their several natures, and ways of operation; inquire how far the powers or properties of one will hinder or promote the effects of the other, and wisely balance the proportions of their influence.

3. Consider what the subject is, in or upon which the cause is to operate; for the same cause on different subjects will oftentimes produce different effects, as the sun which softens wax, will harden clay.

4. Be frequent and diligent in making all proper experiments, in setting such causes at work whose effects you desire to know, and putting together in an orderly manner such things as are most likely to produce some useful effects, according to the best survey you can take of all the concurring causes and circumstances.

5. Observe carefully all the events which happen either by an occasional concurrence of various causes, or by the industrious application of knowing men; and when you see any happy effect certainly produced, and often repeated, treasure it up, together with the known causes of it, amongst your improvements.

6. Take a just survey of all the circumstances which attend the operation of any cause or causes, whereby any special effect is produced, and find out as far as possible how far any of those circumstances had a tendency either to obstruct or promote, or change those operations, and consequently how far the effect might be influenced by them.

In this manner physicians practise and improve their

skill. They consider the various known effects of particular herbs or drugs, they meditate what will be the effects of their composition, and whether the virtues of the one will exalt or diminish the force of the other, or correct any of its innocent qualities. Then they observe the native constitution, and the present temper or circumstances of the patient, and what is likely to be the effect of such a medicine on such a patient. And in all uncommon cases, they make wise and cautious experiments, and nicely observe the effects of particular compound medicines on different constitutions, and in different diseases; and by these treasures of just observations, they grow up to an honourable degree of skill in the art of healing.

So the preacher considers the doctrines and reasons, precepts, promises and threatenings of the word of God, and what are the natural effects of them upon the mind; he considers what is the natural tendency of such a virtue or such a vice; he is well apprized that the representation of some of these things may convince the understanding, some may terrify the conscience, some may allure the slothful, and some encourage the desponding mind; he observes the temper of his hearers, or of any particular person that converses with him about things sacred, and he judges what will be the effects of each representation on such persons; he reviews and recollects what have been the effects of some special parts and methods of his ministry; and by a careful survey of all these, he attains greater degrees of skill in his sacred employment.

*Note.*—In all these cases we must distinguish those causes and effects which are naturally and necessarily connected with each other, from those which have only an accidental or contingent connexion. Even in those causes where the effect is but contingent, we may sometimes arrive at a very high degree of probability; yet we cannot arrive at such certainty as where the causes operate by an evident and natural necessity, and the effects necessarily follow the operation.

See more on this subject, *Logic*, Part II. Chap. V. Sect. 7.

## CHAP. XX.

*Of the Sciences, and their Use in particular Professions.*

1. **THE** best way to learn any science, is to begin with a regular system, or a short and plain scheme of that science, well drawn up into a narrow compass, omitting the deeper and more abstruse parts of it, and that also under the conduct and instruction of some skilful teacher. Systems are necessary to give an entire and comprehensive view of the several parts of any science, which may have a mutual influence towards the explication or proof of each other; whereas, if a man deals always and only in essays and discourses on particular parts of a science, he will never obtain a distinct and just idea of the whole, and may perhaps omit some important part of it, after seven years reading of such occasional discourses.

For this reason, young students should apply themselves to their systems much more than pamphlets. That man is never so fit to judge of particular subjects relating to any science who has never taken a survey of the whole.

It is the remark of an ingenious writer, should a barbarous Indian, who had never seen a palace or a ship, view their separate and disjointed parts, and observe the pillars, doors, windows, cornices, and turrets of the one, or the prow and stern, the ribs and masts, the ropes and shrouds, the sails and tackle of the other, he would be able to form but a very lame and dark idea of either of those excellent and useful inventions. In like manner, those who contemplate only the fragments or pieces broken off from any science, dispersed in short unconnected discourses, and do not discern their relation to each other, and how they may be adapted, and by their union procure the delightful symmetry of a regular scheme, can never survey an entire body of truth, but must always view it as deformed and dismembered; while their ideas, which must be ever indistinct, and often repugnant, will lie in the brain unsorted, and thrown together without order or coherence; such is the knowledge of those men who live upon the scraps of the sciences.



A youth of genius and lively imagination, of an active and forward spirit, may form within himself some alluring scenes and pleasing schemes in the beginning of a science, which are utterly inconsistent with some of the necessary and substantial parts of it, which appear in the middle or the end. And if he never read and pass through the whole, he takes up and is satisfied with his own hasty pleasing schemes, and treasures these errors up amongst his solid acquisitions; whereas his own labour and study farther pursued, would have shown him his early mistakes, and cured him of his self flattering delusions.

Hence it comes to pass, that we have so many half scholars now a days, and there is so much confusion and inconsistency in the notions and opinions of some persons; because they devote their hours of study entirely to short essays and pamphlets, and cast contempt upon the systems, under a pretence of greater politeness; whereas the true reason of this contempt of systematical learning, is mere laziness and want of judgment.

II. After we are grown well acquainted with a short system or compendium of a science, which is written in the plainest and most simple manner, it is then proper to read a large regular treatise on that subject, if we design a complete knowledge and cultivation of it; and either while we are reading this larger system, or after we have done it, then occasional discourses and essays upon the particular subjects and parts of that science, may be read with the greatest profit; for in these essays we may often find very considerable corrections and improvements of what these compends, or even the larger systems may have taught us, mingled with some mistakes.

And these corrections or improvements should be as remarks adjoined by way of note or commentary in their proper places, and superadded to the regular treatise we have read. Then a studious and judicious review of the whole will give us a tolerable acquaintance with that science.

III. It is a great happiness to have such a tutor, or such friends and companions at hand, who are able to inform us what are the best books written on any science, or any special part of it. For want of this advan-

tage, many a man has wasted his time in reading over perhaps some whole volumes, and learnt little more by it than to know that those volumes were not worth his reading.

IV. As for the languages, they are certainly best learnt in the younger years of life. The memory is then most empty and unfurnished, and ready to receive new ideas continually. We find the children, in two years time after they are born, learn to speak their native tongue.

V. The mere abstracted sciences, which depend more upon the understanding and judgment, and which deal much in abstracted ideas, should not be imposed upon children too soon; such are logic, metaphysics, ethics, politics, or the depths and difficulties of grammar and criticism. Yet it must be confessed, first the rudiments of grammar are necessary, or at least very convenient to be known, when a youth learns a new language; and some general easy principles and rules of morality and divinity are needful, in order to teach a child his duty to God and man; but to enter far into abstracted reasonings on these subjects is beyond the capacity of children.

VI. There are several of the sciences that will more agreeably employ our younger years, and the general parts of them may be easily taken in by boys. The first principles and easier practices of arithmetic, geometry, plain trigonometry, measuring heights, depths, lengths, distances, &c. the rudiments of geography and astronomy, together with something of mechanics, may be easily conveyed into the minds of acute young persons from nine or ten years old and upwards.— These studies may be entertaining and useful to young ladies as well as to gentlemen, and to all those who are bred up to the learned professions. The fair sex may intermingle those with the operations of the needle, and the knowledge of domestic life. Boys may be taught to join them with their rudiments of grammar, and their labour in the languages. And even those who never learn any language but their mother tongue, may be taught these sciences with lasting benefit in early days.

That this may be done with ease and advantage; take these three reasons:

(1.) Because they depend so much upon schemes and numbers, images, lines, and figures, and sensible things, that the imagination or fancy will greatly assist the understanding, and render the knowledge of them much more easy.

(2.) These studies are so pleasant, that they will make the dry labour of learning words, phrases, and languages, more tolerable to boys in a Latin school, by this most agreeable mixture. The employment of youth in these studies, will tempt them to neglect many of the foolish plays of childhood, and they will find sweeter entertainment for themselves and their leisure hours, by a cultivation of these pretty pieces of alluring knowledge.

(3.) The knowledge of these parts of science are both easy and worthy to be retained in the memory by all children when they come to manly years, for they are useful through all the parts of human life: They tend to enlarge the understanding early, and to give a various acquaintance with useful subjects by times. And surely it is best, as far as possible, to train up children in the knowledge of those things which they should never forget, rather than to let them waste years of life in trifles, or in hard words which are not worth remembering.

And here by the way, I cannot but wonder that any author in our age should have attempted to teach any of the exploded physics of Descartes, or the nobler inventions of Sir Isaac Newton in his hypothesis of the heavenly bodies and their motions, in his doctrine of light and colours, and other parts of his physiology, or to instruct children in the knowledge of the theory of the heavens, earth, and planets, without any figures or diagrams. Is it possible to give a boy or a young lady the clear, distinct, and proper apprehensions of these things without lines and figures to describe them? Does not their understanding want the aid of fancy and images to convey stronger and juster ideas of them to the inmost soul? Or do they imagine that youth can penetrate into all these beauties and artifices of nature, without those which persons of maturer age find necessary for that purpose? I would not willingly name the books, because some of the writers are said to be gentlemen of excellent acquirements.

VII. After we have first learnt and gone through any of those arts or sciences which are to be explained by diagrams, figures, and schemes, such as geometry, geography, astronomy, optics, mechanics, &c. we may best preserve them in memory, by having those schemes and figures in large sheets of paper, hanging always before the eye in closets, parlours, halls, chambers, entries, staircases, &c. Thus the learned images will be perpetually imprest on the brain, and will keep the learning that depends upon them alive and fresh in the mind through the growing years of life; the mere diagrams and figures will ever recal to our thoughts those theorems, problems, and corollaries which have been demonstrated by them.

It is incredible how much geography may be learnt this way by the two terrestrial hemispheres, and by particular maps and charts of the coasts and countries of the earth, happily disposed round about us. Thus we may learn also the constellations, by just projections of the celestial sphere, hung up in the same manner. And I must confess, for the bulk of learners of astronomy, I like that projection of the stars best, which includes in it all the stars in our horizon, and therefore it reaches to the  $38\frac{1}{2}$  degrees of southern latitude, though its centre be the north pole. This gives us a better view of the heavenly bodies as they appear every night to us; and it may be made use of with a little instruction, and with ease, to serve for a nocturnal, and show the true hour of the night.

But remember, that if there be any colouring upon these maps, or projections, it should be laid on so thin as not to obscure or conceal any part of the lines, figures, or letters; whereas most times they are daubed so thick with gay and glaring colours, and hung up so high above the reach of the eye that should survey and read them, as though their only design were to make a gaudy show upon the wall, and they hung there merely to cover the naked plaister or wainscot. Those sciences which may be drawn out into tables may also be thus hung up and disposed in proper places, such as brief abstracts of history, chronology, &c. and indeed the schemes of any of the arts or sciences may be analyzed in a sort of skeleton, and represented upon tables, with various dependencies and connexions of their

several parts and subjects that belong to them. Mr Solomon Lowe has happily thrown the grammar of several languages into such tables; and a frequent review of these abstracts and epitomes would tend much to imprint them on the brain, when they have been once well learned; this would keep those learned traces always open, and assist the weakness of a labouring memory. In this manner may a scheme of the scripture history be drawn out, and perpetuate those ideas in the mind with which our daily reading furnishes us.

VIII. Every man who pretends to the character of a scholar should attain some general and superficial idea of most or all the sciences; for there is a certain connexion among the various parts of human knowledge, so that some notions borrowed from any one science may assist our acquaintance with any other, either by way of explication, illustration, or proof, though there are some sciences conjoined by a much nearer affinity than others.

IX. Let those parts of every science be chiefly studied at first, and reviewed afterwards, which have a more direct tendency to assist our proper profession, as men, or our general profession as Christians, always observing what we ourselves have found most necessary and useful to us in the course of our lives. Age and experience will teach us to judge which of the sciences, and which parts of them have been of greatest use, and are most valuable; but in younger years of life we are not sufficient judges of this matter, and therefore should seek advice from others who are elder.

X. There are three learned professions among us, viz. divinity, law, and medicine. Though every man who pretends to be a scholar or a gentleman, should so far acquaint himself with a superficial scheme of all the sciences, as not to stand amazed like a mere stranger at the mention of the common subjects that belong to them; yet there is no necessity for every man of learning to enter into their difficulties and deep recesses, nor to climb the heights to which some others have arrived. The knowledge of them in a proper measure may be happily useful to every profession, not only because all arts and sciences have a sort of communion

and connexion with each other, but it is an angelic pleasure to grow in knowledge, it is a matter of honour and esteem, and renders a man more agreeable and acceptable in every company.

But let us survey several of them more particularly, with regard to the learned professions; and first of the mathematics.

XI. Though I have so often commended mathematical studies, and particularly the speculations of arithmetic and geometry as a means to fix a wavering mind, to beget an habit of attention, and to improve the faculty of reason; yet I would by no means be understood to recommend to all a pursuit of these sciences to those extensive lengths to which the moderns have advanced them. This is neither necessary nor proper for any students, but those few who shall make these studies their chief profession and business of life, or those gentlemen whose capacities and turn of mind are suited to these studies, and have all manner of advantage to improve in them.

The general principles of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, of geography, of modern astronomy, mechanics, statics, and optics, have their valuable and excellent uses, not only for the exercise and improvement of the faculties of the mind, but the subjects themselves are very well worth our knowledge in a moderate degree, and are often made of admirable service in human life. So much of these subjects as Dr. Wells has given us in his three volumes, entitled, "*The Young Gentleman's Mathematics*," is richly sufficient for the greatest part of scholars or gentlemen; though perhaps there may be some single treatises, at least on some of these subjects, which may be better written and more useful to be perused, than those of that learned author.

But a penetration into the abstruse difficulties and depths of modern algebra and fluxions, the various methods of quadratures, the mensuration of all manner of curves, and their mutual transformation, and twenty other things that some modern mathematicians deal in, are not worth the labour of those who design either of the three learned professions, divinity, law, or physic, as the business of life. This is the sentence of a con-

siderable man, viz. Dr. George Cheyne, who was a very good proficient and writer on these subjects : He affirms, that they are but barren and airy studies for a man entirely to live upon, and that for a man to indulge and riot in these exquisitely bewitching contemplations, is only proper for public professors, or for gentlemen of estates, who have a strong propensity this way, and a genius fit to cultivate them.

But, says he, to own a great but grievous truth, though they may quicken and sharpen the invention, strengthen and extend the imagination, improve and refine the reasoning faculties, and are of use both in the necessary and the luxurious refinement of the mechanical arts ; yet, having no tendency to rectify the will, to sweeten the temper, or mend the heart, they often leave a stiffness, a positiveness and sufficiency on weak minds, which is much more pernicious to society, and to the interests of the great end of our being, than all their advantages can recompense. He adds further, concerning the launching into the depth of these studies, that they are apt to beget a secret and refined pride, and over weening and over bearing vanity, the most opposite temper to the true spirit of the gospel. This tempts them to presume on a kind of omniscience in respect to their fellow creatures, who have not risen to their elevation ; nor are they fit to be trusted in the hands of any but those who have acquired a humble heart, a lowly spirit, and a sober and teachable temper. See Dr. Cheyne's preface to his Essay on Health and Long Life.

XII. Some of the practical parts of geometry, astronomy, dialling, optics, statics, mechanics, &c. may be agreeable entertainments and amusements to students in every profession, at leisure hours, if they enjoy such circumstances of life as to furnish them with conveniencies for this sort of improvement ; but let them take great care lest they entrench upon more necessary employments, and so fall under the charge and censure of wasted time.

Yet I cannot help making this observation, that where students, or indeed any young gentlemen, have in their early years made themselves masters of a variety of elegant problems in the mathematical circle of knowledge, and gained the most easy, neat, and entertaining

experiments in natural philosophy, with some short and agreeable speculations or practices in any other of the arts and sciences, they have hereby laid a foundation for the esteem and love of mankind among those with whom they converse, in higher or lower ranks of life; they have been often guarded by this means from the temptation of indolent pleasures, and have secured both their own hours and the hours of their companions from running to waste in sauntering and trifles, and from a thousand impertinences in silly dialogues. Gaming and drinking, and many criminal and foolish scenes of talk and action, have been prevented by these innocent and improving elegancies of knowledge.

XIII. History is a necessary study in the supreme place for gentlemen who deal in politics. The government of nations, and distressful and desolating events which have in all ages attended the mistakes of politicians, should be ever present on their minds, to warn them to avoid the like conduct. Geography and chronology, which precisely inform us of the place and time where such transactions or events happened, are the eyes of history, and of absolute necessity in some measure to attend it.

But history, so far as relates to the affairs of the Bible, is as necessary to divines as to gentlemen of any profession. It helps us to reconcile many difficulties in scripture, and demonstrates a divine Providence. Dr. Prideaux's connexion of the Old and New Testament is an excellent treatise of this kind.

XIV. Among the smaller histories, biography or the memoirs of the lives of great and good men, has a high rank in my esteem, as worthy of the perusal of every person who devotes himself to the study of divinity. Therein we frequently find our holy religion reduced to practice, and many parts of Christianity shining with a transcendent and exemplary light. We learn there how deeply sensible great and good men have been of the ruins of human nature, by the first apostacy from God, and how they have toiled and laboured, and turned themselves on all sides, to seek a recovery, in vain, till they have found the gospel of Christ an all sufficient relief. We are there furnished with effectual and unanswerable evidences that the religion of Jesus, with all its self denials, virtues and devotions, is a very practica-



ble thing, since it has been carried to such a degree of honour by some wise and holy men. We have been there assured, that the pleasures and satisfactions of the Christian life, in its present practice and future hopes, are not the mere raptures of fancy and enthusiasm, when some of the strictest professors of reason have added the sanction of their testimony.

In short, the lives or memoirs of persons of piety, well written, have been of infinite and unspeakable advantage to the disciples and professors of Christianity, and have given us admirable instances and rules how to resist every temptation of a soothing or frowning world, how to practise important and difficult duties, how to love God above all, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, to live by the faith of the Son of God, and to die in the same faith, in sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life.

XV. Remember that logic and ontology or metaphysics are necessary sciences, though they have been greatly abused by scholastic writers, who have professed to teach them in former ages. Not only all students, whether they design the profession of theology, law or physic, but all gentlemen should at least acquire a superficial knowledge of them. The introduction of so many subtleties, nice distinctions, and insignificant terms, without clear ideas, has brought a great part of the logic and metaphysics of the schools into just contempt. Their logic has appeared the mere art of wrangling, and their metaphysics the skill of splitting an hair, of distinguishing without a difference, and of putting long hard names upon common things, and sometimes upon a confused jumble of things, which have no clear ideas belonging to them.

It is certain that an unknown heap of trifles and impertinencies have been intermingled with those useful parts of learning, upon which account many persons in this polite age, have made it a part of their breeding to throw a jest upon them; and to rally them well has been esteemed a more valuable talent than to understand them.

But this is running into wide extremes; nor ought these parts of science to be abandoned by the wise, because some writers of former ages have played the fool with them. True logic teaches us to use our reason

well, and brings a light into the understanding; true metaphysics, or ontology, casts a light upon all the objects of thought and meditation, by ranging every being, with all the absolute and relative perfections and properties, modes, and attendants of it, in proper ranks or classes, and thereby it discovers the various relations of things to each other, and what are their general or special differences from each other, wherein a great part of human knowledge consists. And by this means it greatly conduces to instruct us in method, or the disposition of every thing into its proper rank or class of beings, attributes, or actions.

XVI. If I were to say any thing of natural philosophy, I would venture to lay down my sentiments thus :

I think it must needs be very useful to a divine to understand something of natural science. The mere natural history of birds, beasts, and fishes, of insects, trees, and plants, as well as of meteors, such as clouds, thunders, lightnings, snow, hail, frost, &c. in all their common or uncommon appearances, may be of considerable use to one who studies divinity, to give him a wider and more delightful view of the works of God, and to furnish him with lively and happy images and metaphors drawn from the large volume of nature, to display and represent the things of God and religion, in the most beautiful and affecting colours.

And if the mere history of these things be useful for this purpose, surely it will be of further advantage to be led into the reasons, causes, and effects of these natural objects and appearances, and to know the established laws of nature, matter and motion, whereby the great God carries on his extensive works of providence from the creation to this day.

I confess the old Aristotelean scheme of this science will teach us but very little that is worth knowing, about these matters; but the late writers, who have explained nature and its operations in a more sensible and geometrical manner, are well worth the moderate study of a divine; especially those who have followed the principles of that wonder of our age and nation, Sir Isaac Newton. There is much pleasure and entertainment, as well as real profit, to be derived from those admirable improvements which have been advanced in natural philosophy in late years, by the assistance of mathematical

learning, as well as from the multitude of experiments which have been made, and are still making in natural subjects.

**XVII.** This is a science which indeed eminently belongs to the physician; he ought to know all the parts of human nature, what are the sound and healthy functions of an animal body, and what are the distempers and dangers which attend it; he should also be furnished with a large knowledge of plants and minerals, and every thing which makes up the *materia medica*, or the ingredients of which medicines are made; and many other things in natural philosophy, are subservient to his profession, as well as the kindred art of surgery.

**XVIII.** Questions about the powers and operations of nature may also sometimes come into the lawyers cognizance, especially such as relate to assaults, wounds, murders, &c. I remember I have read the trial of a man for murder by crowning, wherein the judge on the bench heard several arguments concerning the lungs being filled or not filled with water, by inspiration or expiration, &c. to all which he professed himself so much a stranger, as did not do him any great honour in public.

**XIX.** But I think no divine, who can obtain it, should be utterly destitute of this knowledge. By the assistance of this study, he will be better able to survey the various monuments of creating wisdom in the heavens, the earth, and the seas, with wonder and worship; and by the use of a moderate skill in this science, he may communicate so much of the astonishing works of God, in the formation and government of this visible world, and so far instruct many of his hearers, as may assist the transfusion of the same ideas into their minds, and raise them to the same delightful exercises of devotion.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all! They are sought out by all that have pleasure in them.

Besides, it is worthy of the notice of every student in theology, that he ought to have some acquaintance with the principles of nature, that he may judge a little how far they will go; so that he may not be imposed upon to take every strange appearance in nature for a miracle, that he may reason the clearer upon this subject, that he may better confirm the miracles of Moses and of

Christ, nor yield up his faith to any pretences of prodigy and wonder, which are either the occasional and uncommon operations of the elements, or the crafty sleights of men well skilled in philosophy and mechanical operations to delude the simple.

XX. The knowledge also of animal nature, and of the rational soul of man, and the mutual influence of these two ingredients of our composition upon each other, is worthy the study of a divine. It is of great importance to persons of this character and office, to judge how far the animal powers have influence upon such and such particular appearances and practices of mankind; how far the appetites or passions of human nature are owing to the flesh and blood, or to the mind; how far they may be moderated, and how far they ought to be subdued; and what are the happiest methods of obtaining these ends. By this science also we may be better informed how far these passions or appetites are lawful, and how far they are criminal, by considering how far they are subjected to the power of the will, and how far they may be changed, and corrected by our watchfulness, care and diligence.

It comes also very properly under the cognizance of this profession, to be able in some measure to determine questions which may arise relating to real inspiration, or prophesy, to wild enthusiasm, to fits of a convulsive kind, to melancholy or phrenzy, &c. and what directions are proper to be given concerning any appearances of this nature.

XXI. Next to the knowledge of natural things, and acquaintance with the human nature and constitution, which is made up of soul and body, I think natural religion properly takes its place. This consists of these two parts, viz. (1.) The speculative or contemplative, which is the knowledge of God in his various perfections, and in his relations to his rational creatures, so far as they may be known by the light of nature, which heretofore used to be called the second part of metaphysics. It includes also (2.) That which is practical or active, which is the knowledge of the several duties which arise from our relation to God, and our relation to our fellow creatures, and the proper conduct and government of ourselves; this has been used to be called ethics, or moral philosophy.

XXII. The knowledge of these things is proper for

all men of learning ; not only because it teaches them to obtain just views of the several parts of revealed religion and of Christianity, which are built upon them, but because every branch of natural religion and of moral duty is contained, and necessarily implied, in all the revealed religions that ever God prescribed to the world. We may well suspect that religion does not come from God, which renounces any part or natural duty.

Whether mankind live under the dispensation of the patriarchs, or of Moses, or the prophets, or of our Lord Jesus Christ, still we are bound to know the one true God, and to practise all that adoration and reverence, all that love to him, that faith in his perfections, with that obedience and submission to his will, which natural religion requires. We are still bound to exercise that justice, truth and goodness towards our neighbours, that restraint and moderation of our own appetites and passions, and that regular behaviour towards ourselves and all our fellow creatures around us, which moral philosophy teaches. There is no sort of revealed religion that will dispense with these natural obligations ; and a happy acquaintance with the several appetites, inclinations, and passions of human nature, and the best methods to rule and restrain, to direct and govern them, are our constant business, and ought to be our everlasting study.

Yet I would lay down this caution, viz. That since students are instructed in the knowledge of the true God in their lectures on Christianity, and since among the Christian duties they are also taught all the moral dictates of the light of nature, or a complete scheme of ethics, there is no absolute necessity of learning these two parts of natural religion, as distinct sciences, separate and by themselves ; but still it is of great importance for a tutor, while he is reading to his pupils these parts of the Christian religion, to give them notice how far the light of nature or mere reason will instruct us in these doctrines and duties, and how far we are obliged to divine revelation and scripture, for clearing up and establishing the firm foundations of the one, for affording us superior motives and powers to practise the other, for raising them to more exalted degrees, and building so glorious a superstructure upon them.

XXIII. The study of natural religion, viz. The knowledge of God and the rules of virtue and piety as far as they are discovered by the light of nature, is needful indeed, to prove the truth of divine revelation or scripture in the most effectual manner; but after the divine authority of scripture is established, that will be a very sufficient spring from whence the bulk of mankind may derive their knowledge of divinity, or the Christian religion, in order to their own present faith and practice, and their future and eternal happiness. In this sense theology is a science necessary for every one that hopes for the favour of God, and the felicity of another world; and it is of infinitely more importance than any of the arts and sciences which belong to the learned professions here on earth.

XXIV. Perhaps it will be thought necessary I should say something concerning the study of the civil law, or the law of nature and nations.

If we should speak with great justness and propriety, the civil law signifies the peculiar law of each state, country, or city; but what we now a days usually mean by the civil law, is a body of laws composed out of the best of the Roman and Grecian laws, and which was in the main received and observed through all the Roman dominions for above twelve hundred years.

The Romans took the first grounds of this law from what they call the twelve tables, which were the abridgments of the laws of Solon at Athens, and of the other cities in Greece famous for knowledge and wisdom; to which they added their own ancient customs of the city of Rome, and the laws which were made there. These written laws were subject to various interpretations, whence controversies daily arising, they were determined by the judgment of the learned; and these determinations were what they first called *Jus Civile*.—All this by degrees grew to a vast number of volumes; and therefore the Emperor Justinian commanded his chancellor Tribonian to reduce them to a perfect body, and this is called the body of the civil law.

XXV. But that which is of most importance for all learned men to be acquainted with is the law of nature, or the knowledge of right and wrong among mankind, whether it be transacted between single persons or communities, so far as common reason and the light

of nature dictate and direct.—This is what Puffendorff calls the law of nature and nations, as will appear if you consult Sect. 3. Chap. III. of that most valuable folio he has written on the subject; which is well worthy the study of every man of learning, particularly lawyers and divines, together with other treatises on the same theme.

If any question proposed relates to right, and property, and justice between man and man, in any polite and civilized country, though it must be adjudged chiefly according to the particular statutes and laws of that country, yet the knowledge of the law of nature will very considerably assist the lawyer and the civil judge in the determination thereof. And this knowledge will be of great use to divines, not only in deciding of cases of conscience among men, and answering any difficult inquiries which may be proposed to them on this subject, but it will greatly assist them also in their studies relating to the law of God, and the performance or violation thereof, the nature of duty and sin, rewards and punishments.

XXVI. I have spoken something of the languages before, but let me here resume the subject, and put in a few thoughts about those studies which are wont to be called philological; such as history, languages, grammar, rhetoric, poesy, and criticism.

An acquaintance with some of the learned languages at least, is necessary for all the three learned professions.

XXVII. The lawyers, who have the least need of foreign tongues, ought to understand Latin. During many ages past, very important matters in the law were always written and managed in that language by the lawyers, as prescriptions in medicine by the physicians, and citations of the scriptures in divinity were always made in Latin by the divines. Prayers also were ordained to be said publicly and privately in the Roman tongue; *pater nosters* and *ave marias* were half the devotion of those ages. These cruel impositions upon the people would not suffer them to read in their own mother tongue what was done, either to or for their own souls, their bodies, or their estates. I am ready to suspect this was all owing to the craft and policy of the priesthood and church of Rome, which enleavoured to aggrandize themselves, and exalt their

own profession into a sovereign tyranny, and to make mere slaves of the laity among mankind, by keeping them in utter ignorance, darkness, and dependence. And they were willing to compound the matter with the physicians and the lawyers, and allow them a small share in this tyranny over the populace, to maintain their own supreme dominion over all.

But we thank God the world is growing something wiser ; and of late years the British Parliament has been pleased to give relief from that bondage in matters relating to the law also, as in the age of the Reformation we were delivered from saying our prayers in Latin, from being bound to read the word of God in a tongue unknown to the people, and from living in everlasting subjection to the clergy in matters of this life, and the life to come.

But to return : There are still so many forms of proceedings in judicature, and things called by Latin names in the professions of the law, and so many barbarous words with Latin terminations, that it is necessary lawyers should understand this language. Some acquaintance also with the old French tongue is needful for the same persons and profession, since the tenures of Lyttleton, which are a sort of Bible to the gentlemen of the long robe, were written in that language ; and this tongue has been interwoven in some forms of the English law, from the days of William the conqueror, who came from Normandy to France.

XXVIII. Physicians should be skilled in the Greek as well as the Latin, because their great master Hippocrates wrote in that tongue, and his writings are still of good value and use. A multitude of the names, both of the parts of the body, of diseases, and of medicines, are derived from the Greek language ; and there are many excellent books of physic, both in the theoretical and practical parts of it, which are delivered to the world in the Roman tongue ; and of which that profession should not be ignorant.

XXIX. Such as intend the study of theology should be well acquainted also with the Latin, because it has been for many hundred years the language of the schools of learning ; their disputations are generally limited to that language, and many and excellent books of divinity must be entirely concealed from the stu-



dents, unless they are acquainted with the Latin authors.

But those that design the sacred profession of theology, should make it their labour of chief importance to be very conversant with their Bibles, both in the Old and New Testament; and this requires some knowledge of those original languages, Greek and Hebrew, in which the scriptures were written. All that will pursue these studies with honour, should be able to read the Old Testament tolerably in the Hebrew tongue; at least they should be so far acquainted with it, as to find out the sense of a text by the help of a dictionary. But scarce any man should be thought worthy the name of a solid divine, or a skilful teacher of the gospel, in these days of light and liberty, unless he has pretty good knowledge of the Greek, since all the important points of the Christian religion are derived from the New Testament, which was first written in that language.

XXX. As for the Syriac and Arabic tongues, if one divine in thirty, or in three hundred, travel far into these regions, it is enough. A few learned men skilled in these languages will make sufficient remarks upon them for the service of the whole Christian world; which remarks may sometimes happen to be of use to those divines who are unacquainted with them, in reading the Bible. But the advantage of these tongues is not of so great importance as it has been too often represented. My reader will agree with me, when he considers that the chief uses of them are these:

The Arabic is a language which has some kindred and affinity to the Hebrew, and perhaps we may now and then guess at the sense of some uncommon and doubtful Hebrew word, which is found but once or twice in the Bible, by its supposed affinity to the Arabic; but whatsoever conjectures may be made by some kindred of a Hebrew word to an Arabic root, yet there is no certainty to be gathered from it; for even words of the same language, which are undoubtedly derived from the same theme or primitive, will give us but very doubtful and sorry information concerning the true sense of kindred words which spring from the same theme.

Let me give a plain instance or two of this uncertainty: The word *strages* signifies slaughter; *stratum* is Latin for a bed; *stramen* is straw; and *stragulum* is a quilt or coverlet: They are all drawn and derived from *sterno*, which signifies to throw down, to kill, or to spread abroad. Let the critics tell me what certain sense they could put upon either of these four words by their mere cognation with each other, or their derivation from one common verb. Again, who could tell me the certain meaning and precise idea of the word honest in English, and assure me that it signifies a man of integrity, justice and probity, though it be evidently derived from *honestus* in Latin? Whereas *honestus* hath a very different idea, and signifies a man of some figure in the world, or a man of honour. Let any man judge then how little service toward explaining the Hebrew tongue can be furnished from all the language of Arabia. Surely a great part of the long learned fatigues and tiresome travels of men through this country, is almost vain and useless to make the Hebrew Bible better understood.

As for the Syriac language, it is granted there may be some small advantage drawn from the knowledge of it, because there is a very ancient translation of the New Testament in that tongue; and perhaps this may sometimes give a proper and apposite meaning to a difficult and doubtful text, and a fair hint for recovering the true meaning of the scripture from the perverse glosses of other writers. But there are several commentators and lexicographers who have been acquainted with the Syriac language, and have given us the chief of these hints in their writings on scripture.

And after all, since none of these assistances can yield us a sufficient proof of a true interpretation, and give us the certain sense of a text, who would be persuaded to waste any great number of his better hours in such dry studies, and in labours of so little profit?

XXXI. The Chaldean language indeed is much nearer to the Hebrew, and it is proper for a divine to have some acquaintance with it, because there are several verses or chapters of Ezra and Daniel which are written in that language; and the old Jewish targums or commentaries, which are written in the Chaldean tongue, may sometimes happen to cast a little light upon a doubtful scripture of the Old Testament.

But it must be still owned, that the knowledge of these eastern tongues does not deserve to be magnified to such a degree as some of the proficients in them have indulged ; wherein they have carried matters beyond all reason and justice, since scarce any of the most important subjects of the gospel of Christ, and the way of salvation, can gain any advantage from them.

**XXXII.** The art of grammar comes now to be mentioned. It is a distinct thing from the mere knowledge of the languages ; for all mankind are taught from their infancy to speak their mother tongue, by a natural imitation of their mothers and nurses, and those who are round about them, without any knowledge of the art of grammar, and the various observations and rules that relate to it. Grammar indeed is nothing else but rules and observations drawn from the common speech of mankind in their several languages ; and it teaches us to speak and pronounce, to spell and write with propriety and exactness, according to the custom of those in every nation, who are or were supposed to speak and write their own languages best : Now it is a shame for a man to pretend to science and study in any of the three learned professions, who is not in some measure acquainted with the propriety of those languages with which he ought to be conversant in his daily studies, and more especially in such as he may sometimes be called upon to write as well as read.

**XXXIII.** Next to grammar we proceed to consider rhetoric.

Now rhetoric in general is the art of persuading, which may be distinguished into these three parts, viz. (1.) Conveying the sense of the speaker to the understanding of the hearers in the clearest and most intelligible manner by the plainest expressions ; and the most lively and striking representations of it, so that the mind may be thoroughly convinced of the thing proposed. (2.) Persuading the will effectually to choose or refuse the thing suggested and represented. (3.) Raising the passions in the most vivid and forcible manner, so as to set all the soul and every power of nature at work, to pursue or avoid the thing in debate.

To attain this end, there is not only a great deal of art necessary in the representation of matters to the

auditory, but also in the disposition or method of introducing these particular representations, together with the reasons which might convince, and the various methods which might persuade and prevail upon the hearers. There are certain seasons wherein a violent torrent of oration, in a disguised and concealed method, may be more effectual than all the nice forms of logic and reasoning. The figures of interrogation and exclamation have sometimes a large place and happy effect in this sort of discourse, and no figure of speech should be wanting here, where the speaker has art enough happily to introduce it.

There are many remarks and rules laid down by the teachers of this art, to improve a young genius into those glorious talents whereby Tully and Demosthenes acquired that amazing influence and success in their own age and nation, and that immortal fame through all nations and ages. And it is with great advantage these rules may be perused and learned. But a happy genius, a lively imagination, and warm passions, together with a due degree of knowledge and skill in the subjects to be debated, and a perpetual perusal of the writings of the best orators, and hearing the best speakers, will do more to make an orator than all the rules of art in the world, without these natural talents, and this careful imitation of the most approved and happiest orators.

XXXIV. Now you will presently suppose that pleaders at the bar have great need of this art of rhetoric; but it has been a just doubt, whether pleading in our British courts of justice, before a skilful judge, should admit of any other aid from rhetoric than that which teaches to open a cause clearly, and spread it in the most perspicuous, complete, and impartial manner before the eyes of him that judges; for impartial justice being the thing which is sought, there should be no artifices used, no eloquence or powers of language employed to persuade the will, or work upon the passions, lest the decisive sentence of the judge should be biassed or warped into injustice. For this reason, Mr. Locke would banish all pleaders in the law for fees out of his government of Carolina, in his posthumous works, though perhaps that great man might possibly be too severe in so universal a censure of the profession.

XXXV. But the case is very different with regard to

divines; the eloquence of the pulpit, beyond all controversy, has a much larger extent.

Their business is not to plead a cause of right and wrong before a wise and skilful judge, but to address all the ranks of mankind, the high and low, the wise and unwise, the sober and the vicious, and persuade them all to pursue and persevere in virtue with regard to themselves, in justice and goodness with regard to their neighbours, and piety towards God. These are affairs of everlasting importance, and most of the persons to whom these addresses are made, are not wise and skilful judges, but are influenced and drawn strongly to the contrary side by their own sinful appetites and passions, and bribed or biassed by the corrupt customs of the world.

There is therefore a necessity not only of a clear and faithful representation of things to men, in order to convince their reason and judgment, but of all the skill and force of persuasion addressed to the will and the passions. So Tully addressed the whole senate of Rome, and Demosthenes the Athenian people, among whom were capacities and inclinations of infinite variety; and therefore they made use of all the lightning and thunder, all the entreaties and terrors, all the soothing elegancies and the flowery beauties of language which their art could furnish them with. Divines in the pulpit have much the same sort of hearers, and therefore they should imitate those ancient examples. The understanding indeed ought to be first convinced by the plainest and strongest force of reasoning; but when this is done, all the powerful motives should be used, which have any just influence upon human nature, all the springs of passion should be touched, to awaken the stupid and the thoughtless into consideration, to penetrate and melt the hardest heart, to persuade the unwilling, to excite the lazy, to reclaim the obstinate, and reform the vicious part of mankind, as well as to encourage those who are humble and pious, and to support their practice and their hope. The tribes of men are sunk into so fatal a degeneracy and dreadful distance from God, and from all that is holy and happy, that all the eloquence which a preacher is master of, should be employed in order to recover the world from its shameful ruin and wretchedness by the gospel.

of our blessed Saviour, and restore it to virtue and piety, to God and happiness, by the divine power of this gospel. O may such glorious masters of sacred oratory never be wanting in the pulpits of Christendom!

XXXVI. Shall I now speak something of my sentiments concerning poesy?

As for books of poesy, whether in the learned or in the modern languages, they are of great use to be read at hours of leisure, by all persons that make any pretence to good education or learning, and that for several reasons.

1. Because there are many couplets or stanzas written in poetic measures, which contain a variety of morals or rules of practice, relating to the common prudentials of mankind, as well as to matters of religion, and the poetic numbers (or rhyme, if there be any) add very considerable force to the memory.

Besides, many an elegant or admirable sentiment or description of things, which are found among the poets, are worth committing to memory, and the particular measures of verse greatly assist us in recollecting such excellent passages, which might sometimes raise our conversation from low and grovelling subjects.

2. In heroic verse, but especially in the grander lyrics, there are sometimes such noble elevations of thought and passion, as illuminate all things around us, and convey to the soul most exalted and magnificent images and sublime sentiments; these furnish us with glorious springs and mediums to raise and aggrandize our conceptions, to warm our souls, to awaken the better passions, and to elevate them even to a divine pitch, and that for devotional purposes. It is the lyric ode which has shown to the world some of the happiest examples of this kind, and I cannot say but this part of poesy has been my favourite amusement above all others.

And for this reason it is, that I have never thought the heroic poems, Greek, Latin, or English, which have obtained the highest fame in the world, are sufficiently diversified, exalted or animated, for want of the inter-spersion of now and then an elegiac or a lyric ode. This might have been done with great and beautiful

propriety, where the poet has introduced a song at a feast, or the joys of a victory, or the the soliloquies of divine satisfaction, or the pensive and despairing agonies of distressing sorrow. Why should that which is called the most glorious form of poesy be bound down and confined to such a long and endless uniformity of measures, when it should kindle or melt the soul, swell or sink it into all the various and transporting changes of which human nature is capable?

Cowley, in his unfinished fragment of the *Davideis*, has shown us this way to improvement; and whatever blemishes may be found in other parts of that heroic essay, this beauty and glory of it ought to be preserved for imitation. I am well assured, that if Homer and Virgil had happened to practise it, it would have been renowned and glorified, by every critic, I am greatly mistaken, if this wise mixture of numbers could not be a further reach of perfection than they have ever attained to without it; let it be remembered, that it is not nature and strict reason, but a weak and awful reverence for antiquity, and the vogue of fallible men, that has established those Greek and Roman writings as absolute and complete patterns. In several ages there have been some men of learning who have very justly disputed this glory, and have pointed to many of their mistakes.

3. But still there is another end of reading poesy, and perhaps the most considerable advantage to be obtained from it by the bulk of mankind, and that is, to furnish our tongues with the richest and most polite variety of phrases and words upon all occasions of life or religion. He that writes well in verse, will often find a necessity to send his thoughts in search through all the treasure of words that express any one idea in the same language, that so he may comport with the measures, or rhyme of the verse which he writes, or with his own most beautiful and vivid sentiments of the thing he describes. Now by much reading of this kind, we shall insensibly acquire the habit and skill of diversifying our phrases upon all occasions, and of expressing our ideas in the most proper and beautiful language, whether we write or speak of the things of God or men.

It is pity that some of these harmonious writers have ever indulged any thing uncleanly or impure to defile their paper and abuse the ears of their readers, or to offend against the rules of the nicest virtue and politeness, but still among the writings of Mr. Dryden, Mr. Pope, and Dr. Young, as well as others, there is a sufficient choice in our own language, wherein we shall not find any indecency to shock the most modest tongue or ear.

Perhaps there has hardly been a writer in any nation, and I may dare to affirm there is none in ours, has a richer and happier talent of painting to the life, or has ever discovered such a large and inexhausted variety of description as the celebrated Mr. Pope. If you read his translations of Homer's Iliad, you will find almost all the terms or phrases in our tongue that are needful to express any thing that is grand or magnificent; but if you peruse his Odyssey, which descends much more into common life, there is scarce any useful subject of discourse or thought, or any ordinary occurrences which he has not cultivated and dressed in the most proper language; and yet still he has ennobled and enlivened even the lower subjects with the brightest and most agreeable ornaments.

I should add here also, that if the same author had more frequently employed his genius upon divine themes, his short poem on the Messiah, part of his letters between Abelard and Eloisa, with that ode on the dying Christian, &c. sufficiently assure us, that his pen would have honourably imitated some of the tender scenes of penitential sorrow, as well as the sublimer odes of the Hebrew Psalmist, and perhaps discovered to us in a better manner than any other translation has done, how great a poet sat upon the throne of Israel.

4. After all that I have said, there is yet a further use of reading poesy, and that is, when the mind has been fatigued with studies of a more laborious kind, or when it is any ways unfit for the pursuit of more difficult subjects, it may be, as it were, unbent, and repose itself a while on the flowery meadows where the muses dwell. It is a very sensible relief to the soul when it is over tired, to amuse itself with the numbers and beautiful sentiments of the poets,



and in a little time this agreeable amusement may recover the languid spirits to activity and more important service.

XXXVII. All this I propose to the world as my best observations about reading of verse. But if the question were offered to me, Shall a student, of a bright genius, never divert himself with writing poesy? I would answer, Yes, when he cannot possibly help it; a lower genius, in mature years, would heartily wish that he had spent much more time in reading the best authors of this kind, and employed much fewer hours in writing. But it must be confessed, or supposed at least, that there may be seasons when it is hardly possible for a poetic soul to restrain the fancy or quench the flame; when it is hard to suppress the exuberant flow of lofty sentiments, and prevent the imagination from this sort of style or language; and that is the only season, I think, wherein this inclination should be indulged; especially by persons who have devoted themselves to professions of a different kind; and one reason is, because what they write in that hour, is more likely to carry in it some appearance above nature, some happy imitation of the dictates of the muse.\*

XXXVIII. There are other things besides history, grammar and languages, rhetoric and poesy, which have been included under the name of philological knowledge; such as, an acquaintance with the notions, customs, manners, tempers, polity, &c. of the various nations of the earth, or the distinct sects and tribes of mankind. This is necessary, in order to understand history the better; and every man who is a lawyer or a gentleman, ought to obtain some acquaintance with these things, without which he can never read history to any great advantage, nor can he maintain his own station and character in life with honour and dignity without some insight into them.

XXXIX. Students in divinity ought to seek a larger acquaintance with the Jewish laws, polity, customs, &c. in order to understand many passages of the Old Testament and New; and to vindicate the sacred wri-

\* The Muse, in the ancient heathen sense is supposed to be a goddess; but, in the philosophic sense, it can mean no more than a bright genius, with a warm and strong imagination, elevated to an uncommon degree.

ters from the reproaches of Infidels. An acquaintance also with many of the Roman and Grecian affairs is needful to explain several texts of scripture in the New Testament, to lead sincere inquirers into the true and genuine sense of the Evangelists and Apostles, and to guard their writings from the unreasonable cavils of men.

**XL.** The art of criticism is reckoned by some as a distinct part of philology; but in truth it is nothing else than a more exact and accurate knowledge or skill in the other parts of it, and a readiness to apply that knowledge upon all occasions, in order to judge well of what relates to these subjects, to explain what is obscure in the authors which we read, to supply what is defective, and amend what is erroneous in manuscripts or ancient copies, to correct the mistakes of authors and editors in the sense or the words, to reconcile the controversies of the learned; and by these means to spread a juster knowledge of these things among the inquisitive part of mankind.

Every man who pretends to the learned professions, if he doth not arise to be a critic himself in philological matters, he should be frequently conversing with those books, whether dictionaries, paraphrasts, commentators, or other critics which may relieve any difficulties he meets with; and give him a more exact acquaintance with those studies which he pursues.

And whensoever any person is arrived to such a degree of knowledge in these things as to furnish him well for the practice of criticism, let him take great care that pride and vanity, contempt of others, with inward wrath and insolence, do not mingle themselves with his remarks and censures. Let him remember the common frailties of human nature, and the mistakes to which the wisest man is sometimes liable, that he may practise this art with due modesty and candour.

# IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

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## PART II.

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### COMMUNICATION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

#### INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE chief design of the former part of this book is to lead us into proper methods for the improvement of our own knowledge : let us now consider what are the best means of improving the minds of others, and of communicating to them the knowledge which we have acquired. If the treasures of the mind should be hoarded up and concealed, they would profit none besides the possessor, and even his advantage by the possession would be poor and narrow in comparison of what the same treasures would yield, both to himself and to the world, by a free communication and diffusion of them. Large quantities of knowledge acquired and reserved by one man, like heaps of gold and silver, would contract a sort of rust and disagreeable aspect, by lying in everlasting secrecy and silence ; but they are burnished and glitter by perpetual circulation through the tribes of mankind.

The two chief ways of conveying knowledge to others, are that of verbal instruction to our disciples, or by writing and publishing our thoughts to the world. Here, therefore, I shall propose some observations which relate to the conveyance of knowledge to others, by regular lectures of verbal instruction, or by conversation : I shall represent several of the chief prejudices of which learners are in danger, with directions to guard against them ; and then mention some of the easiest and

most effectual ways of convincing persons of their mistakes, and of dealing with their understanding, when they labour under the power of prejudice. I shall afterwards add, by way of appendix, an essay written many years ago, on the subject of Education, when I designed a more complete treatise of it.

## CHAP. I.

### *Methods of Teaching, and Reading Lectures.*

HE that has learned any thing thoroughly, in a clear and methodical manner, and has attained a distinct perception and an ample survey of the whole subject, is generally best prepared to teach the same subject in a clear and easy method; for having acquired a large and distinct idea of it, and made it familiar to himself by frequent meditation, reading, and occasional discourse, he is supposed to see it on all sides, to grasp it, with all its appendices and relations, in one survey, and is better able to represent it to the learner in all its views, with all its properties, relations and consequences. He knows which view or side of the subject to hold out first to his disciple, and how to propose to his understanding that part of it which is easiest to apprehend; and also knows how to set it in such a light, as is most likely to allure and to assist his further inquiry.

But it is not every one who is a great scholar that always becomes the happiest teacher, even though he may have a clear conception, and a methodical as well as an extensive survey of the branches of any science. He must also be well acquainted with words, as well as ideas, in a proper variety, that when his disciple does not take in the ideas in one form of expression, he may change the phrase into several forms, till at last he hits the understanding of his scholar, and enlightens it in the just idea of truth.

Besides this, a tutor should be a person of a happy and condescending temper, who has patience to bear with a slowness of perception, or want of sagacity in some learners. He should also have much candour of soul, to pass a gentle censure on their impertinences, and to pity them in their mistakes, and use every mild and engaging method for insinuating knowledge into

those who are willing and diligent in seeking truth, as well as reclaiming those who are wandering into error. But of this I have spoken somewhat already in a chapter of the former part, and shall have occasion to express something more of it shortly.

A very pretty and useful way to lead a person into the knowledge of any particular truth is, by question and answer, which is the Socratical method of disputation, and therefore I refer the reader to that chapter or section which treats of it. On this account, dialogues are used as a polite and pleasant method of leading gentlemen and ladies into some of the sciences, who seek not the most accurate and methodical treasure of learning.

But the most usual and perhaps the most excellent way of instructing students in any of the sciences is, by reading lectures, as tutors in the academy do to their pupils.

The first work is to choose a book well written, which contains a short scheme or abstract of that science; or at least it should not be a very copious and diffusive treatise. Or, if the tutor knows not any such book already written, he should draw up an abstract of that science himself, containing the most substantial and important parts of it, disposed in such a method as he best approves.

Let a chapter or section of this be read daily by the learner, on which the tutor shall paraphrase in this manner, namely :

He should explain both words and ideas more largely; and especially what is dark and difficult should be opened and illustrated, partly by various forms of speech, and partly by apt similitudes and examples. Where the sense of the author is dubious, it must also be fixed and determined.

Where the arguments are strong and cogent, they should be enforced by some further paraphrase, and the truth of the inferences should be made plainly to appear. Where the arguments are weak and insufficient, they should be either confirmed or rejected as useless; and new arguments, if need be, should be added to support that doctrine.

What is treated very concisely in the author should be amplified, and where several things are laid closely

together, they must be taken to pieces and opened by parts.

Where the tutor differs from the author which he reads, he should gently point out and confute his mistakes.

Where the method and order of the book is just and happy, it should be pursued and commended; where it is defective and irregular, it should be corrected.

The most necessary, the most remarkable and useful parts of that treatise, or of that science, should be peculiarly recommended to the learners, and pressed upon them, that they would retain it in memory; and what is more unnecessary or superfluous should be distinguished, lest the learner should spend too much time in the more needless parts of a science.

The various ends, uses and services of that science, or of any part of it, should be also declared and exemplified as far as the tutor hath opportunity and furniture to do it; particularly in mathematics and natural philosophy.

And if there be any thing remarkably beautiful or defective in the style of the writer, it is proper for the tutor to make a just remark upon it.

While he is reading and explaining any particular treatise to his pupils, he may compare the different editions of the same book, or different writers upon the same subject; he should inform them where that subject is treated by other authors, which they may peruse, and lead his disciples thereby to a further elucidation, confirmation, or improvement of that theme of discourse in which he is instructing them.

It is alluring and agreeable to the learner also, now and then to be entertained with some historical remarks, or any occurrences or useful stories which the tutor has met with, relating to the several parts of such a science, provided he does not put off his pupils merely with such stories, and neglect to give them a solid and rational information of the theme in hand. Teachers should endeavour, as far as possible, to join profit and pleasure together, and mingle delight with their instructions; but at the same time they must take heed, that they do not merely amuse the ears, and gratify the fancy of their disciples, without enriching their minds.

In reading lectures of instruction, let the teacher be very solicitous that the learners take up his meaning, and therefore he should frequently inquire, whether he expresses himself intelligibly, whether they understand his sense and take in all his ideas, as he endeavours to convey them in his own forms of speech.

It is necessary that he who instructs others, should use the most proper style for the conveyance of his ideas easily into the minds of those who hear him; and though in teaching the sciences, a person is not confined to the same rules by which we must govern our language in conversation, for he must necessarily make use of many terms of art, and hard words, yet he should never use them merely to show his learning, nor affect sounding language without necessity; a caution which we shall soon further inculcate.

I think it very convenient and proper, if not absolutely necessary, that when a tutor reads a following lecture to his pupils, he should run over the foregoing lecture in questions proposed to them, and by this means acquaint himself with their daily proficiency.\* It is vain for the learner to object, surely we are not school boys, to say our lessons again; we came to be taught, and not to be catechised and examined. But alas! how is it possible for a teacher to proceed in his instructions if he knows not how far the learner takes in and remembers what he has been taught?

Besides I must generally believe it is sloth or idleness, it is real ignorance, incapacity, or unreasonable pride, that makes a learner refuse to give his teacher an account how far he has profited by his last instructions. For want of this constant examination, young gentlemen have spent some idle and useless years, even under the daily labours and inspection of a learned teacher; and they have returned from the academy without the gain of any one science, and even with the shameful loss of their classical learning, that is the knowledge of

\* This precaution, though never to be neglected, is of especial importance when a pupil is entering on any new branch of learning, where it is absolutely necessary the fundamental definitions and principles should not only be clearly understood, but should be rendered very familiar to the mind; and probably most tutors have found young persons sadly bewildered as they have gone on in their lectures, for want of a little more patience and care in this respect.

Greek and Latin, which they had learnt in the grammar school.

Let the teacher always accommodate himself to the genius, temper, and capacity of his disciples, and practise various methods of prudence to allure, persuade, and assist every one of them in their pursuit of knowledge.

Where the scholar has less sagacity, let the teacher enlarge his illustrations ; let him search and find out where the learner sticks, what is the difficulty ; and thus let him help the labouring intellect.

Where the learner manifests forward genius, and a sprightly curiosity by frequent inquiries ; let the teacher oblige such an inquisitive soul by satisfying those questions as far as may be done by decency and conveniency ; and where these inquiries are unseasonable, let him not silence the young inquirer with a magisterial rebuff, but with much candour and gentleness postpone those questions, and refer them to a proper hour.

Curiosity is a useful spring of knowledge, it should be encouraged in children, and awakened by frequent and familiar methods of talking with them. It should be indulged in youth, but not without a prudent moderation. In those who have too much, it should be limited by a wise and gentle restraint or delay, lest by wandering after every thing, they learn nothing to perfection. In those who have too little, it should be excited, lest they grow stupid, narrow spirited, self-satisfied, and never attain a treasure of ideas, or an aptitude of understanding.

Let not the teacher demand or expect things too sublime and difficult from the humble, modest, and fearful disciple ; and where such an one gives a just and happy answer, even to plain and easy questions, let him have words of commendation and love ready for him. Let him encourage every spark of kindling light, till it grow up to bright evidence and confirmed knowledge.

Where he finds a lad pert, positive, and presuming, let the tutor take every just occasion to show him his error ; let him set the absurdity in complete light before him, and convince him, by a full demonstration of his mistake, till he sees and feels it, and learns to be modest and humble.



A teacher should not only observe the different spirit and humour among his scholars, but he should watch the various efforts of their reason, and growth of their understanding. He should practice in his young nursery of learning as a skilful gardener does in his vegetable dominions, and apply prudent methods of cultivation to every plant. Let him with a discreet and gentle hand nip or prune the irregular shoots, let him guard and encourage the tender buddings of the understanding, till they be raised to a blossom, and let him kindly cherish the younger fruits.

The tutor should take every occasion to instil knowledge into his disciples, and make use of every occurrence in life, to raise some profitable conversation upon it; He should frequently inquire something of his disciples that may set their young reason to work, and teach them how to form inferences and to draw one proposition out of another.

Reason being that faculty of mind which he has to deal with in his pupil, let him endeavour by all proper and familiar methods to call it into exercise, and to enlarge the powers of it. He should take frequent opportunities to show them when an idea is clear or confused, when the proposition is evident or doubtful, and when an argument is feeble or strong; and by this means their minds will be so formed, that whatsoever he proposes, with evidence and strength of reason, they will readily receive.

When any uncommon appearances arise in the natural, moral, or political world, he should invite and instruct them to make their remarks on it, and give them the best reflections of his own, for the improvement of their minds.

He should by all means make it appear that he loves his pupils, and that he seeks nothing so much as their increase of knowledge, and their growth in all valuable acquirements; this will engage their affection to his person, and procure a just attention to his lectures.

And indeed there is but little hope that a teacher should obtain any success in his instructions, unless those that hear him have some good degree of esteem and respect for his person and character. And here I cannot but take notice by the way, that it is a matter of infinite and unspeakable injury to the people

of any town or parish, where the minister lies under contempt. If he has procured it by his own conduct, he is doubly criminal, because of the injury he does to the souls of them that hear him; but if this contempt and reproach be cast upon him by the wicked, malicious, and unjust censures of men, they must bear all the ill consequences of receiving no good by his labours, and will be accountable hereafter to the great and divine judge of all.

It would be very necessary to add, in this place, if tutors were not well apprized of it before, that since learners are obliged to seek a divine blessing on their studies, by fervent prayer to the God of all wisdom, their tutors should go before them in this pious practice, and make daily addresses to heaven for the success of their instructions.

## CHAP. II.

### *Of an Instructive Style.*

**T**HE most necessary and most useful character of a style fit for instruction is, that it be plain, perspicuous, and easy. And here I shall first point out all those errors in a style, which diminish or destroy the perspicuity of it, and then mention a few directions how to obtain a perspicuous and easy style.

The errors of style which must be avoided by teachers, are these that follow :

I. The use of many foreign words, which are not sufficiently naturalized and mingled with the language which we speak or write. It is true, that in teaching the sciences in English, we must sometimes use words borrowed from the Greek and Latin, for we have not in English, names for a variety of subjects which belong to learning; but when a man affects, upon all occasions, to bring in long sounding words from the ancient languages without necessity, and mingles French and other outlandish terms and phrases, where plain English would serve as well, he betrays a vain and foolish genius, unbecoming a teacher.

II. Avoid a fantastic learned style, borrowed from the various sciences, where the subject and matter do not require the use of them. Do not affect terms of

art on every occasion, nor seek to show your learning by sounding words and dark phrases; this is properly called pedantry.

Young preachers, just come from the schools, are often tempted to fill their sermons with logical and metaphysical terms in explaining their text, and feed their hearers with sonorous words of vanity. This scholastic language, perhaps, may flatter their own ambition, and raise a wonderment at their learning, among the staring multitude, without any manner of influence toward the instruction of the ignorant, or the reformation of the immoral or impious; these terms of art are but the tools of an artificer, by which his work is wrought in private; but the tools ought not to appear in the finished workmanship.

There are some persons so fond of geometry, that they bring in lines and circles, tangents and parabolas, theorems, problems and postulates, upon all occasions. Others who have dealt in astronomy borrow even their nouns and their verbs, in their common discourse, from the stars and planets; instead of saying Jacob had twelve sons, they tell you, Jacob had as many sons as there are signs in the zodiac. If they describe an inconstant person, they make a planet of him, and set him forth in all his appearances, direct, retrograde and stationary. If a candle be set behind a screen, they call it eclipsed; and tell you fine stories of the orbit and the revolutions, the radii and the limb, or circumference of a cart-wheel.

Others again dress up their sense in chemical language; extracts and oils, salts and essences, exalt and invigorate their discourses; a great wit with them, is a sublimated spirit; and a blockhead is a *caput mortuum*. A certain doctor in his bill, swells in his own idea, when he tells the town, that he has been counsellor to the counsellors of several kings and princes, that he has arrived at the knowledge of the green, black, and golden dragon, known only to magicians and hermetic philosophers. It would be well if the quacks alone had a patent for this language.

III. There are some fine affected words, that are used only at court, and some peculiar phrases that are sounding or gaudy, and belong only to the theatre; these should not come into the lectures of instruction.

the language of poets has too much of metaphor in it to lead mankind into clear and distinct ideas of things; the business of poesy is to strike the soul with a glaring light, and to urge the passions into a flame by splendid shows, by strong images, and a pathetic vehemence of style; but it is another sort of speech that is best suited to lead the calm inquirer into just conceptions of things.

IV. There is a mean vulgar style, borrowed from the lower ranks of mankind, the basest characters and meanest affairs of life; this is also to be avoided; for it should be supposed, that persons of liberal education have not been bred up within the hearing of such language, and consequently, they cannot understand it; besides, that it would create very offensive ideas, should we borrow even similies for illustration from the scullery, the dunghill, and the jakes.

V. An obscure and mysterious manner of expression and cloudy language is to be avoided. Some persons have been led by education, or by some foolish prejudices, into a dark and unintelligible way of thinking and speaking, and this continues with them all their lives, and clouds and confounds their ideas. Perhaps some of these may have been blessed with a great and comprehensive genius, with sublime natural parts, and a torrent of ideas flowing in upon them; yet for want of clearness in the manner of their conception and language, they sometimes drown their own subject of discourse, and overwhelm their argument in darkness and perplexity. Such preachers as have read much of the mystical divinity of the Papists, and imitated their manner of expression, have many times buried a fine understanding under the obscurity of such a style.

VI. A long and tedious style is very improper for a teacher; for this also lessens the perspicuity of it. Some learned writers are never satisfied, unless they fill up every sentence with a great number of ideas and sentiments; they swell their propositions to an enormous size by explications, exceptions, and precautions, lest they should be mistaken, and crowd them all into the same period; they involve and darken their discourse by many parentheses, and prolong their sentences to a tiresome extent, beyond the reach of a common comprehension; such sort of writers or speakers may be rich in knowledge, but they are seldom fit to communicate it. He

that would gain a happy talent for the instruction of others, must know how to disentangle and divide his thoughts, if too many of them are ready to crowd into one paragraph; and let him rather speak three sentences distinctly and perspicuously, which the hearer receives at once with his ears and his soul, than crowd all the thought into one sentence, which the hearer has forgot before he can understand it.

But this leads me to the next thing I proposed, which was to mention some methods, whereby such a perspicuity of style may be obtained as is proper for instruction.

1. Accustom yourself to read those authors who think and write with great clearness and evidence; such as convey their ideas into your understanding as fast as your eye or tongue can run over their sentences; this will imprint upon the mind an habit of imitation; we shall learn the style with which we are very conversant, and practise it with ease and success.

2. Get a distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the subject which you treat of; survey it on all sides, and make yourself perfect master of it; then you will have all the sentiments that relate to it in your view and under your command; and your tongue will very easily clothe those ideas with words, which your mind has first made so familiar and easy to itself.

*Scribendi rectè sapere est et principium et fons:  
Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.*

Hor. de Artè Poeticâ

• Good teaching from good knowledge springs;  
Words will make haste to follow things.

3. Be well skilled in the language which you speak; acquaint yourself with all the idioms and special phrases of it, which are necessary to convey the needful ideas on the subject of which you treat, in the most various and most easy manner to the understanding of the hearer; the variation of a phrase in several forms, is of admirable use to instruct; it is like turning all sides of the subject to view; and if the learner happen not to take in the ideas in one form of speech, probably another may be successful for that end.

Upon this account I have always thought it a useful manner of instruction, which is used in some Latin

schools, which they call variation. Take some plain sentence in the English tongue, and turn it into many forms in Latin ; as for instance, a wolf let into the sheep fold will devour the sheep : if you let a wolf into the fold, the sheep will be devoured : the wolf will devour the sheep, if the sheep fold be left open ; if the fold be not shut carefully, the wolf will devour the sheep : the sheep will be devoured by the wolf, if it find the way into the fold open : there is no defence of the sheep from the wolf, unless it be kept out of the fold : a slaughter will be made among the sheep, if the wolf can get into the fold. Thus by turning the active voice of verbs into the passive, and the nominative case of nouns into the accusative, and altering the connexion of short sentences by different adverbs or conjunctions, and by ablative cases with a preposition brought instead of the nominative, or by participles sometimes put instead of the verbs, the negation of, and the contrary, instead of the assertion of the thing first proposed, a great variety of forms of speech will be created, which shall express the same sense.

4. Acquire a variety of words, a *copia verborum*; let your memory be rich in synonymous terms, or words expressing the same thing ; this will not only attain the same happy effect, with the variation of phrases in the foregoing direction, but it will add a beauty also to your style, by securing you from an appearance of tautology, or repeating the same words too often, which sometimes may disgust the ear of the learner.

5. Learn the art of shortening your sentences, by dividing a long complicated period into two or three small ones. When others connect and join two or three sentences in one, by relative pronouns, as which, whereof, wherein, whereto, &c. and by parentheses frequently inserted ; do you rather divide them into distinct periods, or at least if they must be united, let it be done rather by conjunctions and copulatives, that they may appear like distinct sentences, and give less confusion to the hearer or reader.

I know no method so effectually to learn what I mean, as to take now and then a page of an author, who is guilty of such a long involved parenthetical style, and translate it into plainer English by dividing the ideas or the sentences asunder, and multiplying the periods, till

the language become smooth and easy, and intelligible at first reading.

6. Talk frequently to young and ignorant persons, upon subjects which are new and unknown to them, and be diligent to inquire whether they understand you or no; this will put you upon changing your phrases and forms of speech in a variety, till you can hit their capacity, and convey your ideas into their understanding.

### CHAP. III.

*Of convincing other Persons of any Truth; or delivering them from errors and mistakes.*

**W**HEN we are arrived at a just and rational establishment in an opinion, whether it relate to religion or common life, we are naturally desirous of bringing all the world into our sentiments; and this proceeds from the affectation and pride of superior influence upon the judgment of our fellow creatures, much more frequently than it does from a sense of duty, or a love of truth; so vicious and corrupt is human nature. Yet there is such a thing to be found, as an honest and sincere delight in propagating truth; arising from a dutiful regard to the honours of our Maker, and an hearty love to mankind. Now, if we would be successful in our attempts to convince men of their errors, and to promote the truth, let us divest ourselves as far as possible of that pride and affectation which I mentioned before, and seek to acquire that disinterested love to men, and zeal for the truth, which will naturally lead us into the best methods to promote it. And here the following directions may be useful.

1. If you would convince a person of his mistake, "choose a proper place, a happy hour, and the fittest concurrent circumstances for this purpose." Do not unseasonably set upon him when he is engaged in the midst of other affairs, but when his soul is at liberty, and at leisure to hear and attend. Accost him not upon that subject, when his spirit is ruffled or discomposed with any occurrences of life, and especially when he has heated his passions in the defence of a contrary opinion; but rather seize a golden opportunity, when

some occurrences of life may cast a favourable aspect upon the truth of which you would convince him, or which may throw some dark and unhappy colour or consequence upon that error from which you would fain deliver him. There are in life some *mollissima tempora sandi*, some very agreeable moments of addressing a person, which, if rightly managed, may render your attempts much more successful, and his conviction easy and pleasant.

2. Make it appear by your whole conduct to the person you would teach, that you mean him well, that your design is not to triumph over his opinion, nor to expose his ignorance or his incapacity of defending what he asserts. Let him see that it is not your aim to advance your own character, as a disputant, nor to set yourself up for an instructor of mankind; but that you love him, and seek his true interest; and do not only assure him of this in words, when you are entering on an argument with him, but let the whole of your conduct to him at all times, demonstrate your real friendship for him. Truth and argument come with particular force from the mouth of one whom we trust and love.

3. The softest and gentlest address to the erroneous is the best way to convince them of their mistake. Sometimes it is necessary to represent to your opponent, that he is not far off from the truth, and that you would fain draw him a little nearer to it; commend and establish whatever he says that is just and true, as our blessed Saviour treated the young scribe, when he answered well concerning the two great commandments; "*Thou art not far.*" says our Lord, "*from the kingdom of heaven.*" Mark. xii. 34. Imitate the mildness and conduct of the blessed Jesus.

Come as near to your opponent as you can in all your propositions, and yield to him as much as you dare, in a consistence with truth and justice.

It is a very great and fatal mistake, in persons who attempt to convince and reconcile others to their party, when they make the difference appear as wide as possible; this is shocking to any person who is to be convinced; he will choose rather to keep and maintain his own opinions, if he cannot come into yours without renouncing and abandoning every thing that



he believed before. Human nature must be flattered a little, as well as reasoned with, that so the argument may be able to come at his understanding, which otherwise will be thrust off at a distance. If you charge a man with nonsense and absurdities, with heresy and self-contradiction, you take a very wrong step toward convincing him.

Remember that error is not to be rooted out of the mind of man by reproaches and railing, by flashes of wit, and biting jests, by loud exclamations or sharp ridicule. Long declamations and triumph over our neighbour's mistakes, will not prove the way to convince him; these are signs either of a bad cause, or of want of arguments, or capacity for the defence of a good one.

4. Set therefore a constant watch over yourself, lest you grow warm in dispute before you are aware. The passions never clear the understanding, but raise darkness, clouds, and confusion in the soul: human nature is like water which has mud at the bottom of it; it may be clear while it is calm and undisturbed, and the ideas, like pebbles, appear bright at the bottom; but when once it is stirred and moved by passion, the mud rises uppermost, and spreads confusion and darkness over all the ideas; you cannot set things in so just and so clear a light before the eyes of your neighbour, while your own conceptions are clouded with heat and passion.

Besides, when your own spirits are a little disturbed, and your wrath is awakened, this naturally kindles the same fire in your correspondent, and prevents him from taking in your ideas were they ever so clear; for his passions are engaged all on a sudden for the defence of his own mistakes, and they combat as fiercely as yours do, which perhaps may be awakened on the side of truth.

To provoke a person whom you would convince, not only rouses his anger, and sets it against your doctrine, but it directs its resentment against your person, as well as against all your instructions and arguments. You must treat an opponent like a friend, if you would persuade him to learn any thing from you; and this is one great reason why there is so little success on either

side between two disputants or controversial writers, because they are so ready to interest their passions in the subject of contest, and thereby to prevent the mutual light that might be given and received on either side; ambition, indignation, and a professed zeal, reign on both sides: victory is the point designed, while truth is pretended; and truth oftentimes perishes in the fray, or retires from the field of battle: the combatants end just where they began, their understandings hold fast the same opinions, perhaps with this disadvantage, that they are a little more obstinate and rooted in them, without fresh reason; and they generally come off with the loss of temper and charity.

5. Neither attempt nor hope to convince a person of his mistake by any penal methods or severe usage. There is no light brought into the mind by all the fire and sword, and bloody persecutions that were ever introduced into the world. One would think both the princes, the priests, and the people, the learned and the unlearned, the great and the mean should have all by this time seen the folly and madness of seeking to propagate the truth by the laws of cruelty: we compel a beast to the yoke by blows, because the ox and the ass have no understanding; but intellectual powers are not to be fettered and compelled at this rate. Men cannot believe what they will, nor change their religion and their sentiments as they please: they may be made hypocrites by the forms of severity, and constrained to profess what they do not believe; they may be forced to comply with external practices and ceremonies contrary to their own consciences; but this can never please God, nor profit men.

6. In order to convince another, you should always make choice of those arguments that are best suited to his understanding and capacity, his genius and temper, his state, station, and circumstances. If I were to persuade a ploughman of the truth of any form of church government, it should not be attempted by the use of Greek and Latin fathers, but from the word of God, the light of nature, and the common reason of things.

7. Arguments should always be proposed in such a manner as may lead the mind onward to perceive the truth in a clear and agreeable light, as well as to con-

strain the assent by the power of reasoning. Clear ideas, in many cases, are as useful toward conviction as a well-formed and unanswerable syllogism.

8. Allow the person you desire to instruct, a reasonable time to enter into the force of your arguments. When you have declared your own sentiments in the brightest manner of illustration, and enforced them with the most convincing arguments, you are not to suppose that your friend should immediately be convinced and receive the truth: habitude in a particular way of thinking, as well as in most other things, obtains the force of nature; and you cannot expect to wean a man from his accustomed errors but by slow degrees, and by his own assistance; entreat him, therefore not to judge on a sudden, nor determine against you at once; but that he would please to review your scheme, reflect upon your arguments with all the impartiality he is capable of, and take time to think these over again at large; at least, that he would be disposed to hear you speak yet further on this subject, without pain or aversion.

Address him therefore in an obliging manner, and say, I am not so fond as to think I have placed the subject in such lights as to throw you on a sudden into a new track of thinking, or to make you immediately lay aside your present opinions or designs; all that I hope is, that some hint or other which I have given is capable of being improved by you to your own conviction, or possibly it may lead you to such a train of reasoning, as in time to effect a change in your thoughts. Which hint leads me to add,

9. Labour as much as possible to make the person you would teach his own instructor. Human nature may be allured, by a secret pleasure and pride in its own reasoning, to seem to find out by itself the very thing that you would teach; and there are some persons that have so much of this natural bias toward self, rooted in them, that they can never be convinced of a mistake by the plainest and strongest arguments to the contrary, though the demonstration glare in their faces; but they may be tempted, by such gentle insinuations, to follow a track of thought which you propose, till they have wound themselves out of their own error, and led themselves hereby into your own

opinion, if you do but let it appear that they are under their own guidance rather than yours. And perhaps there is nothing which shows more dexterity of address than this secret influence over the minds of others, which they do not discern even while they follow it.

10. If you can gain the main point in question, be not very solicitous about the nicety with which it shall be expressed. Mankind is so vain a thing, that it is not willing to derive from another; and though it cannot have every thing from itself, yet it would seem at least to mingle something of its own with what it derives elsewhere; therefore when you have set your sentiment in the fullest light, and proved it in the most effectual manner, an opponent will bring in some frivolous and useless distinction, on purpose to change the form of words in the question, and acknowledge that he receives your proposition in such a sense, and in such a manner of expression, though he cannot receive it in your terms and phrases. Vanillus will confess he is now convinced that a man who behaves well in the state ought not to be punished for his religion, but yet he will consent to allow an universal toleration of all religions which do not injure the state, which is the proposition I had been proving. Well, let Vanillus, therefore, use his own language: I am glad he is convinced of the truth, he shall have leave to dress it in his own way.

To these directions I shall add two remarks in the conclusion of this chapter, which would not so properly fall under the preceding directions.

I. Remark. When you have laboured to instruct a person in some controverted truth, and yet he retains some prejudice against it, so that he doth not yield to the convincing force of your arguments, you may sometimes have happy success in convincing him of that truth, by setting him to read a weak author who writes against it: a young reader will find such pleasure in being able to answer the arguments of the opposer, that he will drop his former prejudices against the truth, and yield to the power and evidence of your reason. I confess this looks like setting up one prejudice to overthrow another; but where prejudices cannot be fairly removed by the dint of reason, the wisest

and the best of teachers will sometimes find it necessary to make a way for reason and truth to take place, by this contrast of prejudices.

II. Remark. When our design is to convince a whole family or community of persons of any mistake, and to lead them into any truth, we may justly suppose there are various reigning prejudices among them; and therefore it is not so safe to attempt, nor so easy to effect it, by addressing the whole number at once. Such a method has been often found to raise a sudden alarm and has produced a violent opposition even to the most fair, pious, and useful proposal; so that he who made the motion could never carry his point.

We must therefore first make as sure as we can of the most intelligent and learned, at least the most leading persons amongst them, by addressing them apart prudently, and offering proper reasons, till they are convinced and engaged on the side of truth; and these may with more success apply themselves to others of the same community: yet the original proposer should not neglect to make a distinct application to all the rest, so far as circumstances admit.

Where a thing is to be determined by a number of votes, he should labour to secure a good majority; and then take care that the most proper persons should move and argue the matter in public, lest it be quashed in the very first proposal by some prejudice against the proposer.

So unhappily are our circumstances situated in this world, that if truth, and justice, and goodness, could put on human forms, and descend from heaven to propose the most divine and useful doctrines, and bring with them the clearest evidence, and publish them at once to a multitude whose prejudices are engaged against them, the proposal would be vain and fruitless, and neither convince nor persuade; so necessary is it to join art and dexterity together with the force of reason, to convince mankind of truth, unless we came furnished with miracles or omnipotence to create a conviction.\*

\* The conduct of Christ and his Apostles, armed as they were with supernatural powers, in the gradual openings of truths, against which the minds of their disciples were strongly prejudiced, may not only secure such an address from the imputation of dishonest craft, but may demonstrate the expediency, and in some cases of the necessity of attending to it.

## CHAP. IV.

*Of Authority. Of the Abuse of it; and of its real and proper Use and Service.*

THE influence which other persons have upon our opinions is usually called authority. The power of it is so great and widely extensive, that there is scarce any person in the world entirely free from the impressions of it, even after their utmost watchfulness and care to avoid it. Our parents and tutors, yea, our very nurses, determine a multitude of our sentiments; our friends, our neighbours, the custom of the country where we dwell, and the established opinions of mankind, form our belief; the great, the wise, the pious, the learned, and the ancient, the king, the priest, and the philosopher, are characters of mighty efficacy to persuade us to receive what they dictate. These may be ranked under different heads of prejudice; but they are all of a kindred nature, and may be reduced to this one spring or head of authority.

I have treated of these particularly in Logic, Part II. Chapter III. Section 4; yet a few other remarks occurring among my papers, I thought it not improper to let them find a place here.

Cicero was well acquainted with the unhappy influences of authority, and complains of it in his first book *De Naturâ Deorâm*: "In disputes and controversies (says he) it is not so much the author or patrons of any opinion, as the weight and force of argument, which would influence the mind. The authority of those who teach is a frequent hindrance to those who learn, because they utterly neglect to exercise their own judgment, taking for granted whatsoever others whom they reverence have judged for them. I can by no means approve what we learn from the Pythagoreans, that if any thing asserted in disputation was questioned they were wont to answer, *Ipse dixit*, that is, He himself said so, meaning Pythagoras. So far did prejudice prevail, that authority without reason was sufficient to determine disputes and to establish truth."

All human authority, though it be ever so ancient, though it bath had universal sovereignty, and swayed

all the learned and the vulgar world for some thousands of years, yet has no certain and undoubted claim to truth; nor is it any violation of good manners to enter a caveat with due decency against its pretended dominion. What is there among all the sciences, that has been longer established, and more universally received, ever since the days of Aristotle, and perhaps for ages before he lived, than this, *that all heavy bodies whatsoever tend toward the centre of the earth!* But Sir Isaac Newton has found, that those bulky and weighty bodies, the earth and all the planets, *tend toward the centre of the sun*, whereby the authority of near three thousand years or more is not only called in question, but actually refuted and renounced.

Again: Was ever any thing more universally agreed among the nation of the poets and critics, than that Homer and Virgil are inimitable writers of heroic poems? and whoever presumed to attack their writings, or their reputation, was either condemned for his malice, or derided for his folly. These ancient authors have been supposed to derive peculiar advantages to aggrandize their verses from the heathen theology, and that variety of appearances in which they could represent their gods, and mingle them with the affairs of men. Yet within these few years, Sir Richard Blackmore (whose prefaces are universally esteemed superior in their kind to any of his poems) has ventured to pronounce some noble truths in that excellent preface to his poem called Alfred, and has bravely demonstrated there, beyond all possible exception, that both Virgil and Homer are often guilty of very gross blunders, indecencies, and shameful improprieties; and that they were so far from deriving any advantage from the rabble of heathen gods, that their theology almost unavoidably exposed them to many of those blunders; and that it is not possible upon the foot of gentile superstition to write a perfect epic poem: whereas the sacred religion of the Bible would furnish a poem with much more just and glorious scenes, and a nobler machinery.

Mr. Dennis also had made it appear in his essays some years before, that there were no images so sublime in the brightest of the heathen writers, as those with which we are furnished in the poetic parts of the

holy scripture; and Rapin, the French critic, dared to profess the same sentiments, notwithstanding the world of poets and critics had so universally and unanimously exalted the heathen writers to the sovereignty for so many ages. If we would find out the truth in many cases, we must dare to deviate from the long-beaten track, and venture to think with a just and unbiassed liberty.

Though it be necessary to guard against the evil influences of authority, and the prejudices derived thence, because it has introduced thousands of errors and mischiefs into the world, yet there are three eminent and remarkable cases wherein authority, or the sentiments of other persons, must or will determine the judgments and practice of mankind.

1. Parents are appointed to judge for their children in their younger years, and to instruct them what they should believe, and what they should practise in the civil and religious life. This is a dictate of nature, and doubtless it would have been so in a state of innocence. It is impossible that children should be capable of judging for themselves before their minds are furnished with a competent number of ideas, before they are acquainted with any principles and rules of just judgment, and before their reason is grown up to any degrees of maturity, and proper exercises upon such subjects.

I will not say that a child ought to believe nonsense and impossibility because his father bids him; for so far as the impossibility appears, he cannot believe it: nor will I say he ought to assent to all the false opinions of his parents, or to practise idolatry and murder, or mischief, at their command; yet a child knows not any better way to find out what he should believe, and what he should practise, before he can possibly judge for himself, than to run to his parents and receive their sentiments and their directions.

You will say this is hard indeed, that the child of a heathen idolator, or a cruel cannibal, is laid under a sort of necessity by nature of sinning against the light of nature; I grant it is hard indeed, but it is only owing to our original fall and apostacy; the law of nature continues as it was in innocence, namely, That a parent should judge for his child; but if the parent



judges ill, the child is greatly exposed by it, through that universal disorder that is brought into the world by the sin of Adam our common father; and from the equity and goodness of God, we may reasonably infer, that the great Judge of all will do right: he will balance the ignorance and incapacity of the child with the criminal nature of the offence in those puerile instances, and will not punish beyond just demerit.

Besides, what could God, as a Creator, do better for children in their minority, than to commit them to the care and instruction of parents? None are supposed to be so much concerned for the happiness of children as their parents are; therefore it is the safest step to happiness, according to the original law of creation, to follow their directions, their parents' reason acting for them before they have reason of their own in proper exercise; nor indeed is there any better general rule in our fallen state by which children are capable of being governed, though in many particular cases it may lead them far astray from virtue and happiness.

If children by Providence be cast under some happier instructions, contrary to their parents' erroneous opinions, I cannot say it is the duty of such children to follow error when they discern it to be error, because their father believes it; what I said before is to be interpreted only of those that are under the immediate care and education of their parents, and not yet arrived at years capable of examination. I know not how these can be freed from receiving the dictates of parental authority in their youngest years, except by immediate or divine inspiration.

It is hard to say at what exact time of life the child is exempted from the sovereignty of parental dictates. Perhaps it is much juster to suppose that this sovereignty diminishes by degrees, as the child grows in understanding and capacity, and is more and more capable of exerting his own intellectual powers, than to limit this matter by months and years.

When childhood and youth are so far expired that the reasoning faculties are grown up to any just measure of maturity, it is certain that persons ought to begin to inquire into the reasons of their own faith and practice in all the affairs of life and religion: but as reason does not arrive at this power and self-sufficiency in any

single moment of time, so there is no single moment when a child should at once cast off all its former beliefs and practices; but by degrees, and in slow succession, he should examine them, as opportunity and advantage may offer, and either confirm, or doubt of, or change them, according to the leadings of conscience and reason, with all its best advantages of information.

When we are arrived at manly age, there is no person on earth, no set or society of men whatsoever, that have power and authority given them by God, the creator and governor of the world, absolutely to dictate to others their opinions or practices in the moral and religious life. God has given every man reason to judge for himself, in higher or in lower degrees. Where less is given, less will be required. But we are justly chargeable with criminal sloth, and misimprovement of the talents with which our Creator has entrusted us, if we take all things for granted, which others assert, and believe and practise all things which they dictate, without due examination.

II. Another case wherein authority must govern our assent, is in many matters of fact. Here we may and ought to be determined by the declarations or narratives of other men; though I must confess this is usually called testimony rather than authority. It is upon this foot, that every son or daughter among mankind are required to believe that such and such persons are their parents, for they can never be informed of it, but by the dictates of others. It is by testimony, that we are to believe the laws of our country, and to pay all proper deference to the prince, and to magistrates in subordinate degrees of authority, though we did not actually see them chosen, crowned, or invested with their title and character. It is by testimony that we are necessitated to believe there is such a city as Canterbury, or York, though perhaps we have never been at either; that there are such persons as Papists at Paris and Rome, and that there are many sottish and cruel tenets in their religion. It is by testimony we believe that christianity and the books of the bible have been faithfully delivered down to us through many generations; that there was such a person as Christ our Saviour, that he wrought miracles, and died on the cross, that he rose again and ascended to heaven.

The authority or testimony of men, if they are wise and honest, if they had full opportunities and capacities of knowing the truth, and are free from all suspicion of deceit in relating it, ought to sway our assent ; especially when multitudes concur in the same testimony, and when there are many other attending circumstances that raise the proposition which they dictate to the degree of moral certainty.

But in this very case, even in matters of fact, and affairs of history, we should not too easily give in to all the dictates of tradition, and the pompous pretences to the testimony of men, till we have fairly examined the several things which are necessary to make up a credible testimony, and to lay a just foundation for our belief. There are and have been, so many falsehoods imposed upon mankind, with specious pretences of eye and ear witnesses, that should make us wisely cautious and justly suspicious of reports, where the concurrent signs of truth do not fairly appear, and especially where the matter is of considerable importance. And the less probable the fact testified is in itself, the greater evidence may we justly demand of the veracity of that testimony on which it claims to be admitted.

III. The last case wherein authority must govern us is, when we are called to believe what persons under inspiration have dictated to us. This is not properly the authority of men, but of God himself ; and we are obliged to believe what that authority asserts, though our reason at present may not be able any other way, to discover the certainty or evidence of the proposition ; it is enough if our faculty of reason, in its best exercise, can discover the divine authority which has proposed it. Where doctrines of divine revelation are plainly published, together with sufficient proofs of their revelation, all mankind are bound to receive them, though they cannot perfectly understand them ; for we know that God is true, and cannot dictate falsehood.

But if these pretended dictates are directly contrary to the natural faculties of understanding and reason, which God has given us, we may be well assured these dictates were never revealed to us by God himself. When persons are really influenced by authority to believe pretended mysteries, in plain opposition to

reason, and yet pretend reason for what they believe; this is but a vain amusement.

There is no reason whatsoever, that can prove or establish any authority so firmly, as to give it power to dictate in matters of belief, what is contrary to all the dictates of our reasonable nature. God himself has never given us any such revelations; and I think it may be said, with reverence, he neither can nor will do it, unless he change our faculties from what they are at present. To tell us we must believe a proposition which is plainly contrary to reason, is to tell us that we must believe two ideas are joined, while, (if we attend to reason) we plainly see and know them to be disjoined.

What could ever have established the nonsense of transubstantiation in the world, if men had been fixed in this great truth, that God gives no revelation contradictory to our own reason? Things may be above our reason, that is, reason may have but obscure ideas of them, or reason may not see the connexion of these ideas, or may not know at present the certain and exact manner of reconciling such propositions either with one another, or with other rational truths, as I have explained in some of my logical papers: but when they stand directly and plainly against all sense and reason, as transubstantiation does, no divine authority can be pretended to enforce their belief, and human authority is impudent to pretend to it. Yet this human authority, in the Popish countries, has prevailed over millions of souls, because they have abandoned their reason, they have given up the glory of human nature to be trampled upon by knaves, and so reduced themselves to the condition of brutes.

It is by this amusement of authority (says a certain author) that the horse is taught to obey the words of command, a dog to fetch and carry, and a man to believe inconsistencies and impossibilities. Whips and dungeons, fire and the gibbet, and the solemn terrors of eternal misery after this life, will persuade weak minds to believe against their senses, and in direct contradiction to all their reasoning powers. A parrot is taught to tell lies with much more ease and more gentle usage; but none of all these creatures would

serve their masters at the expence of their liberty, had they but knowledge, and the just use of reason.

I have mentioned three cases, wherein mankind must or will be determined in their sentiments by authority; that is, the case of children in their minority, in regard to the commands of their parents; the case of all men with regard to universal, complete and sufficient testimony, of matter of fact; and the case of every person, with regard to the authority of divine revelation, and of men divinely inspired; and under each of these I have given such limitations and cautions as were necessary.

I proceed now to mention some other cases, wherein we ought to pay a great deference to the authority and sentiments of others, though we are not absolutely concluded and determined by their opinions.

1. When we begin to pass out of our minority, and to judge for ourselves in matters of the civil and religious life, we ought to pay very great deference to the sentiments of our parents, who in the time of our minority were our natural guides and directors in these matters. So in matters of science, an ignorant and unexperienced youth should pay great deference to the opinions of his instructors; and though he may justly suspend his judgment in matters which his tutors dictate, till he perceive sufficient evidence for them; yet neither parents nor tutors should be directly opposed without great and most evident reasons, such as constrain the understanding or conscience of those concerned.

2. Persons of years and long experience of human affairs, when they give advice in matters of prudence or civil conduct, ought to have a considerable deference paid to their authority by those that are young and have not seen the world, for it is most probable that the elder people are in the right.

3. In the affairs of practical godliness, there should be much deference given to persons of long standing in virtue and piety. I confess in the particular forms and ceremonies of religion, there may be as much bigotry and superstition amongst the old as the young; but in questions of inward religion and pure devotion, or virtue, a man who has been long engaged in the sincere practice of those things, is justly presumed to know more

than a youth with all his uncontrolled passions, appetites, and prejudices about him.

4. Men in their several professions and arts, in which they have been educated, and in which they have employed themselves all their days, must be supposed to have greater knowledge and skill than others, and therefore there is due respect to be paid to their judgment in those matters.

5. In matters of fact, where there is not sufficient testimony to constrain our assent, yet there ought to be due deference paid to the narratives of persons wise and sober, according to the degrees of their honesty, skill, and opportunity to acquaint themselves therewith.

I confess, in many of these cases, where the proposition is a mere matter of speculation, and doth not necessarily draw practice along with it, we may delay our assent till better evidence appear; but where the matter is of a practical nature, and requires us to act one way or another, we ought to pay much deference to authority or testimony, and follow such probabilities where we have no certainty; for this is the best light we have; and surely it is better to follow such sort of guidance, where we can have no better, than to wander and fluctuate in absolute uncertainty. It is not reasonable to put out our candle and sit still in the dark, because we have not the light of sun beams.

## CHAP. V.

### *Of Treating and Managing the Prejudices of Men.\**

**I**F we had nothing but the reason of men to deal with, and that reason were pure and uncorrupted, it would then be a matter of no great skill or labour to convince another person of common mistakes, or to persuade him to assent to plain and obvious truths. But, alas! mankind stand wrapped round in errors, and intrenched in prejudices; and every one of their opinions is supported and guarded by something else beside reason. A young bright genius, who has furnished himself with a variety of truths and strong arguments, but is yet un-

\* For the nature and causes of prejudices, and for the preventing or curing them in ourselves, see the Doctor's System of Logic, Part II. Chap. III. Of the springs of false judgment, or the doctrine of prejudices.

acquainted with the world, goes forth from the schools like a knight-errant, presuming bravely to vanquish the follies of men, and to scatter light and truth through all his acquaintance. But he meets with huge giants and chanted castles, strong prepossessions of mind, habits, customs, educations, authority, interest, together with all the various passions of men, armed and obstinate to defend their old opinions; and he is strangely disappointed in his generous attempts. He finds now that he must not trust merely to the sharpness of his steel, and to the strength of his arm, but he must manage the weapons of his reason with much dexterity and artifice, with skill and address, or he shall never be able to subdue errors, and to convince mankind.

Where prejudices are strong, there are these several methods to be practised, in order to convince persons of their mistakes, and make a way for truth to enter into their minds.

I. By avoiding the power and influence of the prejudice, without any direct attack upon it: and this is done, by choosing all the slow, softened distant methods of proposing your own sentiments, and your arguments for them, and by degrees leading the person step by step into those truths which his prejudices would not bear if they were proposed all at once.

Perhaps your neighbour is under the influence of superstition and bigotry, in the simplicity of his soul; you must not immediately run upon him with violence, and show him the absurdity or folly of his own opinions, though you might be able to set them in a glaring light! but you must rather begin at a distance, and establish his assent to some familiar and easy propositions, which have a tendency to refute his mistakes, and to confirm the truth, and then silently observe what impression this makes upon him, and proceed by slow degrees as he is able to bear; and you must carry on the work, perhaps at distant seasons of conversation. The tender or diseased eye cannot bear a deluge of light at once.

Therefore we are not to consider our arguments merely according to our own notions of their force, and from thence expect the immediate conviction of others; but we should regard how they are likely to be received by the persons we converse with; and thus

manage our reasoning as the nurse gives a child drink by slow degrees, lest the infant should be choaked and return it all back again, if poured in too hastily. If your wine be ever so good, and you are ever so liberal in bestowing it on your neighbour, yet if his bottle, into which you attempt to pour it with freedom, has a narrow mouth, you will sooner overset the bottle than fill it with wine.

Overhastiness and vehemence in arguing is oftentimes the effect of pride; it blunts the poignancy of the argument, breaks its force, and disappoints the end. If you were to convince a person of the falsehood of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and you take up the consecrated bread before him and say, "You may see, and taste, and feel, this is nothing but bread, therefore whilst you assert that God commands you to believe it is not bread, you must wickedly accuse God of commanding you to tell a lie." This sort of language would only raise the indignation of the person against you, instead of making any impressions upon him. He will not so much as think at all on the argument you have brought, but he rages at you as a profane wretch, setting up your own sense and reason above sacred authority; so that though what you affirm is a truth of great evidence, yet you lose the benefit of your whole argument by an ill management, and the unseasonable use of it.

II. We may expressly allow and indulge those prejudices for a season, which seem to stand against the truth, and endeavour to introduce the truth by degrees, while those prejudices are expressly allowed, till by degrees the advancing truth may of itself wear out the prejudice. Thus God himself dealt with his own people the Jews after the resurrection of Christ; for though from the following days of Pentecost, when the gospel was proclaimed and confirmed at Jerusalem, the Jewish ceremonies began to be void and ineffectual for any divine purpose, yet the Jews who received Christ the Messiah, were permitted to circumcise their children, and to practise many Levitical forms, till that constitution which then waxed old should in time vanish away.

Where the prejudices of mankind cannot be conquered at once, but they will rise up in arms against the



evidence of truth, we must make some allowances, and yield to them for the present, as far as we can safely do it without real injury to truth ; and if we would have any success in our endeavours to convince the world, we must practise this complaisance for the benefit of mankind.

Take a student who has deeply imbibed the principles of the peripatetics, and imagines certain immaterial beings, called substantial forms, to inhabit every herb, flower, mineral, metal, fire, water, &c. and to be the spring of all its properties and operations ; or take a Platonist who believes an *anima mundi*, an universal soul of the world to pervade all bodies, to act in and by them according to their nature, and indeed to give them their nature and their special powers ; perhaps it may be very hard to convince these persons by arguments, and constrain them to yield up these fancies. Well then let the one believe his universal soul, and the other go on with his notion of substantial forms, and at the same time teach them how, by certain original laws of motion, and the various sizes, shapes and situations of the parts of matter, allowing a continued divine concourse in and with all, the several appearances in nature may be solved, and the variety of effects produced, according to the corpuscular philosophy, improved by Descartes, Mr. Boyle, and Sir Isaac Newton ; and when they have attained a degree of skill in this science, they will see these airy notions of theirs, these imaginary powers to be so useless and unnecessary, that they will drop them of their own accord ; the peripatetic forms will vanish from the mind like a dream, and the Platonic soul of the world will expire.

Or suppose a young philosopher under a powerful persuasion, that there is nothing but what has three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness, and consequently that every finite being has a figure or shape (for shape is but the term and boundary of dimension :) suppose this person through the long prejudices of sense and imagination, cannot be easily brought to conceive of a spirit or a thinking being without shape and dimensions ; let him then continue to conceive a spirit with dimensions ; but be sure in all his conceptions to retain the idea of cogitation, or a power of thinking, and thus proceed to philosophize upon the

subject. Perhaps in a little time he will find, that length, breadth, and shape, have no share in any of the actions of a spirit; and that he can manifest all the properties and relations of such a being, with all its operations of sensation, volition, &c. to be as well performed without the use of this supposed shape, or these dimensions; and that all these operations and these attributes may be ascribed to a spirit, considered merely as a power of thinking. And when he further conceives that God, the infinite Spirit, is an almighty, self-existing, thinking power, without shape and dimensions of length, breadth, and depth, he may then suppose the human spirit may be an inferior self-subsisting power of thought; and he may be inclined to drop the idea of dimension and figure by degrees, when he sees and is convinced they do nothing towards thinking, nor are they necessary to assist or explain the operations or properties of a spirit.

I may give another instance of the same practice, where there is a prejudicate fondness of particular words and phrases. Suppose a man is educated in an unhappy form of speech, whereby he explains some great doctrine of the gospel, and by the means of this phrase he has imbibed a very false idea of that doctrine, yet he is so bigotted to his form of words, that he imagines if those words are omitted the doctrine is lost. Now, if I cannot possibly persuade him to part with his improper terms, I will indulge them a little, and try to explain them in a scriptural sense, rather than let him go on in his mistaken ideas.

Credonius believes that Christ descended into hell: I think the word *hell*, as now commonly understood, is very improper here; but since the bulk of Christians, and Credonius among them, will by no means part with the word out of their English creed, I will explain the word *hell* to signify the state of the dead, or the separate state of souls; and thus lead my friend into more just ideas of the truth, namely, that the soul of Christ existed three days in the state of separation from his body, or was in the invisible world, which might originally be called *hell* in English as well as *hades* in Greek.

Anilla has been bred a Papist all her days, and though she does not know much of religion, yet she resolves

never to part from the Roman Catholic faith, and is obstinately bent against a change. Now I cannot think it unlawful to teach her the true Christian, that is, the Protestant religion, out of the epistle to the Romans, and show her that the same doctrine is contained in the Catholic Epistles of St. Peter, James, and Jude: and thus let her live and die a good Christian, in the belief of the religion I teach her out of the New Testament, while she imagines she is a Roman Catholic still, because she finds the doctrine she is taught in the Catholic Epistles, and in that to the Romans:

I grant it is most proper there should be different words (as far as possible) applied to different ideas; and this rule should never be dispensed with, if we had to do only with the reason of mankind; but their various prejudices and zeal for some party-phrases sometimes make it necessary that we should lead them into truth under the covert of their own beloved forms of speech, rather than permit them to live and die obstinate and unconvincible in any dangerous mistake: whereas an attempt to deprive them of their old established words, would raise such a tumult within them, as to render their conviction hopeless.

III. Sometimes we may make use of the very prejudices under which a person labours, in order to convince him of some particular truth, and argue with him upon his own professed principles as though they were true. This is called *argumentum ad hominem*, and is another way of dealing with the prejudices of men.

Suppose a Jew lies sick of a fever, and is forbidden flesh by his physician; but hearing that rabbits were provided for the dinner of the family, desired earnestly to eat of them; and suppose he became impatient because his physician did not permit him, and he insisted upon it, that it could do him no hurt; surely rather than let him persist in that fancy and that desire, to the danger of his life, I would tell him that these animals were strangled, which sort of food was forbidden by the Jewish law, though I myself may believe that law is now abolished.

In the same manner was Tenerilla persuaded to let Damon, her husband, prosecute a thief who broke open

their house on Sunday. At first she abhorred the thoughts of it, and refused it utterly, because, if the thief were condemned, according to the English law, he must be hanged; where (said she) the law of God in the writings of Moses does not appoint death to be the punishment of such criminals, but tells us that a thief shall be sold for his theft, *Exod. xxii. 3.* But when Damon could no otherwise convince her that the thief ought to be prosecuted, he put her in mind that the theft was committed on a Sunday morning; now the same law of Moses requires that the Sabbath-breaker shall surely be put to death, *Exod. xxxi. 15. Numb. xv. 35.* This argument prevailed with Tenerilla, and she consented to the prosecution.

Encrates used the same means of conviction when he saw a Mahometan drink wine to excess, and heard him maintain the lawfulness and pleasure of drunkenness: Encrates reminded him, that his own prophet Mahomet had utterly forbidden all wine to his followers; and the good man restrained his vicious appetite by his superstition, when he could no otherwise convince him that drunkenness was unlawful, nor withhold him from excess.

Where we find any person obstinately persisting in a mistake in opposition to all reason, especially if the mistake be very injurious or pernicious, and we know this person will hearken to the sentiment or authority of some favourite name, it is needful sometimes to urge the opinion and authority of that favourite person, since that is likely to be regarded much more than reason. I confess I am almost ashamed to speak of using any influence of authority, while I would teach the art of reasoning. But in some cases it is better that poor, silly, perverse, obstinate creatures, should be persuaded to judge and act right by a veneration for the sense of others, than to be left to wander in pernicious errors, and continue deaf to all argument, and blind to all evidence. They are but children of a larger size; and since they persist all their lives in their minority, and reject all true reasoning, surely we may try to persuade them to practise what is for their own interest by such childish reasons as they will hearken to; we may overawe them from pursuing their own ruin by the terrors of a

solemn shadow, or allure them by a sugar-plum to their own happiness.

But, after all, we must conclude, that wheresoever it can be done it is best to remove and root out those prejudices which obstruct the entrance of truth into the mind, rather than to paliate, humour, or indulge them; and sometimes this must necessarily be done, before you can make a person part with some beloved error, and lead him into better sentiments.

Suppose you would convince a gamester that "Gaming is not a lawful calling, or business of life, to maintain one's self by it," and you make use of this argument, namely, "that which doth not admit us to ask the blessing of God, that we may get gain by it, cannot be a lawful employment; but we cannot ask the blessing of God on gaming," &c. The minor is proved thus: "We cannot pray that our neighbour may lose: this is contrary to the rule of seeking our neighbour's welfare, and loving him as ourselves; this is wishing mischief to our neighbour. But in gaming we can gain but just so much as our neighbour loses: therefore in gaming, we cannot pray for the blessing of God that we may gain by it."

Perhaps the gamester shrugs and winces, turns and twists the argument every way, but he cannot fairly answer it; yet he will patch up an answer to satisfy himself, and will never yield to the conviction, because he feels so much of the sweet influence of gaming, either towards the gratification of his avarice, or the support of his expenses. Thus he is under a strong prejudice in favour of it, and is not easily convinced.

Your first work therefore, must be to lead him by degrees to separate the thoughts of his own interest from the argument, and show him that our own temporal interests, our livelihood, or our loss, have nothing to do to determine this point, in opposition to the plain reason of things, and that he ought to put these considerations quite out of the question, if he would be honest and sincere in his search after truth or duty; and that he must be contented to hearken to the voice of reason and truth, even though it should run counter to his secular interest. When this is done, then an argument may carry some weight or force with it toward his conviction.

In like manner, if the question were, Whether Matrisa ought to expose herself and her other children to poverty and misery, in order to support the extravagancies of a favourite son? Perhaps the mother will hear no argument against it; she feels no conviction in the most cogent reasonings; so close do her fond prejudices stick to her heart. The first business here is to remove this prejudice. Ask her therefore, Whether it is not a parent's duty to love all her children, so as to provide for their welfare? Whether duty to God and her family ought not to regulate her love to a favourite? Whether her neighbour Floris did well in dressing up her daughters with expensive gaudery, and neglecting the education of her son till she saw his ruin? Perhaps by this method she may be brought to see, that particular fondness for one child should have no weight or force in determining the judgment in opposition to plain duty; and she may then give herself up to conviction in her own case, and to the evidence of truth; and thus correct her mistaken practice.

Suppose you would convert Rominda from popery, and you set all the absurdities, errors, and superstitions of that church before her in the most glaring evidence; she holds them fast still, and cannot part with them, for she hath a most sacred reverence for the faith and the church of her ancestors, and cannot imagine that they were in the wrong. The first labour must be, therefore, to convince her that her ancestors were fallible creatures; that we may part with their faith without any dishonour done to them; that all persons must choose their religion for themselves; that we must answer for ourselves in the great day of judgment, and not we for our parents, nor they for us; that Christianity itself had never been received by her ancestors in this nation, if they had persisted always in the religion of their parents, for they were all heathens. And when she has by these methods of reasoning been persuaded, that she is not bound always to cleave to the religion of her parents, she may then receive an easier conviction of the errors of Rome.

But, perhaps, of all these different methods of curing prejudices, none can be practised with greater pleasure to a wise and good man, or with greater success, where

success is most desirable, than attempting to turn the attention of well meaning people from some point in which prejudice prevails, to some other of greater importance, and fixing their thoughts and heart on some great truth which they allow, and which leads unto consequences contrary to some other notion which they espouse and retain. By this means they may be led to forget their errors, while attentive to opposite truth; and in proportion to the degree in which their minds open, and their tempers grow more generous and virtuous, may be induced to resign it. And surely nothing can give a benevolent mind more satisfaction, than to improve his neighbour in knowledge and in goodnes at the same time.

## CHAP. VI.

### *Of Instruction by Preaching.*

#### SECTION I.

##### *Wisdom better than Learning in the Pulpit.*

**TYRO** is a young preacher, just come from the schools of logic and divinity, and advanced to the pulpit; he was counted a smart youngster in the academy for analysing a proposition, and is full, even to the brim, with the terms of his art and learning. When he has read his text, after a short flourish of introduction, he tells you in how many senses the chief word is taken, first among Greek heathen writers, and then in the New Testament; he cites all the chapters and verses exactly, and endeavours to make you understand many a text, before he lets you know fully what he means by his own. He finds these things at large in the critics, which he has consulted, where this sort of work is necessary and beautiful, and therefore he imagines it will become his sermon well. Then he informs you, very learnedly, of the various false expositions which have been given by divines and commentators on this part of the scripture,

and it may be the reasons of each of them too ; and he refutes them with much zeal and contempt. Having thus cleared his way, he fixes upon the exposition which his judgment best approves, and dwells generally five or ten minutes upon the arguments to confirm it ; and this he does not only in texts of darkness and difficulty, but even when scarcely a child could doubt of his meaning.

This grammatical exercise being performed, he applies himself to his logic ; the text is divided and subdivided into many little pieces ; he points you precisely to the subject and predicate, brings you acquainted with the agent and the object, shows you all the properties and the accidents that attend it, and would fain make you understand the matter and the form of it, as well as he does himself. When he has thus done, two thirds of the hour is spent, and his hearers are quite tired ; then he begins to draw near to his doctrine, or grand theme of discourse ; and having told the audience with great formality and exactness what it is, and how he intends to manage it, he names you one or two particulars under the first general head ; and by this time finds it necessary to add, " He intended indeed to have been larger in the illustration of his subject, and he should have given you some reasons for the doctrine, but he is sorry that he is prevented ; and then he designed also to have brought it down to the conscience of every man by a warm address, but his time being gone, he must break off." He hurries over a hint or two, which should have been wrought up into exhortation or instruction, but all in great haste, and thus concludes his work. The obstinate and the careless sinner goes away unawakened, unconvinced, and the mourning soul departs uncomforted : The unbeliever is not led to faith in the gospel, nor the immoral wretch to hate, or forsake his iniquities ; the hypocrite and the man of sincerity are both unedified, because the preacher had not time. In short he hath finished his work, and hath done nothing.

When I hear this man preach, it brings to my remembrance the account which I have heard concerning the Czar of Muscovy, the first time that his army besieged a town in Livonia : He was then just



come from his travels in Great Britain, where he and his ministers of state had learned the mathematics of an old acquaintance of mine: the Czar took great care to begin the siege in form; he drew all his lines of circumvallation and contravallation according to the rules of art; but he was so tedious and so exact in these mathematical performances, that the season was spent, he was forced to break up the siege, and retire without any execution done upon the town.

Ergates is another sort of preacher, a workman that need not be ashamed. He had in his younger days but few of these learned vanities, and age and experience have now worn them all off: He preaches like a man who watches for our souls, as one that must give an account; he passes over lesser matters with speed, and pursues his great design; namely, *to save himself, and them that hear him*, 1 Tim. iv. 16. And by following this advice of St. Paul, he happily complies with that great and natural rule of Horace, always to make haste towards the most valuable end:

*Semper ad eventum festinat*—

He never affects to choose a very obscure text, lest he should waste too much of the hour in explaining the literal sense of it; he reserves all those obscurities till they come in course at his seasons of public exposition; for it is his opinion, that preaching the gospel for the salvation of men, carries in it a little different idea from a learned and critical exposition of the difficult texts of scripture.

He knows well how to use his logic in his compositions; but he calls no part of the words by their logical name, if there be any vulgar name that answers it; reading and meditation have furnished him with extensive views of his subject, and his own good sense hath taught him to give sufficient reasons for every thing he asserts; but he never uses one of them till a proof be needful. He is acquainted with the mistaken glosses of expositors; but he thinks it needless to acquaint his hearers with them, unless there be evident danger that they might run into the same mistake. He understands well what his subject is not, as well as what it is; but when he

would explain it to you, he never says first, negatively, unless some remarkable error be at hand, and which his hearers may easily fall into for want of such a caution.

Thus in five or ten minutes at the most, he makes his way plain to the proposition or theme on which he designs to discourse; and being so wise as to know well what to say and what to leave out, he proportions every part of his work to his time; he enlarges a little upon the subject by way of illustration, till the truth become evident and intelligible to the weakest of his hearers; then he confirms the point with a few convincing arguments, where the matter requires it, and makes haste to turn the doctrine into use and improvement. Thus the ignorant are instructed, and the growing Christians are established and improved; the stupid sinner is loudly awakened, and the mourning soul receives consolation; the unbeliever is led to trust in Christ and his gospel, and the impenitent and immoral are convinced and softened, are melted and reformed. The inward voice of the Holy Spirit joins with the voice of the minister; the good man and the hypocrite have their proper portions assigned them, and the work of the Lord prospers in his hand.

This is the usual course and manner of his ministry. — This method being natural, plain, and easy, he casts many of his discourses into this form; but he is no slave to forms and methods of any kind; he makes the nature of his subject and the necessity of his hearers, the great rule to direct him what method he shall choose in every sermon that he may the better enlighten, convince and persuade. Ergates well knows, that where the subject itself is entirely practical, he has no need of the formality of long uses and exhortations; he knows that practice is the chief design of doctrine; therefore he bestows most of his labour upon this part of his office, and intermingles much of the pathetic under every particular; yet he wisely observes the special dangers of his flock, and the errors of the time he lives in; and now and then, though very seldom, he thinks it necessary to spend almost a whole discourse in mere doctrinal articles. Upon such an occasion, he thinks it proper to take up a little larger part of his hour in explaining and

confirming the sense of his text, and brings it down to the understanding of a child.

At another time, perhaps, he particularly designs to entertain the few learned and polite among his auditors; and that with this view, that he may ingratiate his discourses with their ears, and may so far gratify their curiosity in this part of his sermon, as to give an easier entrance for the more plain, necessary, and important parts of it into their hearts. Then he aims at, and he reaches the sublime, and furnishes out an entertainment for the finest taste; but he scarce ever finishes his sermon without compassion to the unlearned, and an address that may reach their consciences with words of salvation.

I have observed him sometimes, after a learned discourse, come down from the pulpit as a man ashamed and quite out of countenance; he has blushed and complained to his intimate friends, lest he should be thought to have preached himself and not Christ Jesus his Lord: he has been ready to wish he had entertained the audience in a more unlearned manner, and on a more vulgar subject, lest the servants, and the labourers, and tradesmen there, should reap no advantage to their souls, and the important hour of worship should be lost as to their improvement. Well he knows, and keeps it on his heart, that the middle and lower ranks of mankind, and people of an unlettered character, make up the greater part of the assembly; therefore he is ever seeking how to adapt his thoughts and language, and far the greatest part of all his ministrations, to the instruction and profit of persons of common rank and capacity; it is in the midst of these that he hopes to find his triumph, his joy and crown in the last great day; for *not many wise, not many noble are called.*

There is so much spirit and beauty in his common conversation, that it is sought and desired by the ingenious men of his age; but he carries a severe guard of piety always about him, that tempers the pleasant air of his discourse, even in his brightest and freest hours; and before he leaves the place (if possible) he will leave something of the savour of heaven there; in the parlour he carries on the design of the pulpit, but in so elegant a manner that it charms the company, and gives not the least occasion for censure.

His polite acquaintance will sometimes rally him for talking so plainly in his sermons, and sinking his good sense to so low a level; but Ergates is bold to tell the gayest of them, "Our public business my friend, is chiefly with the weak and ignorant; that is, the bulk of mankind; *the poor receive the gospel*; the mechanics and day labourers, the women and children of my assembly, have souls to be saved; I will imitate my blessed Redeemer in *preaching the gospel to the poor*; and learn of St. Paul *to become all things to all men, that I may win souls*, and lead many sinners to heaven by repentance, faith, and holiness. —

## SECTION. II.

### *A Branching Sermon.*

I HAVE always thought it a mistake in a preacher to mince his text or his subject too small by a great number of subdivisions, for it occasions great confusion of the understandings of the unlearned. Where a man divides his matter into more general, less general, special, and more particular heads, he is under a necessity sometimes of saying *firstly*, or *secondly*, two or three times together, which the learned may observe; but the greater part of the auditory, not knowing the analysis, cannot so much as take it into their minds, and much less treasure up in their memories in a just and regular order; and when such hearers are desired to give some account of the sermon, they throw the *thirdlys* and *secondlys* into heaps, and make very confused work in a rehearsal, by intermingling the general and the special heads. In writing a large discourse this is much more tolerable;\* but in preaching it is less profitable, and more intricate and offensive.

It is as vain an affectation also to draw out a long rank of particulars in the same sermon under any one general, and run up the number of them to *eighteenthly*, or *seven and twentiethly*. Men that take delight in this sort

\* Especially as words may be used to number the generals, and figures of different kinds and forms, to marshal the primary and secondary ranks of particulars under them.

of work, will cut out all their sense into shreds ; and every thing that they can say upon any topic shall make a new particular.

This sort of folly and mistaken conduct appears weekly in Polyramus's lectures, and renders all his discourses lean and insipid. Whether it proceed from a mere barrenness of thought, and a native dryness of soul, that he is not able to vary his matter, and to amplify beyond the formal topics of an analysis, or whether it arises from affectation of such a way of talking, is hard to say ; but it is certain that the chief part of his auditory are not overmuch profited or pleased. When I sit under his preaching, I fancy myself brought into the valley of Ezekiel's vision : it was full of bones, and behold there were very many in the valley, and lo, they were very dry, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 2.

It is the variety of enlargement upon a few proper heads that clothes the dry bones with flesh, and animates them with blood and spirits ; it is this that colours the discourse, makes it warm and strong, and renders the divine propositions bright and persuasive ; it is this brings down the doctrine or the duty to the understanding or conscience of the whole auditory, and commands the natural affections into the interest of the gospel. In short, it is this that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, gives life and force, beauty and success to a sermon, and provides food for souls. A single rose bush or a dwarf pear, with all their leaves, flowers and fruit about them, have more beauty and spirit in themselves, and yield more food and pleasure to mankind, than the innumerable branches, boughs and twigs of a long hedge of thorns. The fruit will feed the hungry, and the flower will refresh the fainting ; which is more than can be said of the thickest oak in Bashan, when it has lost its vital juice ; it may spread its limbs indeed far and wide, but they are naked, withered, and sapless.

## SECTION III.

*The Harangue.*

IS it not possible to forsake one extreme without running into a worse? Is there no medium between a sermon made up of sixty dry particulars, and a long loose declamation without any distinction of the parts of it? Must the preacher divide his works by the breaks of a minute watch, or let it run on incessantly to the last word, like the flowing stream of the hour glass that measures his divinity? Surely Fluvio preaches as though he knew no medium; and having taken a disgust heretofore at one of Polyramus's lectures, he resolved his own discourses should have no distinction of particulars in them. His language flows smoothly in a long connexion of periods, and glides over the ear like a rivulet of oil over polished marble, and like that too, leaves no trace behind it. The attention is detained in a gentle pleasure, and (to say the best thing possible of it) the hearer is soothed into something like divine delight; but he can give the inquiring friend scarcely any account what it was that pleased him. He retains a faint idea of the sweetness, but has forgotten the sense.

Tell me, Fluvio, is this the most effectual way to instruct ignorant creatures in the several articles of faith, and the various duties of the christian life? Will such a long uniform flow of language imprint all the distinct parts of Christian knowledge on the mind, in their best form and order? Do you find such a gentle and gliding stream of words most powerful to call up the souls of sinners from their dangerous or fatal lethargy? Will this indolent and moveless species of oratory, make a thoughtless wretch attend to matters of infinite moment? Can a long purring sound awaken a sleepy conscience, and give a perishing sinner just notices of his dreadful hazard? Can it furnish his understanding and his memory with all the awful and tremendous topics of our religion, when it scarce ever leaves any distinct impression of one of them on his soul? Can you make the arrow wound where it will

not stick? Where all the discourse vanishes from our remembrance, can you suppose the soul to be profited or enriched? When you brush over the closed eyelids with a feather, did you ever find it give light to the blind? Have any of your soft harangues, your continued threads of silken eloquence ever raised the dead? I fear your whole aim is, to talk over the appointed number of minutes upon the subject, or to practise a little upon the gentler passions, without any concern how to give the understanding its due improvement, or to furnish the memory with any lasting treasure, or to make a knowing and a religious Christian.

Ask old Wheatfield the rich farmer, ask Plowdown your neighbour, or any of his family, who have sat all their lives under your ministry, what they know of the common truths of religion, or of the special articles of Christianity? Desire them to tell you what the gospel is, or what is salvation? What are their duties toward God, or what they mean by religion? Who is Jesus Christ, or what is the meaning of his atonement, or redemption by his blood? Perhaps you will tell me yourself, that you have very seldom entertained them with these subjects. Well, inquire of them what is heaven? Which is the way to obtain it, or what hope they have of dwelling there? Entreat them to tell you, wherein they have profited as to holiness of heart and life, or fitness for death. They will soon make it appear by their awkward answers, that they understood very little of all your fine discourses, and those of your predecessors, and have made but wretched improvement of forty years attendance at church. They have now and then been pleased, perhaps, with the music of your voice, as with the sound of a sweet instrument, and they mistook that for devotion; but their heads are dark still, and their hearts earthly; they are mere heathens with a Christian name, and know little more of God than their yokes of oxen. In short, Polyramus's auditors have some confusion in their knowledge, but Fluvio's hearers have scarce any knowledge at all.

But you will tell me your discourses are not all made up of harangue; your design is sometimes to inform the mind by a train of well connected reasonings, and that all your paragraphs in their long order prove and support each other; and though you do not distinguish

your discourse into particulars, yet you have kept some invisible method all the way, and by some artificial gradations, you have brought down your sermon to the concluding sentence.

It may be so sometimes, and I will acknowledge it; but believe me, Fluvio, this artificial and invisible method carries darkness with it instead of light; nor is it by any means a proper way to instruct the vulgar, that is, the bulk of your auditory; their souls are not capable of so wide a stretch as to take in the whole chain of your long connected consequences; you talk reason and religion to them in vain, if you do not make the argument so short as to come within their grasp, and give a frequent rest for their thoughts; you must break the bread of life into pieces to feed children with it, and part your discourses into distinct propositions, to give the ignorant a plain scheme of any one doctrine, and enable them to comprehend or retain it.

Every day gives us experiments to confirm what I say, and to encourage ministers to divide their sermons into several distinct heads of discourse. Myrtila, a little creature of nine years old, was at church twice yesterday; in the morning the preacher entertained his audience with a running oration, and the child could give her parents no other account of it, but that he talked smoothly and sweetly about virtue and heaven. It was Ergates's lot to fulfil the service of the afternoon; he is an excellent preacher both for the wise and unwise. In the Evening, Myrtila very prettily entertained her mother with a repetition of the most considerable parts of the sermon; for, "Here," said she, "I can fix my thoughts upon first, secondly, and thirdly, upon the doctrine, the reasons, and the inferences; and I know what I must try to remember, and repeat it when my friends shall ask me: but as for the morning sermon, I could do nothing but hear it, for I could not tell what I should get by heart."

This manner of talking in a loose harangue, has not only injured our pulpits, but it makes the several essays and treatises that are written nowadays, less capable of improving the knowledge, or enriching the memory of the reader.

I will easily grant, that where the whole discourse reaches not beyond a few pages, there is no necessity



of the formal proposal of the several parts, before you handle each of them distinctly, nor is there need of such a set method; the unlearned and narrow understanding can take an easy view of the whole, without the author's pointing to the several parts. But where the essay is prolonged to a greater extent, confusion grows upon the reader almost at every page, without some scheme or method of successive heads in the discourse, to direct the mind and aid the memory.

If it be answered here, that neither such treatises nor sermons are a mere heap, for there is a just method observed in the composure, and the subjects are ranged in a proper order; it is easy to reply, that this method is so concealed, that a common hearer or reader can never find it; and you must suppose every one that peruses such a book, and much more that attends such a discourse, to have some good knowledge of the art of logic, before he can distinguish the various parts and branches, the connexions and transitions of it. To an unlearned eye or ear, it appears a mere heap of good things without any method, form or order; and if you tell your young friends they should get it into their heads and hearts, they know not how to set about it.

If we inquire, how it comes to pass that our modern ingenious writers should affect this manner; I know no juster reason to give for it, than a humorous and wanton contempt of the customs and practices of our forefathers; a sensible disgust taken at some of their mistakes and ill conduct, at first tempted a vain generation into the contrary extreme near sixty years ago; and now, even to this day, it continues too much in fashion, so that the wise as well as the weak, are ashamed to oppose it, and are borne down with the current.

Our fathers formed their sermons much upon the model of doctrine, reason, and use; and perhaps there is no one method of more universal service, and more easily applicable to most subjects, though it be not necessary or proper in every discourse; but the very names of doctrine and use are become nowadays such stale and old-fashioned things, that a modish preacher is quite ashamed of them; nor can a modish hearer bear the sound of those syllables; a direct and distinct ad-

dress to the consciences of saints and sinners must not be named or mentioned, though these terms are scriptural, lest it should be hissed out of the church like the garb of a round head or a puritan.

Some of our fathers have multiplied their particulars, under one single head of discourse, and run up the tale of them to sixteen or seventeen. Culpable indeed, and too numerous! But in opposition to this extreme, we are almost ashamed in our age to say thirdly, and all fourthlys and fifthlys are very unfashionable words.

Our fathers made too great account of the sciences of logic and metaphysics, and the formalities of definition and division, syllogism and method, when they brought them so often into the pulpit; but we hold those arts so much in contempt and defiance, that we had rather talk a whole hour without order and without edification, than be suspected of using logic or method in our discourses.

Some of our fathers neglected politeness perhaps too much, and indulged a coarseness of style, and a rough or awkward pronunciation; but we have such a value for elegance, and so nice a taste for what we call polite, that we dare not spoil the cadence of a period to quote a text of scripture in it, nor disturb the harmony of our sentences, to number or to name the heads of our discourse. And for this reason, I have heard it hinted, that the name of Christ has been banished out of polite sermons, because it is a monosyllable of so many consonants, and so harsh a sound.

But, after all, our fathers, with all their defects, and with all their weaknesses, preached the gospel of Christ to the sensible instruction of whole parishes, to the conversion of sinners from the errors of their way, and the salvation of multitudes of souls. But it has been the late complaint of Dr. Edwards, and other worthy sons of the established church, that in too many pulpits nowadays there are only heard some smooth declamation, while the hearers that were ignorant of the gospel abide still without knowledge, and the profane sinners are profane still. O that divine grace would descend and reform what is amiss in all the sanctuaries of the nation!\*

\* It appears by the date, at the bottom of this paper in MMS. that it was written in the year 1718. The first, and perhaps the second section

## CHAP. VII.

*Of Writing Books for the Public.*

**I**N the explication and distinction of words and things by definition and description; in the division of things into their several parts, and in the distribution of things into their several kinds, be sure to observe a just medium. We must not always explain and distinguish, define, divide, and distribute, nor must we always omit it; sometimes it is useless and impertinent, sometimes it is proper and necessary. There is confusion brought into our argument and discourse by too many, or by too few of these. One author plunges his reader into the midst of things without due explication of them; another jumbles together without distinction all those ideas which have any likeness; a third is fond of explaining every word, and coining distinctions between ideas which have little or no difference; but each of these runs into extremes; for all these practices are equal hinderances to clear, just, and useful knowledge. It is not a long train of rules, but observation and good judgment, can teach us when to explain, define and divide, and when to omit it.

In the beginning of a treatise it is proper and necessary sometimes to premise some præcognita or general principles, which may serve for an introduction to the subject in hand, and give light and strength to the following discourse; but it is ridiculous under a pretence of such introductions or prefaces to wander to the most remote or distant themes, which have no near or necessary connexion with the thing in hand, this serves for no other purpose but to make a gaudy show of learning. There was a professor of divinity, who began an analytical exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, with such præcognita as these; first he showed the excellence of man above other creatures, who was able to

of it may seem now to be grown in a great measure out of date; but whether the third is not at least as seasonable now as ever, may deserve serious consideration. The author, since this was drawn up, hath delivered his sentiments more fully in the first part of that excellent piece entitled, *An Humble Attempt for the Revival of Religion, &c.*

declare the sense of his mind, by arbitrary signs ; then he harangued upon the origin of speech ; after that he told of the wonderful invention of writing, and inquired into the author of that art which taught us to paint sounds : When he had given us the various opinions of the learned on this point, and distributed writing into its several kinds, and laid down definitions of them all, at last he came to speak of epistolary writing, and distinguished epistles into familiar, private, public, recommendatory credentials, and what not? Thence he descended to speak of the superscription, subscription, &c. and some lectures were finished before he came to the first verse of St. Paul's epistle ; the auditors being half starved and tired with expectation, dropped away one by one, so that the professor had scarce any hearers to attend the college, or the lectures which he had promised on that part of scripture.

The rules which Horace has given in his Art of Poetry, would instruct many a preacher and professor of theology, if they would but attend to them. He informs us that a wise author, such as Homer, who writes a poem of the Trojan war, would not begin a long and far distant story of Jupiter, in the form of a swan, impregnating Leda with a double egg ; from one part whereof Helen was hatched, who was married to Menelaus a Greek general, and then stolen from him by Paris, son of Priam, king of Troy, which awakened the resentment of the Greeks against the Trojans.

*Nec gemino bellum Trojanum or ditur ab ovo.*

But the writer, says he, makes all proper haste to the event of things, and does not drag on slowly, perpetually turning aside from his point, and catching at every incident to prolong his story, as though he wanted matter to furnish out his tale.

*Semper ad eventum festinat.*

Though I must confess I cannot think that Homer has always followed this rule in either of his two famous epic poems : But Horace does not hear what I say. There is also another rule near akin to the former.

As a writer or speaker should not wander from his subject, to fetch in foreign matter from afar, so neither should he amass together, and drag in all that can be said, even on his appointed theme of discourse; but he should consider what is his chief design, what is the end he hath in view, and then to make every part of his discourse subserve that design. If he keeps his great end always in his eye, he will pass hastily over those parts or appendages of his subject, which have no evident connexion with his design, or he will entirely omit them, and hasten continually towards his intended mark; employing his time, his study and labour chiefly, on that part of his subject which is most necessary to attain his present and proper end.

This might be illustrated by a multitude of examples; but an author who would hear them together on such an occasion, might be in danger of becoming himself an example of the impertinence he is cautioning others to avoid.

After you have finished any discourse which you design for the public, it would be always best, if other circumstances would permit, to let it sleep sometime before you expose it to the world, that so you may have opportunity to review it with the indifference of a stranger, and to make the whole of it pass under a new and just examination; for no man can judge so justly of his own work, while the pleasure of his invention and performance is fresh, and has engaged his self-love too much on the side of what he has newly finished.

If an author would send a discourse into the world, which should be most universally approved, he should consult persons of very different genius, sentiment and party, and endeavour to learn their opinions of it. In the world it will certainly meet with all these. Set it therefore to view amongst several of your acquaintance first, who may survey the argument on all sides, and one may happen to suggest a correction which is entirely neglected by others; and be sure to yield yourself to the dictates of true criticism, and just censure, where-soever you meet with them; nor let a fondness for what you have written, blind your eyes against the discovery of your own mistakes.

When an author desires a friend to revise his work, it is too frequent a practice to disallow almost every correction which a judicious friend shall make; he apologizes for this word, and the other expression; he vindicates this sentence, and gives his reasons for another paragraph, and scarcely ever submits to correction; and thus utterly discourages the freedom that a true friend would take, in pointing out our mistakes. Such writers who are so full of themselves, may go on to admire their own incorrect performances, and expose their works and their follies to the world without pity.\*

Horace, in his Art of Poetry, talks admirably well on this subject :

*Quintilio si quid recitares, corrige, sodes,  
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc; melius te posse negares  
Bis terque expertum frustra; delere judebat,  
Et male tornatos incudi reddere versus.  
Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, mallet;  
Nulla ultra verbum, aut operam insumebat inanem,  
Quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares.*

Let good Quintilius all your lines revise,  
And he will freely say, mend this and this;  
Sir, I have often try'd, and try'd again,  
I'm sure I can't do better, 'tis in vain;  
Then blot out every word, or try once more,  
And file these ill tun'd verses o'er and o'er:  
But if you seem in love with your own thought,  
More eager to defend than mend your fault,  
He says no more but lets the fop go on,  
And, rival free, admire his lovely own.

CREECH.

If you have not the advantage of friends to survey your writings, then read them over yourself, and all the way consider what will be the sentence and judgment of all the various characters of mankind upon them; think what one of your own party would say, or what would be the sense of an adversary; imagine

\* To cut off such chicanery, it may perhaps be the most expedient for a person consulted, on such an occasion, to note down on distinct paper, with proper references, the advised alterations, referring it to the author, to make such use of them as he, on due deliberation, shall think fit.

what a curious or a malicious man, what a captious or an envious critic, what a vulgar or a learned reader would object, either to the matter, the manner, or the style; and be sure and think with yourself what you yourself could say against your own writing, if you were of a different opinion, or a stranger to the writer; and by these means you will obtain some hints whereby to correct and improve your own work, and to guard it better against the censures of the public, as well as to render it more useful to that part of mankind for whom you chiefly design it.

## CHAP. VIII.

### *Of Writing and Reading Controversies.*

#### SECTION I.

##### *Of Writing Controversies.*

**WHEN** a person of good sense writes on any controverted subject, he will generally bring the strongest arguments that are usually to be found for the support of his opinion; and when that is done, he will represent the most powerful objections against it, in a fair and candid manner, giving them their full force, and at last will put in such an answer to those objections, as he thinks will dissipate and dissolve the force of them; and herein the reader will generally find a full view of the controversy, together with the main strength of argument on both sides.

When a good writer has set forth his own opinion at large, and vindicated it with its fairest and strongest proofs, he shall be attacked by some pen on the other side of the question; and if his opponent be a wise and sensible writer, he will show the best reasons why the former opinions cannot be true; that is, he will draw out the objections against them in their fullest array, in order to destroy what he supposes a mistaken opinion; and here we may reasonably suppose that an opponent will draw up his objections against the supposed

error in a brighter light, and with stronger evidence than the first writer did, who propounded his opinion, which was contrary to those objections.

If, in the third place, the first writer answers his opponent with care and diligence, and maintains his own point against the objections which were raised in the best manner; the reader may then generally presume, that in these three pieces he has a complete view of the controversy, together with the most solid and powerful arguments on both sides of the debate.

But when a fourth, and fifth, and sixth volume appear, in rejoinders and replies, we cannot reasonably expect any great degrees of light to be derived from them; or that much further evidences for truth should be found in them; and it is sufficiently evident from daily experience, that many mischiefs attend this prolongation of controversies among men of learning, which for the most part do injury to the truth, either by turning the attention of the reader quite away from the original point to other matters, or by covering the truth with a multitude of occasional incidents and perplexities which serve to bewilder rather than guide a faithful inquirer.

Sometimes, in these latter volumes, the writers on both sides will hang upon little words and occasional expressions, of their opponent, in order to expose them, which have no necessary connexion with the grand point in view, and which have nothing to do with the debated truth.

Sometimes they will spend many a page in vindicating their own character, or their own little sentences or accidental expressions, from the remarks of their opponent, in which expressions or remarks the original truth has no concern.

And sometimes again you shall find even writers of good sense, who have happened to express themselves in an improper and indefensible manner, led away by the fondness of self love to justify those expressions, and vindicate those little lapses they were guilty of, rather than they will condescend to correct those little mistakes, or recall those improper expressions. O that we would put off our pride, our self sufficiency, and our infallibility, when we enter into a debate of



truth ! But if the writer be guilty of mingling these things with his grand argument, happy will that reader be who has judgment enough to distinguish them, and to neglect every thing that does not belong to the original theme proposed and disputed.

Yet here it may be proper to put in one exception to this general observation or remark, namely, when the second writer attacks only a particular or collateral opinion, which was maintained by the first, then the fourth writing may be supposed to contain a necessary part of the complete force of the argument, as well as the second and third, because the first writing only occasionally or collaterally mentioned that sentiment, which the second attacks and opposes, and, in such a case, the second may be esteemed as the first treatise on that controversy. It would take up too much time should we mention instances of this kind, which might be pointed to in most of our controversial writers, and it might be invidious to enter into the detail.\*

## SECTION II.

### *Of Reading Controversies.*

**WHEN** we take a book into our hands, wherein any doctrine or opinion is printed in a way of argument, we are too often satisfied and determined beforehand whether it be right or wrong ; and if we are on the writer's side, we are generally tempted to take his arguments for solid and substantial ; and thus our own for-

\* Upon this it may be remarked farther, that there is a certain spirit of modesty and of benevolence which never fail to adorn a writer on such occasions, and which generally does him much more service in the judgment of wise and sensible men, than any poignancy of satire, with which he might be able to animate his productions ; and as this always appears amiable, so it is peculiarly charming when the opponent shows that pertness and petulancy which is so very common on such occasions. When a writer, instead of pursuing with eager resentment the antagonist that has given him such provocation, calmly attends to the main question in debate, with a noble negligence of those little advantages which ill nature and ill manners always give, he acquires a glory far superior to any trophies which wit can raise. And it is highly probable, that the solid instruction his pages may contain, will give a continuance to his writings far beyond what tracts of peevish controversy are to expect, of which the much greater part are borne away into oblivion by the wind they raise, or burned in their own flames.

mer sentiment is established more powerfully, without a sincere search after truth.

If we are on the other side of the question, we then take it for granted, that there is nothing of force in these arguments, and we are satisfied with a short survey of the book, and are soon persuaded to pronounce mistake, weakness, and insufficiency concerning it. Multitudes of common readers, who are fallen into any error, when they are directed and advised to read a treatise that would set them right, read it with a sort of disgust which they have before entertained; they skim lightly over the arguments, they neglect or despise the force of them, and keep their own conclusions firm in their assent, and thus maintain their error in the midst of light, and grow incapable of conviction.

But if we would indeed act like sincere searchers of the truth, we should survey every argument with a careful and unbiassed mind, whether it agree with our former opinion or no; we should give every reasoning its full force, and weigh it in our sedatest judgment. Now the best way to try what force there is in the arguments which are brought against our own opinions, is to sit down and endeavour to give a solid answer, one by one, to every argument that the author brings to support his own doctrine; and in this attempt, if we find there some arguments which we are not able to answer fairly to our own minds, we should then begin to bethink ourselves, whether we have not been hitherto in a mistake, and whether the defender of the contrary sentiments may not be in the right. Such a method as this will effectually forbid us to pronounce at once against those doctrines, and those writers, which are contrary to our sentiments; and we shall endeavour to find solid arguments to refute their positions, before we entirely establish ourselves in a contrary opinion.

Volatilis had given himself up to the conversation of the free thinkers of our age upon all subjects; and being pleased with the wit and appearance of argument in some of our modern deists, had too easily deserted the christian faith, and gone over to the camp of the infidels. Among other books which were recommended to him, to reduce him to the faith of the gos-

pel, he had Mr. John Reynolds' *Three Letters to a Deist* put into his hands, and was particularly desired to peruse the *third* of them with the utmost care, as being an unanswerable defence of the truth of Christianity. He took it in hand, and, after having given it a short survey, he told his friend, he saw nothing in it but the common arguments which we all use to support the religion in which we have been educated, but they wrought no conviction in him; nor did he see sufficient reason to believe that the gospel of Christ was not a piece of enthusiasm, or a mere imposture.

Upon this, the friend who recommended Mr. Reynolds' *Three Letters* to his study, being confident of the force of truth which lay there, entreated of Volatilis that he would set himself down with diligence, and try to answer Mr. Reynolds' *Third Letter* in vindication of the gospel; and that he would show, under every head, how the several steps which were taken in the propagation of the Christian religion, might be the natural effects of imposture or enthusiasm, and consequently, that it deserves no credit among men.

Volatilis undertook the work, and after he had entered a little way into it, found himself so bewildered, and his arguments to prove the apostles either enthusiasts or impostors so muddled, so perplexed, and so inconclusive, that, by a diligent review of this Letter to the Deists, at last he acknowledged himself fully convinced that the religion of Jesus was divine; for that Christian author had made it appear, it was impossible that that doctrine should have been propagated in the world by simplicity or folly, by fraud or falsehood; and accordingly, he resigned his soul up to the gospel of the blessed Jesus.

I fear there have been multitudes of such unbelievers as Volatilis; and he himself has confessed to me, that even his most rational friends would be constrained to yield to the evidence of the Christian doctrine, if they would honestly try the same method.

**DISCOURSE**  
ON THE  
**EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH.**

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INTRODUCTION.

*Of the Importance of Education, and the Design of this  
Discourse, with a Plan of it.*

**T**HE children of the present age, are the hope of the age to come. We who are now acting our several parts in the busy scenes of life, are hastening off the stage apace ; months and days are sweeping us away from the business and the surface of this earth, and continually laying some of us to sleep under ground. The circle of thirty years will plant another generation in our room ; another set of mortals will be the chief actors in all the greater and lesser affairs of this life, and will fill the world with blessings, or with mischiefs, when our heads lie low in the dust.

Shall we not then consider with ourselves, What can we do now to prevent those mischiefs, and to entail blessings on our successors ? What shall we do to secure wisdom, goodness, and religion, amongst the next generation of men ? Have we any concern for the glory of God in the rising age ? Any solicitude for the propagation of virtue, and happiness to those who shall stand up in our stead ? Let us then hearken to the voice of God and Solomon, and we shall learn how this may be done ; the all wise God, and the wisest of men, join to give us this advice ; “ *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* ” The sense of it may be expressed more at large in this proposition, namely, Let children have a good education.

given them in the younger parts of life, and this is the most likely way to establish them in virtue and piety in their elder years.

In this discourse, I shall not enter into any inquiries about the management of children in the two or three first years of their life; I leave that tender age entirely to the care of the mother and the nurse; yet not without a wish that some wiser and happier pen would give advice or friendly notice to nurses and mothers, of what they ought to avoid and what they ought to do in those early seasons; and indeed, they may do much towards the future welfare of those young buds and blossoms, those lesser pieces of human nature, which are their proper charge. Some of the seeds of virtue and goodness may be conveyed almost into their very constitution betimes, by the pious prudence of those who have the conduct of them; and some forward vices may be nipped in the very bud; which in three years time might gain too firm a root in their heart and practice, and may not easily be plucked up by all the following care of their teachers.

But I begin with children when they can walk and talk, when they have learned their mother tongue, when they begin to give some more evident discoveries of their intellectual powers, and are more manifestly capable of having their minds formed and moulded into knowledge, virtue and piety.

Now the first and most universal ingredient which enters into the education of children, is an instruction of them in those things which are necessary and useful for them in their rank and station, and that with regard to this world and the world to come.

I limit these instructions, (especially such as relate to this world) by the station and rank of life in which children are born and placed by the providence of God. Persons of better circumstances in the world should give their sons and their daughters a much larger share of knowledge, and a richer variety of instruction than meaner persons can or ought. But since every child that is born into this world hath a body and a soul, since its happiness or misery in this world and the next, depends very much upon its instructions and knowledge, it hath a right to be taught by its parents, according to

their best ability, so much as is necessary for its well being, both in soul and body, here and hereafter.

It is true that the great God our Creator hath made us reasonable creatures ; we are by nature capable of learning a million of objects ; but as the soul comes into the world, it is unfurnished with knowledge ; we are born ignorant of every good and useful thing ; we know not God, we know not ourselves, we know not what is our duty and our interest, nor where lies our danger ; and, if left entirely to ourselves, should probably grow up like the brutes of the earth ; we should trifle away the brightest seasons of life in a thousand crimes and follies, and endure the fatigues and burdens of it, surrounded with a thousand miseries ; and at last we should perish and die without knowledge or hope, if we had no instructors.

All our other powers of nature, such as the will and the various affections, the senses, the appetites, and the limbs, would become wild instruments of madness and mischief, if not governed by the understanding ; and the understanding itself would run into a thousand errors, dreadful and pernicious, and would employ all the other powers in mischief and madness, if it hath not the happiness to be instructed in the things of God and men. And who is there among all our fellow creatures so much obliged to bestow this instruction on us, as the persons who, by Divine Providence, have been the instruments to bring us into life and being ? It is their duty to give their young offspring this benefit of instruction, as far as they are able ; or at least to provide such instructors for them, and to put the children under their care.

Here let us therefore inquire what are the several things in which children should be instructed ? And upon a due survey, we shall find the most important things which children ought to learn and know are these which follow.

## SECTION I.

### *Of Instructing Children in Religion.*

**RELIGION**, in all the parts of it, both what they are to believe, and what they are to practise, is most necessary to be taught. I mention this in the first place not only because it is a matter of the highest importance, and of most universal concern to all mankind, but because it may be taught even in those very early years of life. As soon as children begin to know almost any thing, and to exercise their reason about matters that lie within the reach of their knowledge, they may be brought to know so much of religion as is necessary for their age and state. For instance,

1. Young children may be taught that there is a God, a great and Almighty God, who made them, and who gives them every good thing. That he sees them every where, though they cannot see him; and that he takes notice of all their behaviour.

2. They must be told what they should do, and what they should avoid, in order to please God. They should be taught in general to know the difference between good and evil. They may learn that it is their duty to fear, love, and worship God, to pray to him for what they want, and to praise him for what they enjoy; to obey their parents, to speak truth, and to be honest and friendly to all mankind; and to set a guard upon their own appetites and passions. And that to neglect these things, or do any thing contrary to them, is sinful in the sight of God.

3. Their consciences are capable of receiving conviction when they have neglected these duties, or broken the commands of God, or of their parents; and they may be made sensible that the great and holy God, who loves the righteous, and bestows blessings upon them, is angry with those who have broken his commands and sinned against him; and therefore that they themselves are become subject to his displeasure.

4. They may be told that there is another world after this ; and that their souls do not die when their bodies die ; that they shall be taken up into heaven, which is a state of pleasure and happiness, if they have been good and holy in this world ; but if they have been wicked children, they must go down to hell, which is a state of misery and torment.

5. You may also inform them, that though their bodies die and are buried, yet God can and will raise them to life again ; and that their body and soul together must be made happy or miserable according to their behaviour in this life.

6. They may be taught, that there is no way for such sinful creatures as we are to be received into God's favour, but for the sake of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who came down from heaven into our world, and lived a life of pure and perfect holiness, and suffered death to reconcile sinners to the great and holy God, who is offended by the sins of men, and now lives in heaven to plead for mercy for them ; and that as this Jesus Christ is the only reconciler between God and man, so all their hope must be placed in him.

7. They may be taught that their very natures are sinful ; they may be convinced that they are inclined naturally to do evil ; and they should be informed, that it is the holy spirit of God who must cure the evil temper of their own spirits, and make them holy and fit to dwell with God in heaven.

8. They should also be instructed to pray to God, that for the sake of Jesus Christ, the great Mediator or Reconciler, he would pardon their sins past, and help them by his Spirit to love and serve him with zeal and faithfulness, for the time to come : that he would bestow all necessary blessings upon them in this world, and bring them safe at last to his heavenly kingdom.

9. In the last place they should be informed, that our blessed Saviour has appointed two ordinances to be observed by all his followers to the end of the world, which are usually called sacraments.

The one is baptism, wherein persons are to be washed with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to signify their being given up to Christ, as his disciples, or professors of christianity ; and as an



emblem of that purity of heart and life, which, as such, they must aim at, and endeavour after.

The other is the Lord's supper, wherein bread is broken and wine is poured out, and distributed, to be eaten and drank by Christians in remembrance of the body of Christ, which was put to a bloody death, as a sacrifice to obtain pardon for the sins of men.

The first of these, namely, baptism, is but once to be administered to any person; but the last, namely, the Lord's supper, is to be frequently performed, to keep us always in mind of the death of Christ, till he comes again from heaven to judge the world.

This is the sum and substance of the Christian religion, drawn out into a very few plain articles; and I think a child of a common capacity, who is arrived at three or four years of age, may be taught some part of these articles, and may learn to understand them all at seven, or eight, or nine, at least so far as is needful, for all his own exercises of devotion and piety. As his age increases, he may be instructed more at large in the principles and practices of our holy religion, as I shall show more particularly in the third section.

## SECTION II.

*The Exercise and Improvement of their Natural Powers.*

**H**AVING mentioned religion as the principal thing in which children should be instructed, I proceed to say, in the second place, that children should be taught the true use, the exercise and improvement of their natural powers; and we may for order sake distinguish these into the powers of the body and those of the mind; now though nature gives these powers and faculties, yet it is a good education that must instruct us in the exercise and improvement of them; otherwise, like an uncultivated field, they will be ever barren and fruitless, or produce weeds and briars, instead of herbs and corn.

Among the powers of the mind which are to be thus cultivated, we may reckon the understanding, the memory, the judgment, the faculty of reasoning, and the conscience.

1. Teach them to use their understanding aright. Persuade them to value their understanding as a noble faculty, and allure them to seek after the enrichment of it with a variety of knowledge. Let no day escape without adding some new ideas to their understanding, and giving their young unfurnished minds some further notion of things.

Almost every thing is new to a child, and novelty will entice them onward to new acquisitions; show them the birds, the beasts, the fishes and insects, trees, herds, fruits, and all the several parts and properties of the vegetable and the animal world; teach them to observe the various occurrences in nature and providence, the sun, moon, and stars, the day and night, summer and winter, the clouds and the sky, the hail, snow and ice, winds, fire, water, earth, air, fields, woods, mountains, rivers, &c. Teach them that the great God made all these things, and that his providence governs them all. Acquaint a child also with domestic affairs so far as is needful, and with the things that belong to the civil and the military life, the church and the state, with the works of God and the works of men. A thousand objects that strike their eyes, their ears, and all their senses, will furnish out new matter for their curiosity and your instructions.

There are some books which are published in the world, wherein a child may be delightfully led into the knowledge of a great number of these things by pictures, or figures of birds, beasts, &c. well graven, with their names under them. This will much assist the labour of the teacher, and add to the pleasure of the children in their daily learning.

You who instruct them should allure their young curiosity to ask many questions, encourage them in it, and gratify their inquiries, by giving them the best and most satisfactory answers you can frame, and accommodate all your language to their capacity.

Give them, as far as possible, clear ideas of things, and teach them how to distinguish one thing from another by their different appearances, by their different properties, and by their different effects. Show them how far some things agree with others, and how far they differ from them; and above all things teach them, as far

as their young understandings will admit, to distinguish between appearances and realities, between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, between trifles and things of importance; for these are the most valuable pieces of knowledge and distinction which can be lodged in the young understandings of children.

2. The memory is another faculty of the soul, which should be cultivated and improved; endeavour carefully to impress on their minds things of worth and value. Such are, short and useful and entertaining stories, which carry in them some virtue recommended, some vice ridiculed or punished; various human and divine truths, rules of piety and virtue, precepts of prudence, &c. Repeat these things often to them by day and by night; teach them these things in verse and in prose; rehearse them in their ears at all proper seasons, and take occasion to make them repeat these things to you.

Be solicitous to know what it is they learn when they are out of your sight, and take good care that their memories be not charged with trifles and idle trumpery. The memory is a noble repository or cabinet of the soul; it should not be filled with rubbish and lumber. Silly tales and foolish songs, the conundrums of nurses, and the dull rhymes that are sung to lull children asleep, or to sooth a froward humour, should be generally forbid to entertain those children where a good education is designed. Something more innocent, more solid and more profitable, may be invented, instead of these fooleries. If it were possible, let a very few things be lodged in the memory of children which they need to forget when they are men.

The way to strengthen and improve the memory is to put it upon daily exercise. I do not mean that young children should be kept so close to their book as to be crammed with lessons all the day long, and made to receive and sustain a heavy load every hour. The powers of the soul, (especially such as act in close concert with the body, and are so much aided by the brain) may be overburdened and injured as well as the limbs; the mind may be perplexed and confounded, the head may be overstrained and weakened, and the health impaired in those tender years of life, by an excessive imposition on the memory; the teachers of children

should have some prudence, to distinguish their age and their several capacities; they should know how to avoid extremes.

But in general it may be said, that the powers of the mind as well as those of the body, grow stronger by a constant and moderate exercise. Every day let the memory of a child be entrusted with something new; every day let some lesson be learned; and every Lord's day at least, even in their youngest years, let them learn by heart some one text of scripture, (chiefly that on which the minister preaches :) this will grow up in time to a considerable treasure of scriptural knowledge, which will be of unspeakable use to them in the christian life. I have known children, who from their early years have been constantly trained up and taught to remember a few sentences of a sermon besides the text, and by this means have grown up by degrees to know all the distinct parts and branches of a discourse, and in time to write down half the sermon after they came home, to their own consolation, and the improvement of their friends; whereas those who have been never taught to use their memories in their younger parts of life, loose every thing from their thoughts, when it is passed off from their ears, and come home from noble and edifying discourses, pleased (it may be) with transient sound, and commending the preacher, but uninstructed, unimproved, without any growth in knowledge or piety.

3. The judgment is another natural power of the mind, which should be exercised and improved in children. They should be taught to pass no judgment on men or things rashly or suddenly, but to withhold their judgment till they see sufficient reason to determine them. To this end, show them, in little common instances, how often they are deceived when they judge on a sudden, without due consideration, and how often they are forced to change their opinions. Put them in mind how soon they have found themselves mistaken, when they have given their opinion too hastily. This will make them cautious, and afraid of being so rash, either in praising one thing, or in condemning another.

Teach them to judge, not merely by outward show and appearance, but by searching things to the bottom.

Convince them that every man who hath fine clothes is not rich, and that every man who talks hard words is not wise or learned; and that every one who wears a red coat is not a soldier; nor is every person good humoured who speaks very complaisant things in company. Take frequent occasion to show them how frequently they will be mistaken if they judge immediately by outward appearances of things.

Tell them that they must not judge of things by custom, nor by the common opinions of the multitude, nor by the practices of the rich and the great; for all these things may deceive them; but that they must judge of things merely by reason, except in matters of religion, and there they must judge rather by scripture, or the word of God. Let them know, that customs change and alter, and the customs of one age or of one nation differ greatly from those of another; but that the nature and reason of things is still the same, and that scripture is the constant and unchangeable rule of our religion.

To confirm this, let them be informed that it was the custom of our ancestors in England, and it is now the custom in France and Spain, to say their prayers in Latin, and to worship images; but it is a sinful custom, though all the multitudes of the common people agree in it, and though the great and rich practise it also. Nor is our present custom in Great Britain, of praying in English, and worshipping no images, to be esteemed the right way of worship, because it is the custom of the nation, but because it is agreeable to the word of God, which forbids us to worship images, or to pray in an unknown tongue. Take every occasion to guard them against prejudices and passing a judgment on men or things upon insufficient grounds.

4. The reasoning powers of the mind should be cultivated and improved in children. This is very near akin to the former, and therefore I shall be very brief here.

Whensoever children give you their opinion of any thing, ask them to give you also, the reason why they are of that opinion; whensoever they desire or wish for any thing, or show an aversion to it, inquire what is the reason of their desire or aversion; when they have done any thing of their own will, ask them the reason

why they did it. And when you do any thing that is for their good, show them the reason why you did it, and convince them that it was fit and necessary to be done though perhaps it was not so pleasing to them.

By calling their young reason thus into exercise, you will teach them wisdom betimes; you will awaken manly thoughts within them, and so lead them to a rational and manly conduct in their childish years; by this means also you will always have a handle to take hold of, in order to persuade them to their duty, and to save them from mischief. But if their reasoning powers be neglected, you will train them up like the horse and the mule who have no understanding; they will grow like brutes in the shape of men, and reason will have but little power over them in the following parts of life.

5. Conscience is another natural power of the soul, wherein the principles of virtue and rules of duty to God and man are to be laid up: It is something within us that calls us to account for our faults, and by which we pass a judgment concerning ourselves and all our actions.

Children have a conscience within them, and it should be awakened early to its duty. They should be taught to reflect and look back upon their own behaviour, to call themselves often to account, to compare their deeds with those good rules and principles laid up in their minds, and to see how far they have complied with them, and how far they have neglected them. Parents should teach their children to pay a religious respect to the inward dictates of virtue within them, to examine their actions continually by the light of their own consciences, and to rejoice when they can approve themselves to their own minds that they have acted well according to the best of their knowledge; they ought also to attend to the inward reproofs of conscience, and mourn, and be ashamed, and repent, when they have sinned against their light. It is of admirable use toward all the practices of religion and every virtue, to have a conscience well stored with good principles, and to be always kept tender and watchful; it is proper that children should learn to reverence and obey this inward monitor betimes, that every wilful sin may give

their conscience a sensible pain and uneasiness, and that they may be disposed to sacrifice every thing else to consideration of conscience, and to endure any extremities rather than act contrary to it.

I proceed in the next place to consider the several powers of the body, which ought to be regulated and managed by the due instruction of children in their younger years. Now, as the God of nature has given children eyes and tongues, and feet, and arms, and hands, it is expedient that parents should teach their children the proper use of them.

1. The God of nature has given them eyes, let their parents teach them to use these eyes aright. Would it be amiss in me here to give a hint or two of this kind? May not children be warned against a staring look, against stretching their eyelids into a glare of wildness? May they not be forbid to look aside on any object in a squinting manner, when their faces are turned another way? Should they not be instructed to look directly with their faces turned to the thing they look at? May they not be taught with due courage to look in the face of the person they speak to, yet with an humble, modest aspect, as befits a child? A becoming courage and a becoming modesty dwell much in the eye.

Some children should be often admonished to lay aside a gloomy and frowning look, a scowling air, an uneasy and forbidding aspect. They should be taught to smooth the ruffles of their brow, and put on a lively, pleasing and cheerful countenance among their friends; some there are who have all these graces by nature, but those who have them not may be corrected and softened by the care of parents in their younger years.\*

2. Let parents teach their children to use their tongues properly and agreeably; not only to speak, but to pronounce their words plain and distinct. Let

\* It may here be recollected by the way, that a gloominess of aspect does not always arise from a malignity of temper, but sometimes from fear of displeasing and incurring reproof; and is therefore often to be removed by speaking kindly to children, and encouraging them with expressions of candour and tenderness. To know how in such cases to divert a child, and make him cheerful and happy in the company of a parent, is none of the least important cares of education.

them be instructed to keep due and proper distances between their word- and sentences, and not speak in swift hurry, with a tumult of syllables and clutter upon their lips, which will sound like a foreign gibberish, and never be understood. Nor should they drawl out their words in a slow long tone, which is equally ungraceful and disagreeable. There are two other common faults in speaking, and where they are found they should be corrected early in children.

The one is lispings, which is a pronunciation of the letter S or Z, or C, before E and I, as though it were TH. Thus instead of spice they cry *thpithe*, instead of cease they say *theathe*. This may be cured by teaching them to pronounce a few such words as these, where the sound of the letter S prevails, with their teeth shut close; and by forbidding them to put their tongue between their teeth at any time, except when *th* is to be pronounced.

The other fault is stammering, which I suppose may be commonly prevented or cured by teaching children not to speak much, and to speak slow always; and they should be warned against all anger or hastiness, or eagerness of spirit, for such a temper will throw out their words faster than the organs of speech can accommodate themselves to form the syllables, and thus bring a hurry and confusion into their speech; and they should also gain a good degree of courage or becoming assurance, and not speak with much concern or fear; for fear will stop the organs of speech, and hinder the formation of words.

But I insist no longer on the use of the tongue in speaking.

3. As God hath given them feet, let parents teach them to stand firm and strong, and to walk in a becoming and decent manner, without waddling from side to side, without turning either or both their feet inward without little jerks in their motion, or long strides, or any of those awkwardnesses which continue with many persons to old age, for want of having these irregularities corrected when they were young. Children should be indulged in their sports, sometimes in running swiftly, and in leaping, where there is no danger, in order to exercise their limbs, and make them pliant and nimble, strong and active, on all occasions.



As to their arms and hands, they were formed not to lie folded in their bosom, but to be engaged in some useful work ; and sometimes, with due moderation, in robust and hardy exercise and toil ; not so as to overstrain their joints, but to acquire firmness of strength by exercise.

And more especially those who are to get their bread by their hands, should be inured to toilsome and vigorous labours almost from their infancy ; they should be accustomed to work in heat and cold, and to bear rougher exercises and fatigues of the body, that they may be fit to endure hardships, and go through those difficulties which their station of life may call them to, without any injury or inconvenience. And it is desirable, that the sons of all families should be in some degree inured to such difficulties as these, which men of all ranks are sometimes called to encounter.

If some fond and tender mothers had brought up their children in this hardy manner, they had not now, in all human probability, been mourning over their graves. In their younger years they would scarcely let them set the sole of their foot to the ground, nor suffer the wind to blow upon them ; thus they grew up in a state of tenderness and infirmity, sickly and feeble creatures ; a sudden heat or a cold seized them ; their natures, which were never accustomed to bear hardship, were unable to resist the enemy ; a fever kindled in their blood, or a catarrh or cough injured their lungs, and early buried their parents' hopes in the dust.

Thus have I finished the second general head of instruction, that is, children should be instructed to exercise and improve their natural powers both of mind and body ; and this is one necessary part of a good education, which parents and other teachers, should attend to betimes.

## SECTION III.

*Self Government.*

**C**HILDREN should be instructed in the art of self government. They should be taught, as far as possible, to govern their thoughts; to use their wills to be determined by the light of their understandings, and not by headstrong and foolish humour; they should learn to keep the lower powers of nature under the command of their reason; they should be instructed to regulate their senses, their imagination, their appetites, and their passions. Let it be observed, that I speak of these things in this place, not as a part of religion, though they are an important part of it, but give it as a direction exceedingly useful to all the purposes of human life in this world.

1. Their thoughts and fancies should be brought under early government. Children should be taught, as far as possible, to keep their thoughts and attention fixed upon what is their proper business; and to withhold them from roving and wandering away from the work in which they are engaged. Many children have such wild fluttering fancies, that they will not be easily confined to fix upon one object for any considerable time; every flying feather, every motion of any person or thing that is near them, every sound or noise, or shadow, calls them away from their duty.—When they should employ their eyes on their book, or their work, they will be gazing at every thing besides their task; they must rise often to the window to see what passes abroad, when their business lies within.

This volatile humour, if not gently altered, and wisely corrected, in early years, will have an unhappy influence to hinder them for ever from attaining any great excellence in whatsoever business they undertake. Children should be taught therefore to call in their wandering thoughts, and bind them to the work in hand, till they have gone through it and finished it.

Yet this sort of wandering folly should not be chastised severely in young children, nor should it be sub-

duced with violence, by too close and rigorous a confinement to many long hours of labour or study, in that early and tender part of life; such conduct might break or overwhelm an active and sprightly genius, and destroy all those seeds of curiosity which promise well for maturer years; but proper and agreeable methods should be used to persuade and incline the young learner to attend to his present employment. It is far better to fix the thoughts to duty by allurements than by severity; but some way or other it ought to be endeavoured, at least in a good degree.

This fixedness of the mind and active powers, is not only of great service to attain useful knowledge, or to learn any business in common life, but it is of considerable advantage in religion, in attendance on divine worship, either prayer, preaching, or meditation; where the mind is subject to a thousand distractions, for want of being taught to fix the attention in younger years.

Persons who have well learned the art of governing their thoughts, can pursue a train of thinking while they walk through the streets of London, nor will all the noise and hurry of that busy place break the thread of their meditations. A happy attainment this, and a felicity which but few arrive at!

2. Children should be also instructed to govern their inclinations and wishes, and to determine their wills and their choice of things, not by humour and wild fancy, but by the dictates of reason. Some persons even in their mature years, can give no other account why they choose and determine to do this or that, but because they have a fancy for it, and they will do it. I will because I will, serves instead of all other reasons. And in the same manner they manage their refusal or dislike of any thing. I hate to do this thing; I will not go to this place, nor do that work; I am resolved against it; and all from mere humour. This is a conduct very unbecoming a reasonable creature; and this folly should be corrected betimes in our early parts of life, since God has given us understanding and reason to be the guide of our resolutions, and to direct our choice and all our actions.

3. Appetite is another thing which should be put under strict government, and children should be taught

betimes to restrain it. That of the taste is the first thing that gets the ascendent in our younger years, and a guard should be set upon it early. What an unbecoming thing it is for children to be craving after every dish that comes to a table! And this they will generally do, if they have never been taught to bridle their craving. They must eat of all the pickles and sauces, and high seasoned meats, and gorge themselves with a medley of inconsistent dainties; and without any restraint, lest little master should be froward, or lest little miss should grow out of humour with her dinner. How often do they make a foul inroad on their health by excess of eating, being tempted farther than nature requires by every luscious bit which is within their sight! How frequently doth this indulgence vitiate their stomachs, ruin their constitution, weaken the springs of nature, and destroy the powers of animal life betimes! How many graves are filled, and funeral vaults crowded, with little carcasses, which have been brought to untimely death by the foolish fondness of a parent or a nurse, giving the young creatures leave to eat every thing they desire! Or if they happen by strength of constitution, to survive this pestilence, how often do they grow up young gluttons, and place their happiness in the satisfaction of the taste! They are deaf to all the rules of virtue and abstinence all their lives, because they were never taught to deny themselves when they were young. O! it is a mean and shameful thing to be a slave to our taste, and to let this brutal appetite subdue reason and govern the man. But if appetites must be gratified in the child, they will grow strong in the years of youth, and a thousand to one but they overpower the man also.

Let but fond parents humour their little offspring, and indulge their children to sip wine frequently, and they will generally grow up to the love of it long before nature needs it; and by this means they will imagine drams are daily necessary for their support, by that time they are arrived at the age of man or woman. Thus nature is soon burnt up, and life pays for the deadly draught! The foundation of much gluttony and drunkenness, of many diseases that arise from intemperance, and of many an untimely death, is laid in the nursery.

An excess of niceness in pleasing the palate is a foolish and dangerous humour, which should never be encouraged by parents, since the plainest food is most healthful for all persons, but especially for children: and in this respect they should be under the conduct of their elders, and not always choose for themselves. This conduct and discipline will train them up to virtue and self denial, to temperance and frugality, to a relish of plain and wholesome food, to the pleasures of active health, and to a firm and cheerful old age.

The indulgence of a nice appetite in children, is not only the reason why they are so often sick, but at the same time it makes them so humourish and squeamish, that they can scarce be persuaded to swallow a medicine which is necessary for their recovery. What a long, tedious, and tiresome business is it to wait on some children whole hours together, while all the soft persuasions and flatteries of a mother cannot prevail with them to take a nauseous spoonful, or a bitter bolus, though their life may seem to depend on it! They have been taught to make an idol of their taste, and even in the view and peril of death they can scarce be persuaded to affront their idol, and displease their palate with a bitter draught, or even a pill which disgusts it.

There are other appetites, if I may so call them, beside that of the taste, which children are ready to indulge too far, if not limited and corrected by the wisdom of their parents. Their eyes are never satisfied with seeing, nor their ears with hearing. Some young persons cannot hear of a fine show, but they must needs see it; nor can they be told of a concert of music, but they must needs hear it, though it create an expense beyond their circumstances, and may endanger their health or their virtue.

I confess freely, that I would recommend the sight of uncommon things in nature or art, in government, civil or military, to the curiosity of youth. If some strange wild beasts or birds are to be shown, if lions and eagles, ostriches and elephants, pelicans and rhinoceroses, are brought into our land; if an ingenious model of Solomon's temple, or some nice and admirable clock work, engines, or moving pictures, &c. be

made a spectacle to the ingenious : if a king be crown-  
ed, or a public triumph proceed through the streets ;  
when an army is reviewed by a prince, when an em-  
bassador makes a public entry, or when there is a public  
trial of criminals before a judge—I will readily allow  
those sights are worthy the attendance of the younger  
parts of mankind, once at least, where it may be done  
with safety, and without too great hazard or expense.  
Most of these are things which are not often repeated,  
and it is fit that the curiosity of the eyes should be so  
far gratified, as to give people, once in their lives, an  
opportunity of knowing what these things are, that  
their minds may be furnished with useful ideas of the  
world, of nature or art, and with some notion of the  
great and uncommon scenes and appearances of the  
civil life. But for children to haunt every public spec-  
tacle, to attend with constancy every lord mayor's  
show, to seize every opportunity of repeating these  
sights, suffering nothing to escape them that may please  
their senses, and this too often without any regard to  
their religion, their virtue, or their health ; this is a  
vanity which ought to be restrained by those to whom  
God and nature hath committed the care of their in-  
struction, and who have a just and natural authority  
over them. But of this, and some other subjects akin  
to it, I may have occasion to speak more in the follow-  
ing parts of this discourse, when I professedly treat on  
the article of restraint.

Thus I have shown how the appetites and inclinations  
of children should be put under discipline, and how they  
may be taught self government in this respect.

4. The passions or affections are the last things which  
I shall mention ; these appear very early in children to  
want a regulation and government. They love and hate  
too rashly, and with too much vehemence ; they grieve  
and rejoice too violently, and on a sudden, and that for  
mere trifles ; their hopes and fears, their desires and  
their aversions, are presently raised to too high a pitch,  
and upon very slight and insufficient grounds. It be-  
comes a wise parent to watch over these young emo-  
tions of their souls, and put in a word of prudent cau-  
tion, as often as they observe these irregularities.

Let children be taught early, that the little things for

which they are so zealous, for which they grieve or rejoice so impetuously, are not worthy of these affections of their souls ; show them the folly of being so fond of these trifles, and of vexing and growing fretful for the loss of them. Inform them what a happiness it is to have few desires and few aversions, for this will preserve them from a multitude of sorrows, and keep their temper always serene and calm ; persuade them never to raise their hopes very high of things in this world, and then they will never meet with great disappointments. Teach them moderation in all the workings of their spirits ; and inform them that their passions should never be laid out thus on objects which do not deserve them, nor rise higher than the occasion requires.

Teach bashful and timorous children, that they need be ashamed of nothing but what is evil ; that they should fear God in the first place, and serve him, and then they need not be afraid of men, or of any thing that threatens mischief to them ; for the Almighty God will be their friend and defence. Engage their fear and their love in the first place on God, the most proper and supreme object of them ; let their hopes, their joys and their sorrows, as soon as possible, be tinged with religion ; set their young affections at work on the most needful and important objects of them in early life, and this will have a sweet and powerful influence on the better regulation of them with regard to all sensible things.

Above all, let them know that they must govern their anger, and not let it break out on every slight occasion. It is anger that is eminently called passion among children, and in the language of common life. This therefore should eminently have a constant guard set upon it. Show them how unreasonable and unmanly a thing it is to take fire at every little provocation ? how honourable and glorious to forgive an injury ; how much like God, and like the best of men. Let them know what Solomon would inform them, that the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit ; that he who is slow to anger, is better than the mighty ; and that he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city. Teach them to put away their little quarrels and resentments, and to forget and bury them

in love. Let them be put in mind that though anger may happen to rise a little in a good man, yet it rests and abides only in the bosom of a fool ; and therefore they should never grow sullen, nor let the sun go down upon their wrath.

The occasions of childish resentment, and the risings of anger, are ready to return often, and therefore they should often have such warnings given them, and such instructions repeated. Tell them how lovely a thing it is to be meek and free from passion, and how much such children are beloved of all. Instruct them how much it tends to their own peace, to suffer nothing to ruffle or discompose them ; and when their little hearts are ready to swell and grow big within them, and their wrath takes sudden fire, put in some pretty soft word to cure the return of this inward swelling, to quench the new flame that is kindling in their bosom, and to assuage the rising storm. Teach them by degrees to get an habitual conquest over this disorder of nature in youth, and you will lay a foundation for their deliverance from a thousand mischiefs in the following years and events of life.

This shall suffice for the third head of instruction, which relates to self-government: I have dwelt the longer upon it, because it is of so great and evident importance towards the ease and happiness of life, as well as so considerable a part of religion ; and men can hardly ever get so successful a victory over themselves, unless they begin when they are children.



## SECTION IV.

*The Common Arts of Reading and Writing.*

**T**HE next thing that I shall mention as a matter of instruction for children, is the common arts of reading, spelling, and writing.

Writing is almost a divine art, whereby thoughts may be communicated without a voice, and understood without hearing; to these I would add some small knowledge of arithmetic and accounts, as the practice of it is in a manner so universal in our age, that it does almost necessarily belong to a tolerable education.

The knowledge of letters is one of the greatest blessings that ever God bestowed on the children of men; by this means mankind are enabled to preserve the memory of things done in their own times, and to lay up a rich treasure of knowledge for all succeeding generations.

By the art of reading, we learn a thousand things which our eyes can never see, and which our own thoughts would never have reached to; we are instructed by books in the wisdom of ancient ages; we learn what our ancestors have said and done, and enjoy the benefit of the wise and judicious remarks which they have made through the whole course of life, without the fatigue of their long and painful experiments. By this means children may be led, in a great measure, into the wisdom of old age. It is by the art of reading that we can sit at home, and acquaint ourselves with what has been done in the distant parts of the world. The histories and the customs of all ages and all nations are brought, as it were, to our doors. By this art we are let into the knowledge of the affairs of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans; their wars, their laws, and their religion; and we can tell what they did in the nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, above a thousand years ago.

But the greatest blessing that we derive from reading, is the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, wherein God has conveyed down to us the discoveries of his wisdom,

power, and grace, through many past ages: and whereby we attain the knowledge of Christ, and of the way of salvation, by a Mediator.

It must be confessed, that in former ages, before printing was invented, the art of reading was not so common, even in polite nations, because books were much more costly, since they must be all written with a pen, and were therefore hardly to be obtained by the bulk of mankind: But since the providence of God has brought printing into the world, and knowledge is so plentifully diffused through our nation, at so cheap a rate, it is a pity that any children should be born and brought up in civilized states without the skill of reading; and especially since by this means every one may see with his own eyes what God requires of him in order to eternal happiness.

The art of writing is also exceedingly useful, and is now grown so very common, that the greatest part of children may attain it at an easy rate; by this means we communicate our thoughts and all our affairs to our friends at ever so great a distance; we tell them our wants, our sorrows, and our joys, and interest them in our concerns as though they were near us. We maintain correspondence and traffic with persons in distant nations, and the wealth and grandeur of all nations is maintained by this means. By the art of writing, we treasure up all things that concern us in a safe repository, and as often as we please, by consulting our paper records, we renew our remembrance of things that relate to this life or the life to come; and why should any of the children of men be debarred from this privilege, if it may be attained at a cheap and easy rate, without entrenching upon other duties of life, and without omitting any more necessary business that may belong to their station?

I might add here also, true spelling is such a part of knowledge as children ought to be acquainted with, since it is a matter of shame and ridicule in so polite an age as ours, when persons who have leared to handle the pen cannot write three or four words together without a mistake or blunder; and when they put letters together in such an awkward and ignorant manner,

that it is hard to make sense of them, or to tell what they mean.

Arithmetic, or the art of numbers, is, as was observed before, to be reckoned also a necessary part of a good education. Without some degrees of this knowledge, there is indeed no traffic among men. And especially is it more needful at present, since the world deals much more upon trust and credit than it did in former times; and therefore the art of keeping accounts is made, in some measure, necessary to persons, even in meaner stations of life, below the rank of merchants or great traders. A little knowledge of the art of accounts, is also needful, in some degree, in order to take a true survey, and make a just judgment of the common expences of a person or a family, but this part of learning in the various degrees of it, is more or less useful and needful, according to the different stations and businesses for which children are designed.

As the sons of a family should be educated in the knowledge of writing, reading, spelling and accounts, so neither should the daughters be trained up without them. Reading is as needful for one sex as the other; nor should girls be forbid to handle the pen, or to cast up a few figures, since it may be very much for their advantage in almost all circumstances of life, except in the very lowest rank of servitude or hard labour. And I beg leave here to entreat the female youth, especially those of better circumstances in the world, to maintain their skill in writing which they have already learned, by taking every occasion to exercise it; and I would fain persuade them to take pains in acquainting themselves with true spelling, the want of which is one reason why many of them are ashamed to write; and they are not ashamed to own and declare this, as though it were a just and sufficient excuse for neglecting and losing the use of the pen.

## SECTION V.

*Of Trade or Employment.*

**I**N a good education it is required also that children, in the common ranks of life, be brought up to the knowledge of some proper business or employment for their lives; some trade or traffic, artifice or manufacture, by which they may support their expences, and procure for themselves the necessaries of life, and by which they may be enabled to provide for their families in due time. In some of the eastern nations, even persons of high rank are obliged to be educated in some employment or profession; and perhaps that practice has many advantages in it; it engages their younger years in labour and diligence, and secures from the mischievous effects of sloth, idleness, vanity, and a thousand temptations.

In our nation I confess it is a custom to educate the children of noblemen, and the eldest sons of the gentry to no proper business or profession, but only to an acquaintance with some of the ornaments and accomplishments of life, which I shall mention immediately. But perhaps it would be far happier for some families, if the sons were brought up to business, and kept to the practice of it, than to have them exposed to the pernicious inconveniences of a sauntering and idle life, and the more violent impulse of all the corrupt inclinations of youth.

However, it is certain that the far greater part of mankind must bring up their children some, to some regular business or profession, whereby they may sustain their lives and support a family, and become useful members to the state. Now in the choice of such a profession or employment for children many things are to be consulted.

(1.) The circumstances and estate of the parent; whether it will reach to place out the child as an apprentice, to provide for him materials for his business or trade, and to support him till he shall be able to maintain himself by his profession. Sometimes the

ambition of the parent and the child hath fixed on a trade far above their circumstances ; in consequence of which the child hath been exposed to many inconveniences, and the parents to many sorrows.

(2.) The capacity and talents of the child must also be considered. If it be a profession of hard labour hath the child a healthy and firm constitution, and strength of body equal to the work? If it be a profession that requires the exercise of fancy, skill and judgment, or much study and contrivance, then the question will be, hath the lad a genius capable of thinking well, a bright imagination, a solid judgment? Is he able to endure such an application of mind as is necessary for the employment?

(3.) The temper and inclination of the child must be brought into this consultation, in order to determine a proper business for life. If the daily labour and business of a man be not agreeable to him, he can never hope to manage it with any great advantage or success. I knew a bricklayer who professed that he had always an aversion to the smell of mortar; and I was acquainted once with a lad who began to learn Greek at school, but he complained it did not agree with his constitution. I think the first of these ought to have been brought up to work in glass or timber, or any thing rather than bricks; as for the other (to my best remembrance) he was wisely disposed of to a calling wherein he had nothing to do with Greek.

And here I would beg leave to desire, that none might be encouraged to pursue any of the learned professions, that is, divinity, law, or physic, who have not the signs of a good genius, who are not patient of long attention and close application to study; who have not a peculiar delight in that profession which they choose and withal a pretty firm constitution of body; for much study is a weariness to the flesh, and vigour of nature is sooner impaired by laborious thoughtfulness, than by the labour of the limbs.

(4.) It should be also the solicitous and constant care of parents, when they place out their children in the world, to seek out masters for them who profess serious religion, who practise all moral virtues, and keep good order and good hours in their family. The

neglect of this concern has been the ruin of a thousand youths in our days; and notwithstanding the sensible mischief arising from this negligence, yet there is still too little care taken in a matter of so great importance.\*

Thus much for this part of the education of sons. But you will say then, what business of life must daughters be brought up to? I must confess, when I have seen so many of this sex who have lived well in the time of their childhood, grievously exposed to many hardships and poverty on the death of their parents, I have often wished there were more of the callings or employments of life peculiarly appropriated to women, and that they were regularly educated in them, that there might be a better provision made for their support. What if all the garments which are worn by women were so limited and restrained in the manufacture of them, that they should all be made only by their own sex? This would go a great way toward relief in this case: and what if some of the easier labours of life were reserved for them only? But this is not my province.

However it may be as to this matter, it is the custom of the nation, and indeed it hath been the custom of most nations, and ages, to educate daughters in the knowledge of things that relate to the affairs of the household, to spin and to use the needle, both for making garments, and for the ornaments of embroidery; they have been generally employed in the preparation of food, in the regular disposal of the affairs of the house, for the conveniences and accommodations of human life, in the furniture of the rooms and the elegancies of entertainment. "Sarah made ready three measures of meal and kneaded it, and made cakes upon the hearth. Gen. xviii. 6. And the women of Israel that were wise hearted did spin with their hands both blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen for the taber-

\* This danger arises in a great degree from the immoderate love of pleasure that so generally prevails, and leads masters into parties and engagements, especially on the Lord's day; which not only occasions the neglect of religious instruction and family prayer on the evening of it, but sets an example to servants which they think themselves authorized to follow, though it be generally to their own destruction.

nacle. Exod. xxxv. 25. Women shall bake your bread. Lev. xxvi. 16. Women sew pillows and make kerchiefs." Ezek. xiii. 18. which words, though perhaps they are a metaphor in that text, yet denote the office or work of women. "And Dorcas made coats and garments for the poor." Acts ix. 36, 39. I might cite many ancient Heathen authors to prove the same thing among the Greeks and Romans, if it were needful.

Some of these things are the constant labours and cares of women in our day, whereby they maintain themselves; the most laborious parts of them belong to the poor. And it is the opinion of the best judges, that even in superior and wealthy circumstances, every daughter should be so far instructed in them, as to know when they are performed aright, that the servants may not usurp too much power, and impose on the ignorance of the mistress. Nature and Providence seem to have designed these offices for the sex in all ages and in all nations, because, while the men are engaged in harder and more robust labours, and are often called abroad on business, the women are more generally accustomed to keep house and dwell at home; and the word of God, as well as the custom of human life, recommends it. Titus ii. 5. 1 Tim. v. 14.

## SECTION VI.

### *Rules of Prudence.*

**ALL** children should have some instruction given them in the conduct of human life, some necessary rules of prudence, by which they may regulate the management of their own affairs, and their behaviour towards their fellow creatures. Where all other sorts of knowledge are conferred upon children, if this be wanting, they make but a contemptible figure in the world, and plunge themselves into many inconveniences.

Some of these rules of prudence are of a general nature, and necessary at all times, and upon all occasions; others are more particular, and are proper to be used according to the various occurrences of life.

If I were to inquire what are the foundations of human prudence, I should rank them under these three heads:

1. A knowledge of ourselves. Here every one should be taught to consider within himself, what is my temper and natural inclinations? What are my most powerful appetites and my prevailing passions? What are my chief talents and capacities, if I have any at all? What are the weaknesses and follies to which I am most liable, especially in the days of youth? What are the temptations and dangers that attend me? What are my circumstances in the world, and what my various relations to mankind round about me? What are my constant and what my occasional duties? What are the inward or outward advantages that attend me, or the disadvantages under which I labour. A wise, a just survey of all these things, and keeping them always in mind, will be of unspeakable use to us in the conduct of life, that we may set our chief guard upon our weak side, and where our greatest dangers lie; that we may employ our talents aright, and seize all advantages to improve them for the best purpose, and proceed in the shortest way to piety, usefulness and peace.

2. The knowledge of mankind is also necessary to acquire prudence. And here young persons should not only be taught what is the general nature and capacity, the virtues and the vices, and the follies of mankind; but they should be informed also, or at least should be taught to observe more particularly, what are the peculiar tempers, appetites, passions, powers, good and evil qualities, of the persons with whom they have most to do in the world; that they may learn to behave wisely with regard to others, and that they may make a proper improvement of all the brighter and darker characters which they observe amongst men, both for their own advantage and for the benefit of their fellow creatures. This may have a happy influence to lead them to avoid the vices and follies which have plunged others into mischief, to imitate the virtues of those who have behaved well in life, and to secure themselves from any dangers and miseries as well as to pity the weaknesses and sorrows of mankind, and afford them a willing and cheerful relief.



3. The knowledge of the things of the world, and the various affairs of human life, must be included as one of the chief foundations of prudence. It would be endless to run over particulars of this kind; but in a special manner young persons should apply themselves to know those things which most nearly concern them, and which have the most immediate relation to their own business and duty, to their own interest and welfare; and it is a valuable part of wisdom to neglect other things, and not to waste our time and spirits in them, when they stand in any competition with our proper and most important work, whether we consider ourselves as men or as christians.

Solomon tells us, *Eccles.* iii. 1, 17, and viii. 5, 6. There is both time and judgment for every work, and for every purpose under the heaven; and that a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment; that is, he judgeth well concerning what is to be done, and the time when to do it; and therefore the misery of man is great upon him, because he knows not this time and judgment, he doth neither discern what is proper to be done, nor the proper season of doing it. Prudence consists in judging well what is to be said, and what is to be done, on every new occasion; when to lie still, and when to be active; when to keep silence, and when to speak; what to avoid, and what to pursue; how to act in every difficulty; what means to make use of to compass such an end; how to behave in every circumstance of life, and in all companies; how to gain the favour of mankind in order to promote our own happiness, and to do the most service to God and the most good to men, according to that station we possess, and those opportunities which we enjoy.

For this purpose there is no better book than the Proverbs of Solomon. Several of the first chapters seem to be written for young men, under the name of Solomon's son; and all the rest of them should be made familiar to youth by their frequent converse with them, and treasuring them up in their head and heart.

Among human writings of this kind, perhaps the book called Ecclesiasticus, though it be among the apocryphal writings, is equal to the best of the ancients. And among the moderns, I know not a bet-

ter collection than the little book of Directions, Councils and Advices, lately published by Dr. Fuller for the use of his son ; though I could wish he had rendered it more universally acceptable to all readers, by avoiding some severities on the other sex ; and that he had spared his little railleries on the name of saints, though those offensive sentences are but few.

## SECTION VII.

### *The Ornaments and Accomplishments of Life.*

**T**HE last part of instruction which I included in the idea of a good education, is an instruction of youth in some of the useful ornaments and accomplishments of life.

It has been the custom of our nation, for persons of the middle and the lower ranks of life, who design their children for trades and manufactures, to send them to the Latin and Greek schools. There they wear out four or five years in learning a number of strange words, that will be of very little use to them in all the following affairs of their station ; and this very learning also generally taught in a very tiresome and most irrational method, when they are forced to learn Latin by grammar rules written in that unknown tongue. When they leave the school, they usually forget what they have learned, and the chief advantage they gain by it to spell and pronounce hard words better when they meet them in English ; whereas this skill of spelling might be attained in a far shorter time, and at an easier rate, by other methods,\* and much of life might be saved and improved to better purposes.

As for the sons of those who enjoy more plentiful circumstances in the world, they may be instructed in the Latin and Greek languages for several valuable ends in their station ; and especially those who design the learned professions ought thoroughly to understand them ; and such as pursue the study of divinity must be acquainted also with Hebrew and Chaldee, that they may read the Old Testament in its original language, as well as the New.

\* See my Art of Reading and Writing, Chap. xx.

The French is now a days also esteemed an accomplishment to both sexes. If they have time enough, which they know not how to employ better, and a good memory, I would not forbid it. There are several good books written in that language, which are not unworthy of our perusal ; and there are many words now introduced in the English language, borrowed and derived from thence, as well as from the Latin and Greek ; so that it may not be improper for an English gentleman to learn these tongues, that he may understand his own the better. I add also, that if persons have much acquaintance with the French nation, or have occasion to converse with foreigners at court or in the city, or if they design to travel abroad, the French is a necessary tongue, because it is so much spoken in Europe, and especially in courts. But otherwise there are so many of the valuable writings of French authors perpetually translated into English, that it is a needless thing to go through much difficulty, or take much pains in attaining it. I am inclined to believe, that, except in the cases above mentioned, few have found the profit answer the labour. As for those persons who are bred up to traffic with other nations, they must necessarily learn the language of those nations ; and this I reckon not among their accomplishments, but consider it as rather a part of their proper business in life.

In short it is a thing of far greater value and importance, that youth should be perfectly well skilled in reading, writing, and speaking their native tongue, in a proper, a polite, and graceful manner, than in toiling among foreign languages. It is of more worth and advantage to gentlemen and ladies to have an exact knowledge of what is decent, just and elegant in English, than to be a critic in foreign tongues. The very knowledge of foreign words should be improved to this purpose ; and in order to obtain this accomplishment, they should frequently converse with those persons and books which are esteemed polite and elegant in their kind.

Thus far concerning the knowledge of words. But the knowledge of things is of much more importance.

1. The young gentry of both sexes should be a little acquainted with logic, that they may learn to obtain clear ideas ; to judge by reason and the nature of things ;

to banish the prejudices of infancy, custom, and humour; to argue closely and justly on any subject, and to cast their thoughts and affairs into a proper and easy method.

2. Several parts of mathematical learning are also necessary ornaments of the mind, and not without real advantage; and many of these are so agreeable to the fancy, that youth will be entertained and pleased in acquiring the knowledge of them.

Besides the common skill in accounts which is needful for a trader, there is a variety of pretty and useful rules and practices in arithmetic, to which a gentleman should be no stranger; and if his genius lie that way, a little insight into algebra would be no disadvantage to him. It is fit that young people of any figure in the world, should see some of the springs and clues whereby skilful men, by plain rules of reason, trace out the most deep, distant and hidden questions; and whereby they find certain answers to those inquiries; which at first view seem to lie without the ken of mankind, and beyond the reach of human knowledge. It was for want of a little more general acquaintance with mathematical learning in the world, that a good algebraist and a geometrician were counted conjurers a century ago, and people applied to them to seek for lost horses and stolen goods

They should know something of geometry, so far at least as to understand the names of the various lines and angles, surfaces and solids; to know what is meant by a right line or a curve, a right angle or an oblique, whether acute or obtuse; how the quantity of angles is measured, what is a circle, a semicircle, an arch, a quadrant, a degree and minute, a diameter and radius? What we mean by a triangle, a square, a parallelogram, a polygon, a cube, a pyramid, a prism, a cone, an ellipsis, an oval, an hyperbola, a parabola, &c. and to know some of the most general properties of angles, triangles, squares, circles, &c. The world is now grown so learned in mathematical science, that this sort of language is often used in common writings and in conversation, far beyond what it was in the days of our fathers. And besides, without some knowledge of this kind, we cannot make any further progress towards an acquaintance with the arts of surveying, measuring, geography and

astronomy, which are so entertaining and so useful an accomplishment to persons of a polite education.

Geography and astronomy are exceedingly delightful studies. The knowledge of the lines and circles of the globes of heaven and earth, is counted so necessary in our age, that no person of either sex is now esteemed to have had an elegant education without it. Even tradesmen and the actors in common life, should in my opinion, in their younger years, learn something of these sciences, instead of vainly wearing out seven years of drudgery in Greek and Latin.

It is of considerable advantage as well as delight for mankind to know a little of the earth on which they dwell, and of the stars and skies that surround them on all sides. It is almost necessary for young persons who pretend to any thing of instruction and schooling above the lowest rank of people, to get a little acquaintance with the several parts of the land and the sea, that they may know in what quarter of the world the chief cities and countries are situated; that at the mention of the word Copenhagen, they may not grossly blunder and expose themselves, as a certain gentleman once did by supposing it to be the name of some Dutch commander. Without this knowledge we cannot read any history with profit, nor so much as understand any common newspapers.

It is necessary also to know something of the heavenly bodies, and their various motions and periods of revolution, that we may understand the accounts of time in past ages, and the histories of ancient nations, as well as know the reasons of day and night, summer and winter, and the various appearances and places of the moon and other planets. Then we shall not be terrified at every eclipse, nor presage, and foretel public desolation at the sight of a comet; we shall see the sun covered with darkness, and the full moon deprived of her light, without forboding imaginations that the government is in danger, or that the world is come to an end. This will not only increase rational knowledge, and guard us against foolish and ridiculous fears, but it will amuse the mind most agreeably; and it has a most happy tendency to raise in our thoughts the noblest and most

magnificent ideas of God by the survey of his works, in their surprising grandeur and divine artifice.

3. Natural philosophy, at least in the more general principles and foundations of it, should be infused into the minds of youth. This is a very bright ornament of our rational natures, which are inclined to be inquisitive into the causes and reasons of things. A course of philosophical experiments is now frequently attended by the ladies as well as gentlemen, with no small pleasure and improvement. God and religion may be better known, and clearer ideas may be obtained of the amazing wisdom of our Creator, and of the glories of the life come, as well as of the things of this life, by the rational learning and the knowledge of nature that is now so much in vogue. If I were to recommend a book or two on this subject, which may usefully be read by the ladies as well as the gentlemen, I know none better than Mr. Ray's *Wisdom of God in the Creation*, Dr. Derham's *Discourses on the same subject*, the archbishop of Cambray's *Treatise on the Existence of God*, at least to the fiftieth section, *Nieuweit's Religious Philosopher*, and Dr. Mather's *Christian Philosopher*. These things will enlarge and refine the understanding, improve the judgment, and bring the faculty of reasoning into a juster exercise, even upon all manner of subjects.

4. History is another accomplishment of youth and ornament of education. The narratives of the various occurrences in nations, as well as in the lives of particular persons, slide into younger minds with pleasure. These will furnish the soul in time with a treasure of knowledge whence to derive useful observations, inferences and rules of conduct. These will enable us to gratify our acquaintance, by rehearsing such narratives at proper seasons, and render our own company agreeable and useful to mankind.

5. Nor can our education be called completely elegant without something of poesy, in so very polite an age as this.

While I mention some knowledge of poesy as a proper ornament of youth, I would not be understood as though I recommended verse making to every young gentleman and lady. It is an old proverb, that poets

are born, and not made. And though I have been too far betrayed, by an unguarded inclination, into attempts of this kind, in some of my former years, yet, while I sometimes repent of having laid out so many days and hours of a short life in writing verses, I will not encourage others to practice it, unless they are blest with a brighter genius, and find an insuperable bent and bias of soul that way; and even then let it be a diversion, and not a business.

The thing, therefore, which I here recommend to persons of a polite education, is some acquaintance with good verse. To read it in the best authors, to learn to know, and taste, and feel a fine stanza, as well as hear it, and to treasure up some of the richest sentiments and expressions of the most admired writers is all that I mean in this advice.

Nor is this a mere amusement or useless embroidery of the mind: It brightens and animates the fancy with a thousand beautiful images; it enriches the soul with many great and sublime sentiments and refined ideas; it fills the memory with a noble variety of language, and furnishes the tongue with speech and expression suited to every subject. It teaches the art of describing well, and of painting every thing to the life, and dressing up all the pleasing and the frightful scenes of nature and providence, vice and virtue, in their proper charms and horrors. It assists us in the art of persuasion; it leads us into a pathetic manner of speech and writing, and adds life and beauty to conversation.

How often have we been enabled to gild a gloomy hour of life, and to soften a rough and painful occurrence, by meditating and repeating the lines of some great poet? Between the colours and the harmony that belong to verse, our senses and our souls are sometimes sweetly entertained in a solitary retirement; and sometimes we entertain our friends agreeably, we regale them as with music and painting at once, and gladden the whole company.

But poetry hath still some sublimer powers. It raises our dying religion to a heavenly degree, and kindles a flame of holy love and joy in the heart. If the memory be well stored with devout songs, we shall never be at loss for divine meditation; we may exalt the praises

of God and our Saviour at all times, and feel our souls borne up as on the wings of angels, far above this dusky globe of earth, till we have lost all its flattering vanities and its painful vexations. Poesy was first designed for the service of religion, and dedicated to the temple. Moses and David made divine and illustrious use of it. The royal psalmist is raised on the wings of inspiration and sacred verse, far above the level of the Jewish ceremonies and shadows, and converses with heavenly things, and sheds abroad the glories of the future Messiah, amidst the raptures of his sublime and inimitable poesy.

But it is time to descend and mention some of the accomplishments of animal nature. The first of this kind and perhaps the nearest to poesy is the art of singing. A most charming gift of the God of nature, and designed for the solace of our sorrows and the improvement of our joys. Those young persons who are blest with a musical ear and voice, should have some instruction bestowed on them, that they may acquire this delightful skill. I am sorry that the greatest part of our songs, whereby young gentlemen and ladies are taught to practice this art, are of the amorous kind, and some of them polluted too. Will no happy genius lend a helping hand to rescue music from all its defilements, and to furnish the tongue with a nobler and more refined melody? But singing must not be named alone.

Various harmony both of the wind and string were once in use in divine worship, and that by divine appointment. It is certain then that the use of these instruments in common life is no unlawful practice, though the New Testament has not ordained the use of it in evangelical worship. But if the voice be happily capable of this art, it is preferable to all instruments fashioned and composed by man; this is an organ formed and tuned by God himself. It is most easily kept in exercise, the skill is retained longest, and the pleasure transcends all the rest. Where an ode of noble and seraphic composure is set throughout to music, and sung by an artful voice, while the spirit at the same time enjoys a devout temper, the joys of the soul and the sense are united, and it approaches to the scriptural ideas of the celestial state. Happy the youth who



has a bright and harmonious constitution, with a pious turn of soul, a cheerful spirit and a relish of sacred melody! He takes a frequent flight above this lower world, beyond the regions of sense and time; he joins the concert of the heavenly inhabitants, and seems to anticipate the business and the blessedness of eternity.

Shall I be allowed after this to mention drawing and painting as agreeable amusements for polite youth? Where the genius leads that way, it is a noble diversion, and improves the mind. Nature has her share in this, as well as in poesy; where nature inclines, let polite youth be taught to sketch a little on paper; let them have at least some taste of these arts, some capacity of being pleased with a curious draught, a noble painting, an elegant statue, and fine resemblances of nature. This is an ingenious and a graceful acquirement. Mr. Richardson's *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, is the best book that I know on that subject, and sufficient to give a young gentleman a general knowledge of the art.

Shall I now name the art of fencing, and of riding the managed horse, as an accomplishment for gentlemen? These are exercises of a healthy kind, and may be useful in life. Shall I speak of dancing, as a modish accomplishment of both sexes? I confess I know no evil in it. This also is a healthful exercise, and it gives young persons a decent manner of appearance in company. It may be profitable to some good purposes, if it be well guarded against all the abuses and temptations that may attend it. It was used of old in sacred and civil rejoicings, 1 Sam. xviii. 6. 2 Sam. vi. 14. Exod. xv. 20, 21. It is certainly an advantage to have the body formed early to graceful motion, to which the art of dancing may have contributed. But where it is much beloved and indulged, it has most sensible dangers, especially mixed dancing. It leads youth too often and too early into company; it may create too much forwardness and assurance in the sex whose chief glory is their modesty; it may kindle vain and vicious inclinations, and raise in young minds too great a fondness for the excessive gaieties and licentious pleasures of the age. In all these affairs a wise parent will keep a watchful eye upon the child, while he indulges it in these gratifications of youth and inclination; a wise parent will

daily observe whether the son, or the little daughter begin to be too much charmed with any of the gay ornaments and amusements of life ; and with a prudent and sacred solicitude, will take care lest any of them intrench on the more necessary, and more important duties of life and religion. And according to this view of things, the parent's hand will either give a looser reign to the pursuit of these exercises ; or will manage the propensities of the child with a needful and becoming restraint.

But among all the accomplishments of youth, there is none preferable to a decent and agreeable behaviour among men, a modest freedom of speech, a soft and elegant manner of address, a graceful and lovely deportment, a cheerful gravity and good humour, with a mind appearing ever serene under the ruffling accidents of human life ; add to this a pleasing solemnity and reverence when the discourse turns upon any thing sacred and divine, a becoming neglect of injuries, a hatred of calumny and slander, a habit of speaking well of others, a pleasing benevolence and readiness to do good to mankind, and special compassion to the miserable ; with an air and countenance, in a natural and unaffected manner, expressive of all these excellent qualifications.

Some of these, I own, are to be numbered among the duties and virtues, rather than among the ornaments of mankind ; but they must be confessed to be ornaments as well as virtues. They are graces in the eyes of man as well as of God. These will bespeak the affection of all that know us, and engage even an ill natured world betimes in our favour. These will enable the youth of both sexes, who are so happy as to attain them, to enter upon the stage of life with approbation and love, to pass through the world with ease, as far as ease may be expected in so degenerate and unhappy a state of things ; to finish the scenes of action on earth with applause, and to leave behind them the monument of a good name, when their bodies sleep in the dust, and their souls dwell with God.

## SECTION VIII.

*A Guard against evil Influences from Persons and Things.*

IT belongs also to a good education, that children be guarded and secured, as far as possible, from all evil influences and unhappy impressions, which they may be exposed to receive both from persons and things. I shall sufficiently explain this direction by particular instances.

Let not nurses or servants be suffered to fill their minds with silly tales, and with senseless rhymes, many of which are so absurd and ridiculous, that they will not bear to be represented in a grave discourse. The imagination of young creatures is hereby flattered and deceived; their reason is grossly abused and imposed upon; and by this means they are trained up to be amused with follies and nonsense, rather than to exercise their understanding, which is the glory of human nature.

Let not any persons that are near them terrify their tender minds with dismal stories of witches and ghosts, of devils and evil spirits, or faries and bugbears in the dark. This hath had a most mischievous effect on some children, and hath fixed in their constitutions such a rooted slavery and fear, that they have scarcely dared to be left alone all their lives, especially in the night. These stories have made such a deep and frightful impression on their tender fancies, that it hath enervated their souls, it hath broken their spirits early, it hath grown up with them and mingled with their religion, it hath laid a wretched foundation for melancholy and distracting sorrows. Let these sort of informations be reserved for their firmer years, and let them not be told in their hearing, till they can better judge what truth or reality there is in them, and be made sensible how much is owing to romance and fiction.

Nor let their little hearts be frightened at three or four years old with shocking and bloody histories, with massacres and martyrdoms, with cuttings and burnings, with the images of horrible and barbarous murders,

with racks and red-hot pincers, with engines of torment and cruelty, with mangled limbs, and carcasses drenched in gore. It is time enough, when their spirits are grown a little firmer, to acquaint them with these madnesses and miseries of human nature. There is no need that the history of the holy confessors and martyrs should be set before their thoughts so early, in all their most ghastly shapes and colours. These things, when they are a little older, may be of excellent use to discover to them the wicked and bloody principles of persecution, both among the heathens and the papists; and to teach them the power of the grace of Christ, in supporting these poor sufferers under all the torments which they sustained for the love of God and the truth.

Let their ears be ever kept from all immodest stories, and from wanton songs; from riddles and puns with double meanings and foul intentions; let them not be suffered to read wanton jests or amorous romances; and due care should be taken to remove all books out of their way that may defile their imagination, or teach them the language, or the sentiments of impurity. Nor let their eyes be entertained with lewd and unclean pictures, and images of things or actions that are not fit to be exposed. These things indeed have too often an unhappy influence to corrupt the fancy and the manners; and in riper years have been the occasion of numberless mischiefs; but especially they should be kept far away from the sight and hearing of children, lest too deep and dangerous impressions be made in those early years of life. Nothing but what is chaste, pure, and innocent, should come within the reach of their eyes and ears. Even the common necessities and actions of nature, should be always expressed before them in the most modest forms of speech that our mother tongue can furnish us with. In this respect, as the poet says, children should be treated with great reverence.

*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.*

It is confessed that books of anatomy, and other parts of necessary science, are proper to be written; and these may be consulted by persons who are grown up to a due age, especially by those whose profession re-

quires it. There is also some necessity of foul narratives, where foul crimes are committed, and ought to be publicly exposed and brought to justice and punishment. As the affairs of mankind stand, these things cannot always be avoided; but there is no manner of necessity that children should read them, or rash unguarded youth.

For some of the reasons before mentioned, there should be a wise conduct in showing children what parts of the bible they should read; for though the word of God expresseth all things with due decency, yet there are some things, which have been found necessary to be spoken of in scripture, both in the laws of Moses, and in the representation of the wickedness of the Gentiles, in the New Testament, in which adult persons have been concerned, which there is no necessity for children to read or hear, and they may be passed over or omitted among them. The Jews were wont to withhold Solomon's Songs from their children till they were thirty years old; and the late pious and prudent bishop Tillotson, in a manuscript which I have seen, wishes that those parts of the bible, wherein there are some of the affairs of mankind expressed too naturally, as he calls it, were omitted in the public lessons of the church: I think they may as well be excepted also out of the common lessons of children, and out of the daily course of reading in family worship.

Let parents take as much care as they can in the choice of companions and playfellows for their sons and daughters. It would be a happy thing if children, who are bred up in schools, could be secured from the company and evil influence of other children, who curse and swear, who take the name of God in vain, and use filthy and unclean language. Masters and mistresses should be very watchful and strict in their inquiries into the behaviour of their scholars of both sexes when they are out of their sight, that if it were possible, there might not be one among them whose lips are impure or profane; for one diseased sheep may infect the whole flock. However, where children find such immorality practised by any of their fellows, they should be taught to show their utmost abhorrence of it, and speedily forsake such pernicious company.

## SECTION IX.

*A Guard set on the Sports and Diversions of Children.*

AS parents should take care to have their children employed in proper learning and business, so they should not think it beneath them to concern themselves a little about their sports and recreations. Human nature, especially in younger years cannot be constantly kept intent on work, learning or labour. There must be some intervals of pleasure to give a loose to the mind, and to refresh the natural spirits. Too long and intense confinement to one thing is ready to overtire the spirits of youth, and to weaken the springs of activity by excessive fatigue. It is an old simile on this occasion, and a very just one, that a bow kept always bent will grow feeble and lose its force. The alternate successions of business and diversion, preserve the body and soul of children in the happiest temper; and learning is more closely pursued, and work better done, after some agreeable relaxations. The young creatures apply themselves to their business with new vigour after the enjoyment of some pleasurable release.

I confess, it would be of considerable advantage, if the various parts of learning and business in which children are employed, were so happily contrived, that one might be, as it were, a relaxation or diversion, when the mind is tired with the other; and if children have a taste and relish of reading and improvement of the mind, there is a rich variety of entertainment to be found in books of poetry, history, accounts of the wonders of art and nature, as well as ingenious practices in mechanical and mathematical affairs. It is happiest indeed, where this relish is the gift of nature; yet children may be trained up, by wise and alluring methods, to delight in knowledge, and to choose such sort of recreations, especially in winter nights and rainy seasons, when they cannot enjoy the more active diversions abroad. Yet besides these, some other sorts of

sports will generally be found necessary for children of almost all dispositions.

And their sports ought to be such as are in some measure chosen by themselves, that they may be matter of delight; yet still under the regulation of the eye and prudence of a parent. No sort of play should be permitted, wherein sacred things become a matter of jest or merriment. No sport should be indulged wherein foul language, ill names, or scandal are practised; wherein there is any violation of modesty, or of the rules of decency and cleanliness. Nothing must be suffered wherein there is any breach of the moral precepts of the law of God; wherein cozening or cheating, falsehood or lying, are practised or allowed. They should be confined to honesty, justice, truth and goodness, even in their very play.

They should not be permitted to use such sporting as may tend to discompose their spirits, disorder their nature, injure their flesh, prejudice their health, break their limbs, or do mischief to themselves, or each other. This should rather be the play of dogs, or horses, than of children.

Nor should they ever be allowed to practice those diversions that carry an idea of barbarity and cruelty in them, though it be but to brute creatures, they should not set up cocks to be banged with cudgels thrown at them about Shrove tide; nor delight in giving a tedious lingering death to a young litter of dogs or cats, that may be appointed to be destroyed or drowned, lest they multiply too much in a house, nor should they take pleasure in pricking, cutting or mangling young birds which they have caught, nor using any savage and bloody practices, towards any creatures whatsoever, lest their hearts grow hard and unrelenting, and they learn in time to practise these cruelties on their own kind, and to murder and torture their fellow mortals, or at least to be indifferent to their pain and distress, so as to occasion it without remorse.

They should never be suffered to game for money, nor even for their own toys or play things, if they are costly and expensive: many sore inconveniences in riper years arise from such indulgencies. And indeed no

recreations should be accounted lawful, but those in which they can with courage recommend themselves to God and desire his blessing upon them.

Those children who are kept pretty close to learning in a school, should be directed to pursue their recreations, as much as may be, in the open air; and to exercise their limbs with vigour and activity, that their growth and health may not be impaired by study, and too much confinement to a book. But in very foul weather, or in long winter evenings, as I hinted before, they may be taught to seek such diversions as may at once refresh and improve their minds.

For want of this in some families, the game of draughts and chess are practised, and some other little sports upon a chess board, without any stakes or aim at gain, beyond the mere pleasure of victory. In other houses cards and dice are introduced, for want of better recreations. The former of these, namely, draughts and chess, are innocent enough, and may wear off a heavy hour, when the mind or body are unfit for business; the latter have had the general censure of our wise and pious fathers, and there have been most unhappy effects attending them; and indeed, these games are seldom used without depositing too much money at the stake; and this tends to engage the passions with greater vehemence than the nature of a recreation can require, or should admit. But I leave it to those who are more skilful in casuistic divinity, to prove them absolutely unlawful in the very nature of the game.

However that be, I have often earnestly wished, that instead of these games, there were some more profitable sports invented for a long evening, for a dull hour, or a rainy season; and I am well assured, that if some ingenious mind, which is well skilled in mathematical learning and in games, would but take pains to contrive some such diversions, there might be a much better account given of the hours of leisure and remission of business by persons of both sexes, and of all ages, than can be at present, for want of such useful and improving recreations.

What if cards and dice should be proved to be ever so lawful in themselves, yet there might be various in-



ventions, of much more advantage to knowledge and virtue, placed in the room of them. May not some little tablets of pasteboard be made, in imitation of cards, which might teach the unlearned several parts of grammar, philosophy, geometry, geography, astronomy, &c.

What if on one side of these tablets or charts, a town or city were named and described, and on the other side, the country, province and kingdom where that town stands, with some geographical or historical remark on it; and whosoever in play draws the chart with the town on it, should be obliged to tell the country where it stands, and the remark on it?

What if on one side were a geometrical figure, and on the other the demonstration of some property belonging to it?

What if one side bore the name or figure of any piece of money, and the other all the multiplies of it by the nine digits, or as far as twelve? This would be useful for children brought up to a trade?

What if the figure of some plant, animal, engine or any thing else in the world of nature or art, were printed on one side, and on the name of the thing, which should be required to be spelt right by young scholars when they see the figure, in order to teach them the art of spelling. And if to this were added some beautiful expression or description of the thing, taken out of our best English poets, to be repeated by him who draws the chart which has the figure on it?

Or if on one side were a word in English, and on the other the same thing expressed in Latin, Greek, or French, for such who learn those languages?

Or if single names of famous men and women were on one side, and the reverse contained the history, or some short account of those persons whose names were so famous?

What if in a sheet of paper or a two penny book, were written a hundred proverbs or wise sayings, collected out of moralists, ancient and modern, relating to all the virtues and vices; and a collection of the most eminent examples of these virtues and vices were superadded; and if one or more solid bodies of wood,

of sixteen, twenty or thirty two flat sides were formed, with the name of one virtue or vice inscribed on each side; and by the rolling of this many sided toy, the uppermost word or name should be an indication what proverb or what example to require?

There have been I confess, several sorts of cards invented with proverbs, with various learned figures and mathematical devices upon them; but, as far as I can learn, these have been but mere pictures and ornaments to the hearts and diamonds; these learned devices and figures have had no share in the game; the cards are used like common cards still, without any manner of improvement of any of the gamesters in these sciences. But what I propose is a contrivance to render these words or figures, or sentences, the very implements or engines of the sport itself, without so much as the form of any spade, or club, or heart, or diamond drawn upon the chart or tablet.

Some of these exercises and diversions, if happily contrived, may not only be fit to entertain children in their younger years, but may usefully amuse them when they are grown up toward manly age.

For my part I own myself to be so much unskilled in the various games used among us, that I am not fit to contrive, nor capable of inventing such useful pastime. But I wish some of the sons of ingenuity had science and virtue so much at heart, as to attempt such a service to mankind. And parents should seek some sort of delightful employments or recreations for the leisure hours of their sons and their daughters, when they are in the stage of youth, that they may be the more easily withheld from those diversions of the present age which are so fashionable and yet so dangerous.

Among these dangerous and modish diversions, I cannot forbear to mention midnight assemblies, play-houses, gaming tables, and masquerades. Let parents who would willingly see their children walking in the paths of piety and virtue, endeavour to guard their inclinations from these enticing amusements. The religion and conscience of many a well inclined youth have been exposed to great and imminent danger among those scenes of vanity and folly, to say no worse. My

business is not to rail at them, though some of my readers will hardly forgive me that I deal with them so tenderly, and give them names of so soft a sound. But this must be confessed, that if persons of piety frequent them, they too much risk their character and their innocence, and expose their virtue and their piety to too great and needless temptations ; or at least by giving the sanction of their presence at such places, and on such occasions, they make themselves accessory to the ruin of those who may be less fortified against their ensnaring tendency.

Yet some of these diversions and amusements are so charming to many a young thoughtless creature, that no risk is thought too great to run, if they may but please their ears and their eyes, and gratify their idle and vain inclinations. Hence these houses of pleasure are filled and frequented ; hence the theatres are crowded and gaming tables attended by multitudes of youths whose parents have enjoyed the blessing of a stricter education ; and though their estate can scarcely support their irregular expense, yet they gratify their children in these hazardous recreations, and take no pains to cure them of this pernicious folly.

But the children of our age will pertly reply, " What, must we live like nobody ? Must we turn old Puritans again ? Must we look like fools in company, where there is scarcely any discourse but of plays, operas, and masquerades, or cards, dice, and midnight assemblies ? And pray what sin is there in any of them ? "

To this I answer, that I am very sorry to find that the children of religious parents choose and delight in company where these things are the chief subject of conversation. I fear, lest God and virtue, and the important things of another world are utterly banished out of such a visiting room, where these discourses are the chief entertainment, and there is little place found for any profitable conversation, even about the most useful and valuable affairs of this life.

But, light as these pert questions are, I will consider them one after another. You say first, " Must we look like old puritans ? Must we live like nobody ? " No, my friends, I am not persuading you to return to the habit and guise of your ancestors, nor to transact your visits,

nor to model your diversions, by the pattern of four-score years ago. There is a certain fashion and appearance of things that belong to every age ; modes of conversation and forms of behaviour are ever changing in this life ; and it is no improper thing for persons, according to their rank and figure in life, to conform themselves to the present customs as far as they are innocent, and have no evil influence upon morality or religion. But where any unhappy customs prevail in the world that make an inroad upon your piety, that endanger your virtue, that break the good order of religious families, and are usually or always attended with some mischievous consequences, surely in these instances it is better to look like a Puritan and stand almost alone, than to follow the multitude in a road that leads to iniquity and mischief. A Puritan or a Separatist from the vain and dangerous courses of a vicious world, is to this day a name of lasting glory, though the enemies of God and of your ancestors may cast it upon them in a way of reproach. There are some things in which you must dare to be singular, if you would be Christians, and especially in a corrupt and degenerate age. A sense of the love of God secured to your hearts, and an inward peace of conscience, will infinitely countervail the enmity of the world, and overbalance the reproaches of an ungodly generation.

Besides, if the families that profess religion, and desire to preserve piety among them, and to transmit it down to their children's children, would but heartily join together, in a resolved abstinence from these hazardous diversions, there would be no need of any one of you to stand alone, and your appearance on the side of virtue would not be singular. You might animate and support one another with public courage, and having God and virtue on your side, you might in some measure bear down the effrontery and ridicule of an age of vice and sensuality ; an age wherein comedies and masquerades, gaming tables and midnight assemblies, are become the modish diversions.

But still it may be said, what sin is there in any of them ? Bear with me then, while I take them in order, one after another, and briefly give my opinion concerning each of them.

1. Let us begin with the playhouse. It is granted that a dramatic representation of the affairs of human life, is by no means sinful in itself: I am inclined to think that valuable compositions might be made of this kind, such as might entertain a virtuous audience with innocent delight, and even with some real profit. Such have been written in French, and have in times past, been acted with applause. But it is too well known that the comedies which appear on our stage, and most of the tragedies too, have no design to set religion or virtue in the best light, nor to render vice odious to the spectators. In many of them piety makes a ridiculous figure and virtue is drest in the habit of folly; the sacred name of God is frequently taken in vain, if not blasphemed; and the man of flagrant vice is the fine gentleman and the poet's favourite, who must be rewarded at the end of the play.

Besides, there is nothing will pass in our theatres that has not a mixture of some amorous intrigue; lewdness itself reigns and riots in some of their scenes; sobriety is put quite out of countenance, and modesty is in certain danger there; the youth of serious religion that ventures sometimes into this infected air, finds his antidotes too weak to resist the contagion. The pleasures of the closet and devout retirement are suspended first, and then utterly vanquished by the overpowering influence of the last comedy; the fancy is all over defiled, the vain images rise uppermost in the soul and pollute the feeble attempts of devotion, till by degrees, secret religion is lost and forgotten; and in a little time the play house has got so much the mastery of conscience that the young christian goes to bed after the evening drama with as much satisfaction and ease as he used to do after evening prayer.

If there have been found two or three plays which have been tolerably free from lewd and profane mixtures, there are some scores or hundreds that have many hateful passages in them, for which no excuse can be made. And when all the charming powers of poesy and music are joined with the gayest scenes and entertainments, to assault the senses and the soul at once, and to drive out virtue from the possession of the heart, it is to be feared that it will not long keep its place

and power there. What a prophet of their own says of a court, may with much more truth and justice be said of the theatre ;

It is a golden, but a fatal circle,  
Upon whose magic skirts a thousand devils  
In crystal forms sit tempting innocence,  
And beckon early virtue from its centre.

Another of the poets of the town, who made no great pretences to virtue, and who well knew the qualities of the theatre, and its mischievous influence, writes thus of it :

It would be endless to trace all the vice  
That from the playhouse takes immediate rise,  
It is the unexhausted magazine  
That stocks the land with vanity and sin.  
—————By flourishing so long,  
Numbers have been undone, both old and young ;  
And many hundred souls are now unblest,  
Which else had died in peace, and found eternal rest.

As for any of my friends who are not yet convinced of the justice of these censures, I intreat them to read what Mr. Collier, Mr. Bedford, and Mr. Lawe have written on this subject : And though I would by no means justify and support every remark they have made, yet I think every reader who has a modest and pious soul, and has the cause of God and virtue near his heart, will be a little afraid to give his presence there, lest he should seem to encourage such incentives to iniquity and profaneness ; or if he should go thither once, merely to see and know what it is, I would persuade myself he will not make it his practice, or frequent that house of infection.

But you will say, "There is some advantage to be gained by these entertainments ; there is a deal of fine language in them, and fashionable airs of conversation ; there are many of the fooleries of life exposed in the theatre, which suit not a more solemn place ; and comedies will teach us to know the world, and to avoid the ridicule of the age."

But let my younger friends, who are so willing to im-

prove in their knowledge of the world and politeness remember, that whatsoever may be gotten, there is much more to be lost among these perilous and enticing scenes of vanity; the risk of their virtue and serious religion can never be recompenced by the learning a few fine speeches and modish airs, or the correction of some awkward and unfashionable piece of behaviour. This is to plunge headlong into the sea, that I may wash off a little dirt from my coat, or to venture on poison in order to cure a pimple.

Besides, most or all of these ends might be attained by reading some few of the best of them in private; though I confess, I am cautious how I recommend this practice, because I think that almost all these dramatic composures in our age have some dangerous mixtures in them. Those volumes of short essays which are entitled the Spectator, will give a sufficient knowledge of the ways of the world, and cure us of a hundred little follies, without the danger that there is in reading of plays; though even in those very volumes, I could heartily wish that here and there a leaf were left out, wherein the writer speaks too favourably of the stage, and now and then, though rarely, introduces a sentence that would raise a blush in the face of strict virtue.

2. The next forbidden diversion is the masquerade. By all the descriptions that I have heard of it, it seems to be a very low piece of foolery, fitted for children and for persons of a little and trifling genius, who can entertain themselves at blind man's buff. And as the entertainment is much meaner than that of the theatre, so it is something more hazardous to virtue and innocence. It does not so much as pretend to any such improvement of the mind as the theatre professes; while it lays a more dreadful snare to modesty, and has made too often a dismal inroad on the morals of those that frequent it. Could I but persuade persons to read what the Right Reverend the late Lord Bishop of London has published in his sermon for the reformation of manners, I am ready to think that all those who profess virtue would refrain their feet far from it, and not come near the doors of the house. His words are these:

“Amongst the various engines contrived by a corrupt generation to support vice and profaneness, and keep

them in countenance, I must particularly take notice of masquerades, as they deprive virtue and religion of their last refuge, I mean shame; which keeps multitudes of sinners within the bounds of decency, after they have broken through all the ties of principle and conscience. But this invention sets them free from that tie also; being neither better nor worse than an opportunity to say and do there, what virtue, decency, and good manners will not permit to be said or done in any other place. If persons of either sex will frequent lewd and profane plays, or openly join themselves to loose and atheistical assemblies of any kind, they have their reward, they are sure to be marked and branded by all good men, as persons of corrupt minds and vicious inclinations, who have abandoned religion and all pretences to it, and given themselves over to luxury and profaneness. And as bad as the world is, this is a very heavy load upon the characters of men; and in spite of all the endeavours of vice to bear up and keep itself in countenance, it sinks them by degrees, into infamy and contempt. But this pernicious invention intrenches vice and profaneness against all the assaults and impressions of shame; and whatever lewdness may be concerted, whatever luxury, immodesty, or extravagance may be committed in word or deed, no one's reputation is at stake, no one's character is responsible for it. A circumstance of such terrible consequence to virtue and good manners, that if masquerades shall ever be revived, as we heartily hope they will not, all serious christians within these two great and populous cities will be nearly concerned to lay it to heart, and diligently bestir themselves in cautioning their friends and neighbours against such fatal snares. Particularly all who have the government and education of youth, ought to take the greatest care to keep them out of the way of this dangerous temptation, and then to labour against the spreading of it.

“ I cannot forbear to add, that all religious considerations apart, this is a diversion that no true Englishman ought to be fond of, when he remembers, that it was brought in among us by an ambassador of a neighbouring nation in the last reign, while his master was in measures to enslave us; and indeed there is not a more



effectual way to enslave a people, than first to dispirit and enfeeble them by licentiousness and effeminacy." Thus far the right reverend author, whose zeal for the suppression of all these tempting machineries has been so conspicuous and honourable.

3. The third place of dangerous resort is the gaming table. Many young gentlemen have been there bubbled and cheated of large sums of money, which were given them by their parents to support them honourably in their stations. In such sort of shops, young ladies are tempted to squander away too large a share of their yearly allowance, if not of the provision which their parents have made for their whole lives. It is a fatal snare to both sexes; if they win, they are allured still onward, while, according to their language, luck runs on their side; if they loose, they are tempted to another and another cast of the die, and enticed on still to fresh games, by a delusive hope that fortune will turn, and they shall recover all that they have lost. In the midst of these scenes their passions rise shamefully, a greedy desire of gain makes them warm and eager, and new losses plunge them sometimes into vexation and fury, till the soul is quite beat off from its guard, and virtue and reason have no manner of command over them.

My worthy friend Mr. Neal, in his reformation sermon, has taken occasion not only to inform us, that merchants and tradesmen mix themselves at these tables with men of desperate fortunes, and throw the dice for their estates; but in a very decent and soft manner of address, he has inquired whether public gaming in virtuous ladies be not a little out of character? Whether it does not draw them into mixed company, and give them an air of boldness, which is perfectly inconsistent with that modesty which is the ornament of the fair sex? Whether it does not engage them in an habit of idleness and of keeping ill hours? Whether their passions are not sometimes disordered? And whether the losses they sustain have not a tendency to breed ill blood in their families and between their nearest relations? It has been often observed, that "gaming in a lady has usually been attended with loss of reputation, and sometimes of that which is still more valua-

ble, her virtue and honour." Thus far proceeds this useful sermon.

Now, if these be the dismal and frequent consequences of the gaming tables, the loss of a little money is one of the least injuries you sustain by it. But what if you should still come off gainers? Is this the way that God has taught or allowed us to procure the necessary comforts of life? Is this a sort of labour or traffic on which you can ask the blessing of heaven? Can you lift up your face to God, and pray that he would succeed the cast of the die, the drawing of the lot, or the dealing out of the cards, so as to increase your gain, while it is the very sense and language of the prayer that your neighbour may sustain so much loss? This is a sad and guilty circumstance which belongs to gaming, that one can gain nothing but what another loses; and consequently we cannot ask a blessing upon ourselves, but at the same time we pray for a blast upon our neighbour.

Will you hope to excuse it by saying, that my neighbour consents to this blast, or this loss, by entering into the game, and there is no injury where there is consent?

I answer, that though he consents to lose conditionally, and upon a venturous hope of gain, yet he is not willing to sustain the loss absolutely; but when either chance or his neighbour's skill in the game has determined against him, then he is constrained to lose and does it unwillingly, so that he still sustains it as a loss, or misfortune, or evil. Now if you ask a blessing from heaven on this way of your getting money you ask rather absolutely that your neighbour may sustain a loss, without any regard to the condition of his hope of gain.

Your wish and prayer is directly that you may get, and he may lose; you cannot wish this good to yourself, but you wish the contrary evil to him: and therefore I think gaming for gain cannot be consistent with the laws of Christ, which certainly forbid us to wish evil to our neighbour.

And if you cannot so much as in thought ask God's blessing on this, as you certainly may on such recreations as have an evident tendency innocently to exercise the body, and relax the mind, it seems your conscience secretly condemns it, and there is an additional proof of its being evil to you.

All the justest writers of morality, and the best casuists, have generally, if not universally, determined against these methods of gain. Whatsoever game may be indulged as lawful, it is still a recreation, and not as a calling or business of life; and therefore no larger sums ought to be risked or ventured in this manner, than what may be lawfully laid out by any persons for their present recreation, according to their different circumstances in the world.

Besides all this, think of the loss of time, and the waste of life that is continually made by some who frequent these gaming places. Think how it calls away many a youth from their proper business, and tempts them to throw away what is not their own, and to risk the substance as well as the displeasure of their parents or their master, at all the uncertain hazards of a dice box. Read the pages which Mr. Neal has employed on this theme, in the sermon just now cited; read what Mr. Dorrington has written several years ago, on this subject of gaming; I wish such discourses were fresh in print, and put into the hands of every one who lies under this temptation.

4. The midnight assemblies are the last which I shall mention of those modish and hazardous diversions, wherein youth are drawn away to too much vanity, and plunged into the sensual gaieties of life; and that at those hours, part of which should be devoted to the religion of the family, or the closet, and partly to the nightly repose of nature. It is acknowledged to be proper and needful that young people should be indulged in some recreations, agreeable to their age and suitable to the condition in which Providence has placed them. But I would ask, whether the great and only valuable end of recreation is to be expected from these midnight assemblies, namely to relieve us from the fatigues of life, and to exhilarate the spirits, so as thereby to fit us for the duties of life and religion? Now are these the proper means to fit us for the duties of either kind? Perhaps it will be said, that dancing which is practised in those assemblies, is an exercise conducive to health, and therefore a means of fitting us for the duties of life. But may not the unseasonableness of the midnight hour

prevent and overbalance the benefit that might otherwise be supposed to arise from the exercise? Is it likely that natural health should be promoted or preserved, by changing the seasons and order of nature, and by allotting those hours to exercise which God and nature have ordained to rest? Is the returning home after five or six hours dancing, through the cold and damp of the midnight air, a proper means of preserving health? Or rather is it not more likely to impair and destroy it? Have not these fatal effects been too often felt? Have there not been sacrifices of human life offered to this midnight idol? Have there been no fair young martyrs to this unseasonable folly? Are there not some of its slaves who are become feeble, labouring under sore diseases, and some of them fallen asleep in death? Have not their music and their dancing, instead of natural rest in their beds, brought them down to a long silence in the grave and an untimely rest in a bed of dust? Those amiable pieces of human nature, who were lately the joy and hope of their too indulgent parents, are now the bitterness of their hearts; and those very exercises from whence they hoped the continuance of their joy, as the supposed means of confirming their children's health, are become an everlasting spring of their mourning.

And as those midnight recreations are badly suited to fit us for the duties of the civil life, so they are worse suited to fit us for, or rather, they are more apparently opposite to the duties of religion. The religion of the closet is neglected, the beautiful regularity and order of the family is broken; and when the night has been turned into day, a good part of the next day is turned into night, while the duties of the morning, both to God and man, are unperformed. Those who have frequented these assemblies know all this, and are my witnesses to the truth of it. Nay, the very practice itself at those unseasonable hours, tells all the world how much they prefer these dangerous amusements to the worship of God in the evening and in the morning, and to all the conveniencies and decorum of family government. Besides, if I speak to christians, have you not found that the indulgence of this sort of diversions, which are usually practised in those unseasonable assemblies, leads the mind away insensibly from God and religion, gives a van-

ity to the spirit, and greatly abates the spiritual and heavenly temper which should belong to Christians? Hath it not taken away the savour of godliness and tincture of piety from some younger minds? And do elder Christians never suffer by it? Let it be further considered what sort of company you mingle with at those midnight assemblies. Are they most frequented by the wise and pious, or by the more vain and vicious part of mankind? Do they tend to fill your mind with the most improving notions, and your ears and your lips with the most proper conversation? Do you that frequent them never find your piety in danger there? Does strict religion and prayer relish so well with you after those gaudy nights of mirth and folly? And do you then, when you join in those assemblies, practice the commands of God, to abstain from all appearance of evil and to shun the paths of temptation? Can you pray for a blessing on your attendance on these midnight meetings? Or can you hope to run into the midst of those sparks and living coals, and yet not be burned, nor so much as have your garments singed? Are not parents very generally sensible, that there are dangerous snares to youth in those gay diversions? And therefore the mother will herself go along with her young offspring, to take care of them and to watch over them; and perhaps there is scarcely any place or time which more wants the watchful eye of a superior. But here let me ask, is this all the reason why the mother attends those scenes of vanity? Has she no relish for them herself? Has she no gay humours of her own to be gratified, which she disguises, and covers with the pretence of parental solicitude for the virtue and honour of her offspring? Are there no mothers who freely lead their children into those perilous places, where soul and body are in danger, and are really their tempters, under a colour of being their guardians?

You will plead perhaps, that some of these things are proper for the improvement of young people in good breeding and politeness. They must be brought into company to see the world and to learn how to behave with becoming decency. Well, suppose these assemblies to be academies of politeness, and that young people attend there upon lectures of good breeding. Is there no other time so fit as midnight to polish the youth of

both sexes and to breed them well? May not an hour or two be appointed at more proper seasons by select companies, for mutual conversation and innocent delight? Can there be no genteel recreations enjoyed, no lessons of behaviour taught by day light? Can no method of improvement in good breeding be contrived and appointed, which shall be more secure from temptations and inconveniences? Are there none which are more harmless, more innocent, of better reputation among persons of strict piety, and which make less inroads on the duties of life, both solitary and social, civil and religious.

Shall I inquire once more, What is done at many of those midnight assemblies before the dance is begun, or when it is ended, and what is the entertainment of those who are not engaged in dancing? Are they not active in gaming? Are not cards the business of the hour? Are not children educated by these means in the love of gaming? And do they not hereby get such a relish of it as proves afterwards pernicious to them? Now if gaming be not a practice fit to be encouraged, what encouragement do those assemblies deserve where gaming is one of the chief diversions or business?

But it is time to put an end to this sort of discourse. I beg pardon of my readers for having drawn it out to so great a length; for I have said too much on this subject for those who have no inclination to these criminal and dangerous diversions; and wish I may have said enough to do good to those who have.

Upon the whole, I conclude, it is the duty of parents who would give their children a good education, to see to it, that children in their younger years do not indulge such recreations as may spoil all the good effects of the pious instructions, the prayers and care of their parents. Otherwise, if you encourage them in such recreations, you are building up these vanities of mind, and those vicious inclinations, with one hand, which you labour to prevent or to destroy with the other.

## SECTION X.

*Of the Proper Degrees of Liberty and restraint in the Education of a Son, illustrated by Example.*

SO weak and unhappy is human nature that it is ever ready to run into extremes; and when we would recover ourselves from an excess on the right hand, we know not where to stop till we are got to an excess on the left. Instances of this kind are innumerable in all the affairs of human life; but it is hardly more remarkable in any thing than in the strict and severe education of our fathers a century ago, and in the most profuse and unlimited liberty that is indulged to children in our age.

In those days the sons were bred up to learning by terrible discipline; every Greek and Latin author they conversed with was attended with one or many new scourges, to drive them into acquaintance with him, and not the least misdemeanor in life could escape the lash, as though the father would prove his daily love to his son by never sparing his rod: Prov. xiii. 24. Now a days young master must be treated with a foolish fondness, till he is grown to the size of man; and let his faults be ever so heinous, and his obstinacy ever so great, yet the preceptor must not let him hear the name of the rod, lest the child should be frightened or hurt; the advice of the wisest of men is utterly forgotten when he tells us, that "*Due correction shall drive out the folly that is bound up in the heart of a child:*" Prov. xxii. 15. Or else they boldly reverse his divine council, Prov. xiii. 24, as though they would make the rule of their practice, a direct contradiction to the words of Solomon, namely, *He that spareth the rod loveth his son, but he that hateth him chastens him betimes.*

In that day many children were kept in a most servile subjection, and not suffered to sit down, or to speak, in the presence of their father, till they were come to

the age of one and twenty. The least degree of freedom was esteemed a bold presumption, and incurred a sharp reproof. Now they are made familiar companions to their parents, almost from the very nursery; and therefore they will hardly bear a check or a reproof at their hand.

In the beginning of the last century, and so onward to the middle of it, the children were usually obliged to believe what their parents and their masters taught them, whether they were principles of science or articles of faith and practice; they were tied down almost every punctilio, as though it were necessary to salvation; they were not suffered to examine or inquire whether their teachers were in the right, and scarcely knew upon what grounds they were to assent to the things that were taught them; for it was a maxim of all teachers, that the learner must believe: *Discentem oportet credere*. Then an *ipse dixit*, or Aristotle said so, was a sufficient proof of any proposition in the colleges; and for a man of five and twenty to be a Christian and a Protestant, a Dissenter or a Churchman, it was almost reason enough to say that his father was so. But in this century, when the doctrine of a just and reasonable liberty is better known, too many of the present youth break all the bonds of nature and duty, and run into the wildest degrees of looseness both in belief and practice. They slight the religion which their parents have taught them, that they may appear to have chosen a religion for themselves, and when they have made a creed or belief of their own, or rather borrowed some scraps of infidelity from their vain companions and equals, they find pretences enough to cast off all other creeds at once, as well as the councils and customs of their religious predecessors.

“The practices of our fathers, say they, were precise and foolish, and shall be no rule for our conduct; the articles of their faith were absurd and mysterious, but we will believe nothing of mystery, lest our faith should be as ridiculous as theirs.” In their younger years, and before their reason is half grown, they pretend to examine the sublimest doctrines of christianity; and a raw and half witted boy, shall commence an infidel, because he cannot comprehend some of the



glorious truths of the gospel ; and laughs at his elders and ancestors, for believing what they could not comprehend.

The child now a days forgets that his parent is obliged, by all the laws of God and nature, to train him up in his own religion, till he comes to the proper age of discretion to judge for himself ; he forgets, or he will not know, that the parent is instructed with the care of the souls of his young offspring by the very laws of nature, as well as by the revealed covenants of innocency and of grace. The son now a days forgets the obligations he is under to honour and obey the persons who gave him birth ; he pays no regard to the doctrines which led on his ancestors to the love of God and man ; whereas doctrines that have such influence claim at least some degrees of attention, and especially from a son who has been trained up in them, and beheld the effect of them in the piety of his parents ; nor will the very light of nature suffer him to depart from them, but upon the clearest judgment of his own mature reason, a thorough and impartial search into the subject, the loud inward dictates of his conscience, and the full evidence of his parents' mistake.

So wanton and licentious a spirit has possessed some of the youth of the nation, that they never think they have freed themselves from the prejudices of their education, till they have thrown off almost all the yokes of restraint, that were laid upon them by God or man. Some take a petulant pride in laying aside the holy scriptures, for the same reason that Timothy was advised to continue in them ; and that is, because *They have learned and known them from their very childhood* : 2 Tim. iii. 15. And some perhaps have been laughed out of their christianity, lest it should be said that their mothers and their nurses had made them christians.

Heretofore the sons were scarce suffered to be absent from home an hour without express leave, till they were arrived at the age of man, nor daughters till they were married : Now, both sexes take an unbounded license of roving where they please, and from a dozen years old they forget to ask leave to wander or to visit where their fancies lead them : At first, the parent gives

a loose and winks at it, and then the child claims it as his due for ever.

In short the last age taught mankind to believe that they were mere children, and treated them as such, till they were near thirty years old ; but the present gives them leave to fancy themselves complete men and women at twelve or fifteen ; and they accordingly judge and manage for themselves entirely, and too often despise all advice of their elders.

Now, though it be sufficiently evident that both these are extremes of liberty or restraint, yet if we judge by the reason of things, or by experience and success, surely the ancient education is to be preferred before the present, and of the two should rather be chosen.

If we would determine this by reason, it is easy to see that a father of fifty or sixty years old is fitter to judge for his son, at four and twenty, in matters of importance, than a boy of fifteen is to judge for himself.

Or, if we would decide the matter by experience, it is plain enough that the posterity of the former generation, who are the fathers and the grandfathers of the present, had more of serious religion and true virtue amongst them, than there is any hope or prospect of amongst the greatest part of their children and grandchildren. And if I would use a bold metaphor, I might venture to say with truth, the last century has brought forth more solid fruits of goodness, than the present can yet show in blossoms ; and in my opinion, this is much owing to the neglect of the pruning knife.

But, after all, is there no medium between these two extremes, excess of confinement and excess of liberty ? May not young understandings be allowed to shoot and spread themselves a little, without growing rank and rampant ? May not children be kept in a due and gentle subjection to their parents, without putting yokes of bondage on them ? Is there no reasonable restraint of the wild opinions and violent inclinations of youth, without making chains for the understanding, and throwing fetters on the soul ? May not the young gentleman begin to act like a man without forgetting that he is a son ; and maintain the full liberty of his own judgment, without insolence and contempt of the

opinions of his elders? May not he who is bred up a Protestant and a Christian, judge freely for himself, without the prejudices of his education, and yet continue a Christian and a Protestant still? Is it not possible for the parent to indulge, and the child to enjoy a just liberty, and yet neither encourage nor practise a wild licentiousness?

Yes, surely; and there have been happy instances in the last age, and there are some in this, both of parents and children that have learned to tread this middle path, and found wisdom and virtue in it, piety and peace. Agathus has bred his sons up under such discipline, as renders them both proper examples to the world.

Eugenio is just out of his minority, and in the twenty second year of his age practises the man with all that virtue and decency which makes his father's acquaintance covet his company; and indeed they may learn by his discourse the art of good reasoning, as well as the precepts of piety from his example. He is an entertaining companion to the young gentlemen his equals; and yet divines and philosophers take a pleasure to have Eugenio amongst them. He is carressed by his superiors in honour and years; and though he is released from the discipline of parental education, yet treats the lady his mother with all that affectionate duty that could be desired or demanded of him ten years ago; his father is content to see his own youth outshined by his son, and confesses that Eugenio already promises greater things than Agathus did at thirty.

If you ask whence these happy qualities arise, I grant there was some foundation for them in the very make of his nature; there was something of a complexional virtue mingled with his frame; but it is much more owing to the wise conduct of his parents, from his very infancy, and the blessing of divine grace attending their labours, their prayers, and their hopes.

He was trained up from the very cradle to all the duties of infant virtue, by the allurements of love and reward suited to his age; and never was driven to practise any thing by a frown or a hasty word where it was possible for kinder affections to work the same effect by indulgence and delay.

As fast as his reasoning powers began to appear and exert themselves, they were conducted in an easy track of thought to find out and observe the reasonableness of every part of his duty, and the lovely character of a child obedient to reason and to his parents' will ; while every departure from duty was shown to be so contrary to reason, as laid an early foundation for conscience to work upon ; conscience began here to assume its office, and to manifest its authority in dictates, and reproofs, and reflections of mind, peaceful or painful, according to his behaviour. When his parents observed this inward monitor to awake his soul, they could better trust him out of their sight.

When he became capable of conceiving of an almighty and invisible Being, who made this world and every creature in it, he was taught to pay all due regard to this God his maker ; and from the authority and love of his father on earth, he was led to form right ideas, as far as childhood permitted, of the power, government and goodness of the universal and supreme Father of all in heaven.

He was informed why punishment was due to an offence against God or his parents, that his fear might become an useful passion to awaken or guard his virtue ; but he was instructed at the same time, that where he heartily repented of a fault, and returned to his duty with due diligence, there was forgiveness to be obtained both of God and man.

When at any time a friend interceded for him to his father, after he had been guilty of a fault, he was hereby directed into the doctrine of Jesus, the Mediator between God and man ; and thus he knew him as an intercessor, before he could well understand the notion of his sacrifice, and atonement.

In his younger years he passed but twice under the correction of the rod ; once for a fit of obstinacy and persisting in a falsehood ; then he was given up to a severe chastisement, and it dispelled and cured the sullen humour for ever ; and once for the contempt of his mother's authority he endured the scourge again, and he wanted it no more.

He was enticed sometimes to the love of letters, by making his lesson a reward of some domestic duty ; and

ta permission to pursue some parts of learning was the appointed recompence of his diligence and improvement in others.

There was nothing required of his memory but what was first, as far as possible, let into his understanding, and by proper images and representations suited to his years, he was taught to form some conception of the things described, before he was bid to learn the words by heart. Thus he was freed from the danger of treasuring up the cant and jargon of mere names, instead of the riches of solid knowledge.

Where any abstruse and difficult notions occurred in his course of learning, his preceptor postponed them till he had gone through that subject in a more superficial way; for this purpose he passed twice through all the sciences; and to make the doctrines of Christianity easy to him in his childhood, he had two or three catechisms composed by his tutor, each of them suited to his more early or more improved capacity, till at twelve years old he was thought fit to learn that public form, which is more universally taught and approved.

As he was inured to reasoning from his childhood, so he was instructed to prove every thing, according to the nature of the subject, by natural or moral arguments, as far as his years would admit; and thus he drew much of his early knowledge from reason, or from revelation, by the force of his judgment, and not merely from his teachers by the strength of his memory.

His parents were persuaded indeed that they ought to teach him the principles of virtue while he was a child; and the most important truths of religion, both natural and revealed, before he was capable of deriving them from the fund of his own reason; or of framing a religion for himself out of so large a book as the Bible. They thought themselves under the obligation of that divine command, "*train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*" Prov. xxii. 6. And therefore from a child they made him acquainted with the holy scriptures, persuaded him to believe that they were given by the inspiration of God, before it was possible for him to

take in the arguments from reason, history, tradition, &c. which must be joined together to confirm the sacred canon, and prove the several books of the Bible to be divine. Thus, like Timothy, he *continued in the things which he had learned, and had been assured of, knowing of whom he had learned them*, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16. Yet as his years advanced, they thought it requisite to show him the solid and rational foundations of his faith, that his hope might be built upon the authority of God and not of men.

Thus the apostles and prophets were made his early companions ; and being instructed in the proofs of the Christian religion, and the divine original of his Bible, he pays a more constant and sacred regard to it, since his judgment and reason assure him that it is the word of God, than when he was a child and believed it because his mother told him so. He reads the scriptures daily now, not like the lessons of his infancy, but as the infallible rule of his faith and practice: He searches them every day in his closet, not to confirm any articles or doctrines that he is resolved to believe, but, as the noble Bereans did, to examine and try whether those doctrines and articles ought to be believed or not, which he was taught in the nursery.

After he arrived at fifteen, he was suffered to admit nothing into his full assent, till his mind saw the rational evidence of the proposition itself ; or at least till he felt the power of those reasons which obliged him to assent upon moral evidence and testimony, where the evidences of sense or of reason were not to be expected. He knew that he was not to hope for mathematical proofs that there is a Pope at Rome, that the Turks have dominion over Judea, that St. Paul wrote an epistle to the Romans, that Christ was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, and that in three days time he rose from the dead ; and yet that there is just and reasonable evidence to enforce and support the belief of all these. Where truths were too sublime for present comprehension, he would never admit them as a part of his faith, till he saw full evidence of a speaking God, and a divine revelation.

His tutor never imposed any thing on him with a magisterial air, but by way of advice recommended to

him such studies and such methods of improvement as his experience had long approved; he gave frequent hints of the danger of some opinions, and the fatal consequences of some modish and mistaken principles. He let him know generally what sentiments he himself embraced among the divided opinions of the age; and what clear and comprehensive knowledge, what satisfaction of judgment, serenity of mind, and peace of conscience were to be found in the principles which he had chosen; but he exhorted his pupil still to choose wisely for himself, and led him onward in the sciences, and in common and sacred affairs, to frame his own sentiments by just rules of reasoning; though Eugenio did not superstitiously confine his belief to the opinions of his instructor, yet he could not but love the man that indulged him in such a liberty of thought, and gave him such an admirable clue, by which he let himself into the secrets of knowledge, human and divine; thus, under the happy and insensible influences of so prudent a supervisor, he traced the paths of learning, and enjoyed the unspeakable pleasure of being his own teacher, and of framing his opinions himself. By this means he began early to use his reason with freedom, and to judge for himself, without a servile submission to the authority of others; and yet to pay a just and solemn deference to persons of age and experience, and particularly to those who were the proper and appointed guides of his youth, and who led him on so gently in the paths of knowledge.

He loves to call himself by the honourable name of a christian; and though his particular sentiments approach much nearer to the opinions of some parties than to others, yet he likes not to be called by the name of any party, for he is wise and bold enough to be a bigot to none. He practices a noble and an extensive charity to those that, in lesser matters, differ widely from him, if they do but maintain the most essential and necessary parts of Christianity; nor does he seclude them from his communion, nor withhold himself from theirs; but as the providence of God gives him just occasions, he eats and drinks with them at the table of their common Lord, provided always

that they impose nothing upon his practice contrary to his conscience.

Yet his charity has its limits too; for he hardly knows how to worship the Son of God in the most solemn ordinance of communion, with those that esteem him but a mere man; nor can he join with an assembly of professed Socinians to commemorate the death of Christ, who deny it to be a proper atonement for the sins of men.

He dares to believe the doctrines of original sin, the satisfaction of Christ, the influences of the blessed Spirit, and other despised truths of the gospel; and this not because his ancestors believed them, but because he cannot avoid the evidence of them in scripture. And if in some few points of less importance he takes leave to differ from the sentiments of his elders, it is with such a becoming modesty, that convinces his father how unwilling he is to dissent from him; and yet he maintains his opinion with such an appearance of argument, and such an honest concern for truth and piety, that makes it plain to his friends, that he is under the strong constraint of an inward conviction. Thus though he has perhaps some new apprehensions of things, yet he is by no means led into them by a licentious humour of opposing his teachers, nor a wanton pride of free thinking.

He was not kept a stranger to the errors and follies of mankind, nor was he let loose amongst them, either in books or company, without a guard and a guide. His preceptor let him know the gross mistakes and iniquities of men, ancient and modern, but inlaid him with proper principles of truth and virtue, and furnished him with such rules of judgment, as led him more easily to distinguish between good and bad; and thus he was secured against the infection and the poison, both of the living and the dead.

He had early cautions given him to avoid the bantering tribe of mortals, and was instructed to distinguish a jest from an argument, so that a loud laugh at his religion never puts him nor his faith out of countenance. He is ever ready to render a reason of his Christian hope, and to defend his creed; but he scorns to enter the list with such a disputant that has no artillery but



quib and flash, no arguments but grimace and ridicule. Thus he supports the character of a Christian with honour; he confines his faith to his Bible, and his practice to all the rules of piety; and yet thinks as freely as that vain herd of Atheists and Deists, who arrogate the name of Freethinkers to themselves.

You will inquire, perhaps, how he came to attain so manly a conduct in life at so early an age, and how every thing of the boy was worn off so soon. Truly, besides other influences, it is much owing to the happy management of Eraste, that was the name of the lady, his mother; she was frequently in the nursery, and inspired sentiments into his childhood, becoming riper years. When there was company in the parlour with whom she could use such a freedom, she brought her son in among them, not to entertain them with his own noise, and tattle, and impertinence, but to hear their discourse, and sometimes to answer a little question or two they might ask him. When he was grown up to a youth, he was often admitted into the room with his father's acquaintance, and was indulged the liberty to ask and inquire on subjects that seemed to be above his years; he was encouraged to speak a sentence or two of his own thoughts, and thus to learn and practise a modest assurance. But when the company was gone, he was approved and praised if he had behaved well, or received kind hints of admonition that he might know when he had been too silent, and when too forward to speak. Thus by enjoying the advantage of society above the level of his own age and understanding, he was always aspiring to imitation: and the excesses and defects of his conduct were daily noticed and cured.

His curiosity was gratified abroad with new sights and scenes, as often as his parents could do it with convenience, that he might not stare and wonder at every strange object or occurrence; but he was made patient of restraint and disappointment, when he seemed to indulge an excessive desire of any needless diversion. If he sought any criminal pleasures, or diversions attended with great danger and inconvenience, the pursuit of them was absolutely forbidden; but it was done in so kind a manner, as made the guilt

or peril of them appear in the strongest light, and thereby they were rendered hateful or formidable, rather than the objects of wish or desire.

When Eugenio first began to go abroad in the world, his companions were recommended to him by the prudence of his parents; or if he chose them himself, it was still within the reach of his tutor's observation, or the notice of his father's eye; nor was he suffered to run loose into promiscuous company, till it appeared that his mind was furnished with steady principles of virtue; till he had knowledge enough to defend those principles, and to repel the assaults that might be made upon his faith. And for this reason, till he was twenty years old, he gave account to his superiors how he spent the day, whensoever he was absent from them; though they did not at that age require that he should ask formal leave for a few hours excursion.

Yet it was hardly thought fit to trust him to his own conduct for whole days together, lest he should meet with temptations too hard for his virtue, till he had gained resolution enough to say NO boldly, and to maintain an obstinate refusal of pernicious pleasures. He was told beforehand how the profane and lewd would use all the arts of address, and how subtilly they would practise upon his good humour with powerful and tempting importunities. This set him ever upon his guard, and though he carried his sweetness of temper always about with him, yet he learned to conceal it wheresoever it was neither proper nor safe to appear. By a little converse in the world, he found that it was necessary to be positive, bold, and immoveable in rejecting every proposal which might endanger his character or his morals; especially as he soon became sensible that a soft and cold denial gave courage to new attacks, and left him liable to be teased with fresh solicitations. He laid down this therefore for a constant rule, that where his reason had determined any practice to be either plainly sinful or utterly inexpedient, he would give so firm a denial, upon the principles of virtue and religion, as should for ever discourage any further solicitations. This gave him the character of a man of resolute virtue, even among the rakes of the time; nor was he ever esteemed the less on this ac-

count. At first indeed he thought it a happy victory which he had gained over himself, when he could defy the shame of the world, and resolve to be a Christian in the face of vice and infidelity: He found the shortest way to conquer this foolish shame, was to renounce it at once; then it was easy to practise singularity amidst a profane multitude. And when he began to get courage enough to profess resolute piety without a blush, in the midst of such company as this, Agathus and Eraste then permitted their son to travel abroad, and to see more of the world, under the protection of their daily prayers. His first tour was through the neighbouring counties of England; he afterwards enlarged the circuit of his travels, till he had visited foreign nations and learned the value of his own.

In short, the restraints of his younger years were tempered with so much liberty, and managed with such prudence and tenderness, and these bonds of discipline were so gradually loosened, as fast as he grew wise enough to govern himself, that Eugenio always carried about with him an inward conviction of the great love and wisdom of his parents, and his tutor. The humours of the child now and then felt some reluctance against the pious discipline of his elders; but now he has arrived to manhood, there is nothing he looks back upon with greater satisfaction than the steps of their conduct, and the instances of his own submission. He often recounts these things with pleasure, as some of the chief favours of heaven, whereby he was guarded through all the dangers and follies of youth and childhood, and effectually kept, through divine grace operating by these happy means, from a thousand sorrows, and perhaps from everlasting ruin.

Though he has been released some years from the strictness of paternal government, yet he still makes his parents his chosen friends; and though they cease to practise authority upon him and absolute command, yet he pays the utmost deference to their councils, and to the first notice of their inclinations. You shall never find him resisting and debating against their desires and propensities in little common things of life, which are indifferent in themselves; he thinks it carries in it too much contempt of those whom God and nature require

him to honour. In those instances of practice which they utterly forbid in their family, he bears so tender a regard to their peace, that he will scarcely ever allow himself in them, even when he cannot see sufficient reason to pronounce them unlawful.—Nor does he pay this regard to his parents alone ; but denies himself in some gratifications which he esteems innocent, out of regard to what he accounts the mistaken judgment of some pious persons with whom he converses and worships. They are weak, perhaps, in their austerities ; but St. Paul has taught him that the strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves to the offence of the church of God. This he observed to be the constant practice of Agathus and Eraste ; and he maintains a great regard to the examples of so much piety and goodness, even though his reason does not lead him always to embrace their opinions. Whensoever he enters into any important action of life, he takes a filial pleasure to seek advice from his worthy parents ; and it is uneasy to him to attempt any thing of moment without it. He does not indeed universally practise all their sentiments ; but he gains their consent to follow his own reason and choice.

Some of the wild young gentlemen of the age may happen to laugh at him for being so much a boy still, and for showing such subjection to the old folks, as they call them ; with a scornful smile they bid him “ break off his leading-strings and cast away his yokes of bondage.” But for the most part he observes, that the same persons shake off all yokes at once ; and at once break the bonds of nature, duty, and religion ; they pay but little regard to their superior in heaven, any more than to those on earth ; and have forgot God and their parents together. “ Nor will I ever be moved, says he, with the reproaches of those who make a jest of things sacred as well as civil, and treat their mother and their Maker with the same contempt.”

## SECTION XI.

*Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Restraint in the Education of Daughters, illustrated by Examples.*

**I**T is necessary that youth should be laid under some restraint. When our inclinations are violent, and our judgment weak, it was a wise provision of God our Creator that we should be under the conduct of those who were born before us; and that we should be bound to obey them who have an innate solicitude for our happiness, and are much fitter to judge for our advantage than we ourselves can be in that early part of life.

But it may be said, liberty is so glorious a blessing, that surely it ought not utterly to be taken away from the young, lest their spirits be cramped and enslaved, and the growth of their souls so stunted by a narrow and severe restraint, that they act all their lives like children under age. Or, sometimes a too rigid confinement will have the contrary effect, and make the impatience of youth break out beyond all bounds as soon as ever they get the first relish of freedom.

But O! how exceedingly difficult it is to hit the middle way! How hard for parents to manage their own authority with so much gentleness, and to regulate the liberties of their children with so wise a discipline, as to fall into neither extreme, nor give unhappy occasion for censure! Though I have spoken my opinion freely, that it is safer to err on the side of restraint than of excessive indulgence.

Antigone had an excellent mother, but she died young: Antigone, with her elder sister, from their very infancy were placed under a grandmother's care. The good old gentlewoman trained them up precisely in the forms she herself was educated, when the modes of breeding had, it must be confessed, too much narrowness and austerity. She gave them all the good instructions she had received from her ancestors, and would scarcely ever suffer them to be out of her sight. She saw the eldest well married at five and twenty, and settled in a course of virtue and religion; she found her zeal

and pious care attended with success in several of her posterity, and she departed this life in peace.

But unhappy Antigone took a different turn ; she was let loose into the world with all her possessions and powers in her own hand ; and, falling into vain company, she got such a taste of unbounded liberty and modish vices, that she could never reflect upon the method of her own education without angry remarks or ridicule.

When she came to have children of her own she still retained the resentment which she had conceived at the conduct of her grandmother, and therefore resolved that her daughters should be brought up in the other extreme.

“ In my younger times, said she, we were kept hard to the labour of the needle, and spent six hours a day at it, as though I were to get my bread by my fingers’ ends ; but a little of that business shall serve these children, for their father has left them good fortunes of their own.

“ We were not suffered to read any thing but the Bible and sermon books ; but I shall teach mine politer lessons out of plays and romances, that they may be acquainted with the world betimes.

“ My eldest sister was scarcely ever allowed to speak in company till she was married, and it was a tiresome length of years before that day came. The old proverb ran thus : A maiden must be seen and not heard ; but I hope my little daughters will not be dumb.

“ We were always confined to dwell at home, unless some extraordinary occasion called us abroad, perhaps once in a month, or twice in a summer. We were taught to play the good housewife in the kitchen and the pastery, and were well instructed in the conduct of the broom and the duster : but we knew nothing of the modes of the court and the diversions of the town. I should be ashamed to see these young creatures that are under my care so awkward in company at fourteen as I was at four and twenty.”

And thus Antigone brought up her young family of daughters agreeable to her own loose notions ; for she had formed her sentiments of education merely from the aversion she had conceived to the way of her elders,

and chose the very reverse of their conduct for her rule because their piety and wisdom had a little alloy of rigour and stiffness attending them.

The young things, under their mother's eye, could manage the tea-table at ten years' old, when they could hardly read a chapter in the New Testament. At fourteen they learned the airs of the world; they gad abroad at their pleasure, and will hardly suffer Antigone to direct them, or to go with them; they despise the old woman betimes, for they can visit without her attendance, and prattle abundantly without her prompting.

She led or sent them to the play-house twice or thrice in a week, where a great part of their natural modesty is worn off and forgotten: Modesty, the guard of youthful virtue! they can talk love stories out of Cleopatra; they are well practised already in the arts of scandal; and for want of better furniture of mind, emptiness and impertinence, ribands and fashions, gay gentlemen and wanton songs, ever dwell upon their tongues. They have been taught so little to set a guard upon themselves, that their virtue is much suspected. But (be that as it will) they are seized and married before sixteen, being tempted away to bind themselves for life to a laced coat and fashionable wig. Thus children set up at once to govern a family: but so ignorant in all those concerns, that from the garret to the kitchen the whole house is entirely ruled by the humour of the servants, because the young mistress knows not how to instruct or correct them. There is neither religion nor prudence among them, at home or abroad. Thus they make haste to ruin and misery in this world, without thought or hope of the world to come, and the heaven or the hell that awaits us there.

Antigone sees her own mistake too late: and though she has not so just a sense or horror of their loose and profane life as would become her years, yet is vexed to see herself neglected so soon, and scorned by her own children; but she confesses with a sigh, that she has led them the way by laughing so often at her good old grandmother.

How much wiser is Phronissa in the education that she gives her daughters, who maintains a happy medium between the severity of the last age, and the wild

license of this! She manages her conduct towards them with such an admirable felicity, that though she confines them within the sacred limits of virtue and religion, they have not a wish beyond the liberties which they daily enjoy.

Phronissa, when her daughters were little children, used to spend some hours daily in the nursery, and taught the young creatures to recite many a pretty passage out of the Bible, before they were capable of reading it themselves; yet at six years old they read the scriptures with ease, and then they rejoiced to find the same stories in Genesis and in the Gospels which their mother had taught them before. As their years advanced they were admitted into the best conversation, and had such books put into their hands as might acquaint them with the rules of prudence and piety in an easy and familiar way: the reading the lives of eminent persons, who were examples of this kind, was one of the daily methods she used, at once to instruct and entertain them. By such means, and others which she wisely adapted to their advanced age, they had all the knowledge bestowed upon them that could be supposed proper for women, and that might render their character honourable and useful in the world.

As for plays and romances, they were ever bred up in a just apprehension of the danger and mischief of them: Collier's View of the Stage was early put into their closets, that they might learn there the hideous immorality and profaneness of the English comedies: and by the way, he forbids us to hope from our tragical poets a much safer entertainment. There they might read enough to forbid their attendance on the playhouse; and see the poison exposed without danger of the infection. The servants that waited on them, and the books that were left within their reach, were such as never corrupted their minds with impure words or images.

Long has Phronissa known that domestic virtues are the business and the honour of our sex. Nature and history agree to assure her that the conduct of the household is committed to the women, and the precepts and examples of scripture confirm it. She edu-



cated her daughters therefore in constant acquaintance with all family affairs, and they knew betimes what belonged to the provisions of the table, and the furniture of every room. Though her circumstances were considerable in the world, yet by her own example she made her children know, that a frequent visit to the kitchen was not beneath their state, nor the common menial affairs too mean for their notice, that they might be able hereafter to manage their own house, and not be directed, imposed upon, and perhaps ridiculed, by their own servants.

They were initiated early in the science of the needle, and were bred up skilful in all the plain and the flowery arts of it; but it was never made a task nor a toil to them; nor did they waste their hours in those nice and tedious works which cost our female ancestors seven years of their life, and stitches without number. To render this exercise pleasant, one of them always entertained the company with some useful author, while the rest were at work; every one had freedom and encouragement to start what question she pleased, and to make any remarks on the present subject; that reading, working, and conversation, might fill up the hour with variety and delight. Thus while their hands were making garments for themselves or for the poor, their minds were enriched with treasures of human and divine knowledge.

At proper seasons the young ladies were instructed in the gayer accomplishments of their age; but they were taught to esteem the song and the dance some of their meanest talents, because they are often forgotten in advanced years, and add but little to the virtue, the honour, or the happiness of life.

Phronissa herself was sprightly and active, and she abhorred a slothful and lazy humour; therefore she constantly found out some inviting and agreeable employment for her daughters, that they might hate idleness as a mischievous vice, and be trained up to an active and useful life. Yet she perpetually insinuated the superior delights of the closet, and tempted them by all divine methods to the love of devout retirement. Whensoever she seemed to distinguish them by any peculiar favours, it was generally upon some new indi-

cation of early piety, or some young practice of a self-denying virtue.

They were taught to receive visits in forms agreeable to the age; and though they knew the modes of dress sufficiently to secure them from any thing awkward or unfashionable, yet their minds were so well furnished with richer variety, that they had no need to run to those poor and trivial topics, to exclude silence and dulness from the drawing-room. They would not give such an affront to the understandings of the ladies their visitants, as to treat them with such meanness and impertinence: therefore all this sort of conversation, was reserved almost entirely, for the minutes appointed to the milliner and the tire-woman.

Here I must publish it to their honour, to provoke the sex to imitation, that though they comported with the fashion in all their ornaments, so far as the fashion was modest and could approve itself to reason or religion, yet Phronissa would not suffer their younger judgments to be so far imposed on by custom, as that the mode should be entirely the measure of all decency to them. She knew there was such a thing as natural harmony and agreeableness: in the beauties of colour and figure, her delicacy of taste was exquisite: and where the mode run counter to nature, though she indulged her daughters to follow it in some innocent instances, because she loved not to be remarkably singular in things of indifference, yet she took care always to teach them to distinguish gay folly and extravagance from natural decencies, both in furniture and in dress: Their rank in the world was eminent; but they never appeared the first, nor the highest in any new-fangled forms of attire. By her wise examples and instructions she had formed their minds, as to be able to see garments more gaudy, or even more modish than their own, without envy or wishes. They could bear to find a trimming set a little awry, or the plait of a garment ill-disposed, without making the whole house and the day uneasy, and the sun and heavens smile upon them in vain.

Phronissa taught them the happy art of managing a visit with some useful improvement of the hour, and without offence. If a word of scandal occurred in

company, it was soon diverted or suppressed. The children were charged to speak well of their neighbours, as far as truth would admit, and to be silent as to any thing further: but when the poor or the deformed were mentioned in discourse, the aged, the lame, or the blind, those objects were handled with the utmost tenderness: nothing could displease Phronissa more than to hear a jest thrown upon natural infirmities: she thought there was something sacred in misery, and it was not to be touched with a rude hand. All reproach and satire of this kind was for ever banished where she came; and if ever raillery was indulged, vice and wilful folly were the constant subjects of it.

Persons of distinguished characters she always distinguished in her respect, and trained up her family to pay the same civilities.—Whensoever she named her own parents, it was with high veneration and love; and thereby she naturally led her children to give due honour to all their superior relatives.

Though it be the fashion of the age to laugh at the priesthood in all forms, and to teach every boy to scoff at a minister, Phronissa paid double honours to them who laboured in the word and doctrine, where there personal behaviour upheld the dignity of their office; for she was persuaded St. Paul was a better director than the gay gentlemen of the mode. 1 Tim. v. 17. Besides, she wisely considered, that a contempt of their persons would necessarily bring with it a contempt of all their ministrations; and then she might carry her daughters to church as much as she pleased, but preaching and praying, and all sacred things, would grow despicable and useless when they had first learned to make a jest of the preacher.

But are these young ladies always confined at home? Are they never suffered to see the world? Yes, and sometimes without the guard of a mother too; though Phronissa is so well beloved by her children that they would very seldom choose to go without her. Their souls are inlaid betimes with the principles of virtue and prudence; these are their constant guard; nor do they ever wish to make a visit where their mother has reason to suspect their safety.

They have freedom given them in all the common

affairs of life to choose for themselves ; but they take pleasure, for the most part, in referring the choice back again to their elders. Phronissa has managed the restraint of their younger years with so much reason and love, that they have seemed all their lives to know nothing but liberty ; and admonition of their parents meets with cheerful compliance, and is never debated.

A wish or desire has the same power over them now, as a command had in their infancy and childhood ; for the command was ever dressed in the softest language of authority, and this made every act of obedience a delight, till it became an habitual pleasure.

In short, they have been educated with such discretion, tenderness, and piety, as have laid a foundation to make them happy and useful in the rising age ; their parents with pleasure view the growing prospect, and return daily thanks to Almighty God, whose blessing has attended their watchful cares, and has thus far answered their most fervent devotions.

**REMNANTS OF TIME,**

**EMPLOYED IN**

**PROSE AND VERSE:**

**OR,**

**SHORT ESSAYS AND COMPOSURES,**

**ON**

**VARIOUS SUBJECTS.**



## ADVERTISEMENT.



*Dr. Watts's Opinion about publishing these Papers, appears in the following Advertisement, prefixed to them by himself.*

THESE papers were written at several seasons and intervals of leisure, and on various occasions, arising through the greatest part of my life. Many of them were designed to be published among the *Reliquæ Juveniles*; but, for some reason or other, not worth present notice, were laid by at that time. Whether I shall ever publish them I know not, though far the greatest part of them have long stood corrected among my manuscripts; nor do I suppose many of them inferior to those Essays and remarks of this kind, which have before appeared in the world with some acceptance. If they are not published in my life-time, my worthy friends, who have the care of my papers, may leave out what they please.

July 3, 1740.

I. W.





# REMNANTS OF TIME,

EMPLOYED IN

PROSE AND VERSE, &c.

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## *I. Justice and Grace.*

**N**EVER was there any hour since the creation of all things, nor ever will be until the last conflagration, wherein the holy God so remarkably displayed his justice and his grace, as that hour which saw our Lord Jesus Christ hanging upon the cross, forsaken of his Father and expiring. What a dreadful glory was given to vindictive justice when the great and terrible God made the soul of his own Son a painful sacrifice for sin! What an amazing instance of grace, that he should redeem such worthless sinners as we are from the vengeance, by exposing his beloved Son to it! When I view the severity or the compassion of that hour, my thoughts are lost in astonishment: it is not for me, it is not for Paul or Apollos, it is not for the tongue of men or angels, to say which was greatest, the compassion or the severity. Humble adoration becomes us best, and a thankful acceptance of the pardon that was purchased at so dear a rate.

Next to this, I know not a more eminent display of terror and mercy, than the dying hour of a pious but desponding Christian, under the tumultuous and disquieting temptations of the devil.

See within those curtains a person of faith and serious piety, but of a melancholy constitution, and expecting death. While his flesh is tortured with sharp agonies, and terribly convulsed, a ghastly horror sits on

his countenance, and he groans under extreme anguish. Behold the man, a favourite of heaven, a child of light, assaulted with the darts of hell, and his soul surrounded with thick darkness : all his sins stand in dreadful array before him, and threaten him with the execution of all the curses in the Bible. Though he loves God with all his heart, he is in the dark, he knows it not, nor can he believe that God has any love for him ; and though he cannot utterly let go his hold of his Saviour and the gospel, yet in his own apprehension he is abandoned both of the Father and the Son. In every new pang that he feels, his own fears persuade him, that the gates of hell are now opening upon him, he hangs hovering over the burning pit, and at the last gasp of life, when he seems to be sinking into eternal death, he quits the body with all its sad circumstances, and feels himself safe in the arms of his Saviour, and in the presence of his God.

What amazing transport ! What agreeable surprise ! not to be uttered by the words of our scanty mortal language, nor conceived but by the person who feels it. The body indeed which was the habitation of so pious a spirit, is demolished at once : behold the lifeless carcase ; it makes haste to putrefaction.—The released soul, in ecstasy, feels and surveys its own happiness, appears before the throne, is acknowledged there as one of the sons of God, and invested with the glories of the upper world. Sorrows and sins, guilt, fetters and darkness vanish for ever : It exults in liberty and light, and dwells for ever under the smiles of God.

What was it could provoke the wise and gracious God to permit the wicked spirit to vex one of his own children at this rate, and to deal so severely with the man whom he loves ? To expose that soul to exquisite anguish in the flesh which he designed the same day to make a partner with blessed spirits ! To express in one hour so much terror and so much mercy ?

St. Paul will give a short and plain answer to this inquiry. Rom. viii. 10 : "*The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.* Hence that anguish, those agonies and convulsions in the sinful flesh that must die, and these will be felt in some measure by the partner spirit ; though that spirit being

vested with divine righteousness, or justified in the sight of God, shall survive these agonies in a peaceful immortality. Though the sufferings of the son of God have redeemed it from an everlasting hell, yet it becomes the offended majesty of heaven sometimes to give sensible instances what misery the pardoned sinner has deserved; and the moment, he receives him into full blessedness may, on some accounts, be the fittest to make a display of all his terror, that the soul may have the full taste of felicity, and pay the highest honours to recovering grace. The demolition of the earthly tabernacle with all the pangs and the groans that attend it, are a shadow of that vengeance which was due even to the best of saints; it is fit we should see the picture of vindictive justice before we are taken into the arms of eternal mercy.

Besides, there may be another reason that renders the dying hour of this man more dreadful too: Perhaps he had walked unwatchfully before God, and had given too much indulgence to some congenial iniquity, some vice that easily beset him; now it becomes the great God to write his own hatred of sin in deep and piercing characters, sometimes on his own children, that he may let the world know that he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity any where without resentment. The man had "built much hay and stubble upon the divine foundation of Christ Jesus, and it was proper that he should be saved so as by fire:" 1 Cor. iii. 15.

Will the Papist therefore attempt to support the structure of his purgatory upon such a text as this? An useless structure, and a vain attempt! That place was erected by the superstitious fancy of men, to purge out the sins of a dead man by his own sufferings, and to make him fit for heaven in times hereafter; as though the atoning blood of Christ were not sufficient for complete pardon, or the sanctifying work of the Spirit were imperfect even after death. Whereas the design of God in some such instances of terror is chiefly to give now and then an example to survivors in this life, how highly he is displeased with sin, and to discourage his own people from an indulgence of the works of the flesh. Now this end could not be attained by all the pains of their pretended purgatory, even though it

were a real place of torment, because it is so invisible and unknown.

But whatsoever sorrows the dying Christian sustains in the wise administration of Providence, it is by no means to make compensation to God for sin; the atoning work of Christ is complete still, and the sanctifying work of the Spirit perfect as soon as the soul is dismissed from earth; therefore it has an entrance into full blessedness, such as becomes a God infinite in mercy to bestow on a penitent sinner, presented before the throne in the name and righteousness of his own Son. "*We are complete in him:*" Col. ii. 10. By him made perfectly acceptable to God at our death, we are filled with all grace, and introduced into complete glory.

## II. *Death of a Young Son. In a Letter to a Friend.*

**MADAM**, it has been the delight and practice of the pious in all ages to talk in the words of scripture, and in the language of their God; the images of that book are bright and beautiful; and where they happily correspond with any present providence, there is a certain divine pleasure in the parallel. The Jews have ever used it as a fashionable style, and it has always been the custom of Christians in the most religious times till iniquity and profaneness called it cant and fanaticism. The Evangelists and the Apostles have justified the practice: those later inspired authors have often indulged it, even where the Prophet, or first writer of the text, had quite another subject in view; and though an allusion to the words of scripture will by no means stand in the place of a proper exposition, yet it carries something divine and effecting in it; and by this means it may shine in a sermon or a familiar epistle, and makes a pleasing similitude. Accept then a few hints of consolation from a part of scripture, which, by an easy turn of thought, may be applied to your case.

Rev. xii. 1. "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet; v. 2. Being with child, travailed in birth; v. 5. And she brought forth a man-child, and it was caught up to God and his throne; v. 6. And the woman had a place prepared of God in the wilderness; v. 14. To be nourished for a time and

times ; v. 9. But the great dragon that was cast out of heaven, the old serpent called the devil and Satan, v. 13. Persecuted the woman ; v. 15. And cast out of his mouth water as a flood. v. 17. And went to make war with the remnant of her seed."

Thus far the words of scripture.—

Now, Madam, if you have put on Christ, and are clothed by faith with the Sun of Righteousness ; if you are drest in the shining graces of heaven, and have the pale and changing glories of this world under your feet ; then you may be assured that the child you have brought forth is not lost, but is caught up to God and his throne by virtue of that extensive covenant which includes sincere Christians and their offspring together. Mourn not therefore for your son, who is with God, but rather for yourself, who are yet in the wilderness of this world, where the old serpent has so much power ; where he will persecute you with the flood of his temptations, if possible to carry you away with them : But I trust God has prepared a place for your safety, even his church, his gospel, and his own everlasting arms.

Yet shall the serpent make war with the remnant of your seed ; your little daughter that remains in the wilderness must go through this war, and be exposed to these temptations. O turn your tears for your son into pity and prayer for yourself and your daughter, that ye may never be carried away by these floods ; but when the times are past which God has appointed for your abode and nourishment in the wilderness, you may rejoice to find yourself with all your offspring in everlasting safety before the throne of God. Amen.

So prays your affectionate, &c.

May 2, 1719.

I. W.

### III. *Heathen Poesy Christianized.* 1736.

**I**T is a piece of ancient and sacred history which Moses informs us of, that when the tribes of Israel departed from the land of Egypt, they borrowed of their neighbours gold and jewels, by the appointment of God, for the decoration of their sacrifices and solemn worship, when they should arrive at the appointed place in the

wilderness. God himself taught his people how the richest of metals which had ever been abused to the worship of idols, might be purified by the fire, and being melted up into a new form, might be consecrated to the service of the living God, and add to the magnificence and grandeur of his tabernacle and temple. Such are some of the poetical writings of the ancient Heathens ; they have a great deal of native beauty and lustre in them ; and through some happy turn given them by the pen of a Christian poet, may be transformed into divine meditations, and may assist the devout and pious soul in several parts of the Christian life and worship.

Amongst all the rest of the Pagan writers I know none so fit for this service as the Odes of Horace, as vile a sinner as he was. Their manner of composure comes nearer the spirit and force of the Psalms of David than any other ; and as we take the devotions of the Jewish King, and bring them into our Christian churches, by changing the scene and the chronology, and superadding some of the glories of the gospel, so may the representation of some of the heathen virtues, by a little more labour, be changed into Christian graces, or at least into the image of them, so far as human power can reach. One day musing on this subject, I made an experiment on the two last stanzas of Ode 29, Book III.

*Non meum est, si mugiat Africis  
Malus procellis, ad miseræ preces  
Decurere, et votis pacisci,  
Ne Cypriæ Tyriæque merces  
Addant avaro divitias mari.  
Tunc me biremis præsidio scaphæ,  
Tutum per Ægeos tumultus  
Aura feret, geminusque Pollux.*

#### IV.....*The British Fisherman.*

##### I.

Let Spain's proud traders when the mast  
Bends groaning to the stormy blast,  
Run to their beads with wretched plaints,  
And vow and bargain with their saints,  
Lest Turkish silks or Tyran wares  
Sink in the drowning ship ;

Or the rich dust Peru prepares  
 Defraud their long projection cares,  
 And add new treasures to the greedy deep.

## II.

My little skiff that skims the shores,  
 With half a sail and two short oars,  
 Provides me food in gentler waves :  
 But if they gape in watery graves,  
 I trust the eternal power, whose hand  
     Has swell'd the storm so high,  
     'To waft my boat and me to land,  
     Or give some angel swift command  
 To bear the drowning sailor to the sky.

V. *Redemption.*

## I.

THE mighty frame of glorious grace,  
 That brightest monument of praise  
 That e're the God of love design'd,  
 Employs and fills my labouring mind.

## II.

Begin, my muse, the heav'nly song,  
 A burden for an angel's tongue :  
 When Gabriel sounds these awful things,  
 He tunes and summons all his strings.

## III.

Proclaim inimitable love :  
 Jesus, the Lord of worlds above,  
 Puts off the beams of bright array,  
 And veils the God in mortal clay.

## IV.

What black reproach defil'd his name,  
 When with our sin he took our shame !  
 The power whom kneeling angels blest,  
 Is made the impious rabble's jest.

## V.

He that distributes crowns and thrones,  
 Hangs on a tree, and bleeds and groans :

The Prince of life resigns his breath.  
The king of glory bows to death.

## VI.

But see the wonders of his pow'r,  
He triumphs in his dying hour ;  
And whilst by Satan's rage he fell,  
He dash'd the rising hopes of hell.

## VII.

Thus were the hosts of death subdu'd,  
And sin was drown'd in Jesus' blood ;  
Then he arose, and reigns above,  
And conquers sinners by his love.

If I could pursue all the wondrous achievements of a dying and a rising Saviour in verse, as fast and as far as my thoughts sometimes attempt to trace them, I should lengthen this Ode to many stanzas. and yet at last I should lose both my thoughts and my verse amongst the unknown wonders of his glory, and the ages of eternity.

Who shall fulfil this boundless song ?  
What vain pretender dares ?  
The theme surmounts an angel's tongue,  
And Gabriel's harp despairs.\*

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VI.—*Complaint and Hope under great Pain.* 1736.

## I.

LORD, I am pain'd ; but I resign  
To thy superior will :  
'Tis grace, 'tis wisdom all divine  
Appoints the pains I feel.

## II.

Dark are thy ways of providence,  
Whilst those that love thee groan :

\* In this Ode there are three or four lines taken from Mr. Stennet's Sacramental Hymns ; for when I found they expressed my thought and design in proper and beautiful language, I chose rather to borrow and acknowledge the debt, than to labour hard for worse lines, that I might have the poor pleasure of calling them my own.



Thy reasons lie conceal'd from sense,  
Mysterious and unknown.

## III.

Yet nature may have leave to speak,  
And plead before her God,  
Lest the o'erburden'd heart should break  
Beneath thy heavy rod.

## IV.

Will nothing but such daily pain  
Secure my soul from hell?  
Canst thou not make my health attain  
Thy kind designs as well?

## V.

How shall my tongue proclaim thy grace  
While thus at home confin'd?  
What can I write, while painful flesh  
Hangs heavy on the mind?

## VI.

These groans, and sighs, and flowing tears,  
Give my poor spirit ease,  
While every groan my father hears,  
And ev'ry tear he sees.

## VII.

Is not some smiling hour at hand,  
With peace upon its wings?  
Give it, O God! thy swift command,  
With all the joys it brings.



VII.—*On an Elegy written by the Right Honourable the Countess of Hertford, on the Death of Mrs. Rowe. 1737.*

STRUCK with the sight of Philomela's urn,  
Eusebia weeps, and calls her muse to mourn;  
While from her lips the tuneful sorrows fell,  
The groves confess a rising Philomel.

VIII.—*Dr. Young's admirable Description of the Peacock, enlarged.*

VIEW next the Peacock : What bright glories run  
 From plume to plume, and vary in the sun ?  
 Proudly he boasts, then to the heavenly ray,  
 Gives all his colours, and adorns the day.  
 Was it thy pencil, Job, divinely bold,  
 Drest his rich form in azure, green, and gold ?  
 Thy hand his crest with starry radiance crown'd,  
 Or spread his sweepy train ? His train disdains the ground, }  
 And kindles living lamps through all the spacious round. }  
 Mark with what conscious state the bird displays  
 His native gems, and 'midst the waving blaze  
 On the slow step of majesty he moves,  
 Asserts his honours, and demands his loves.

IX. *Vanity inscribed on all Things.*

**T**IME, like a long flowing stream, makes haste into eternity and is for ever lost and swallowed up there ; and, while it is hastening to its period, it sweeps away all things with it which are not immortal. There is a limit appointed by Providence to the duration of all the pleasant and desirable scenes of life, to all the works of the hands of men, with all the glories and excellencies of animal nature, and all that is made of flesh and blood. Let us not doat upon any thing here below, for heaven hath inscribed vanity upon it. The moment is hastening when the decree of heaven shall be uttered, and Providence shall pronounce upon every glory of the earth, "*Its time shall be no longer.*"

What is that stately building, that princely palace, which now entertains and amuses our sight with ranks of marble columns, and wide spreading arches, that gay edifice which enriches our imagination with a thousand royal ornaments, and a profusion of costly and glittering furniture ? Time and all its circling hours, with a swift wing are brushing away ; decay steals upon it insensibly, and a few years hence it shall lie in mouldering ruin and desolation. Unhappy possessor, if he have no better inheritance !

What are those fine and elegant gardens, those delightful walks, those gentle ascents and soft declining hopes, which raise and sink the eye by turns to a thousand vegetable pleasures? How lovely are those sweet borders, and those growing varieties of bloom and fruit, which recal lost paradise to mind! Those lovely parterres which regale the sense with vital fragrancy, and make glad the sight by their refreshing verdure and intermingled flowery beauties! The scythe of time is passing over them all; they wither, they die away, they drop and vanish into dust; their duration is short; a few months deface all their yearly glories, and within a few years, perhaps all these rising terras walks, these gentle verging declivities, shall lose all order and elegance, and become a rugged heap of ruins; those well distinguished borders and parterres shall be levelled in confusion, and thrown into common earth again, for the ox and the ass to graze upon. Unhappy man, who possesses this agreeable spot of ground, if he have no paradise more durable than this!

And no wonder that these labours of the hands of men should perish, when even the works of God are perishable!

What are these visible heavens, those lower skies, and this globe of the earth? They are indeed the glorious workmanship of the Almighty. But they are waxing old, and waiting their period too, when the angel shall pronounce upon them that time shall be no more. The heavens shall be folded up as a vesture, the elements of the lower world shall melt with a fervent heat, and the earth, and all the works thereof, shall be burnt with fire. May the unruinable world be but my portion, and the heaven of heavens my inheritance, which is built for an eternal mansion for the sons of God: These buildings shall outlive time and nature, and exist through unknown ages of felicity!

What have we mortals to be proud of in our present state, when every human glory is so fugitive and fading? Let the brightest and the best of us say to ourselves, that we are but dust and vanity.

Is my body formed upon a graceful model? Are my limbs well turned, and my complexion better coloured than my neighbour's? Beauty even in perfection, is of

the shortest date : A few years will inform me that its bloom vanishes, its flower withers, its lustre grows dim, its duration shall be no longer ; and, if life be prolonged, yet the pride and glory of it is for ever lost in age and wrinkles ; or perhaps our vanity meets a speedier fate. Death and the grave, with a sovereign and irresistible command, summon the brightest as well as the coarsest pieces of human nature, to lie down early in their cold embraces ; and at last they must all mix together, amongst worms and corruption.

Æsop the deformed, and Helena the fair, are lost and undistinguished in common earth. Nature, in its gayest bloom, is but a painted vanity.

Are my nerves well strung and vigorous ? Is my activity and strength far superior to my neighbour's in the days of youth ? But youth hath its appointed limit ; age steals upon it, unstrings the nerves, and makes the force of nature languish into infirmity and feebleness. Sampson and Goliath would have lost their boasted advantages of stature and their brawny limbs, in the course of half a century, though the one had escaped the sling of David, and the other the vengeance of his own hands in the ruin of Dagon's temple. Man, in his best estate, is a flying shadow, and vanity.

Even those nobler powers of human life, which seem to have something angelical in them, I mean the powers of wit and fancy, gay imagination, and capacious memory, they are all subject to the same laws of decay and death. What though they can raise and animate beautiful scenes in a moment, and, in imitation of creating power, can spread bright appearances and new worlds before the senses and the souls of their friends ? What though they can entertain the better part of mankind, the refined and polite world, with high delight and rapture ? These scenes of rapturous delight grow flat and old by a frequent review, and the very powers that raised them grow feeble apace. What though they can raise immortal applause and fame to their possessors ? It is but the immortality of an empty name, a mere succession of the breath of men, and it is a short sort of immortality too, which must die and perish when this world perishes. A poor shadow of duration indeed, while the real period of these powers is hastening

every day; they languish and die as fast as animal nature, which has a large share in them, makes haste to its decay; and the time of their exercise shall shortly be no more.

In vain the aged poet or the painter would call up the muse and genius of their youth, and summon all the arts of their imagination, to spread and dress out some visionary scene; in vain the elegant orator would recal the bold and masterly figures, and all those flowery images which give ardour, grace, and dignity to his younger composures, and charmed every ear; they are gone, they are fled beyond the reach of the owner's call; their time is past, they are vanished and lost beyond all hope of recovery.

The God of nature has pronounced an impassable period upon all the powers, and pleasures, and glories of this mortal state. Let us then be afraid to make any of them our boast or our happiness, but point our affections to those diviner objects, whose nature is everlasting; let us seek those religious attainments, and those new created powers of a sanctified mind, concerning which it shall never be pronounced, that their time shall be no longer.

O may every one of us be humbly content at the call of heaven, to part with all that is pleasing or magnificent here on earth; let us resign even these agreeable talents when the God of nature demands; and when the hour arrives that shall close our eyes to all visible things, and lay our fleshly structure in the dust, let us yield up our whole selves to the hands of our Creator, who shall reserve our spirits with himself; and while we cheerfully give up all that was mortal to the grave, we may lie down full of the joyful hope of a rising immortality. New and unknown powers and glories, brighter flames of imagination, richer scenes of wit and fancy, and diviner talents are preparing for us when we shall awake from the dust, and the mind itself, shall have its faculties in a sublime state of improvement. These shall make us equal, if not superior to angels, for we are nearer akin to the Son of God than they are, and therefore we shall be made more like him.

X. *The rake reformed in the House of Mourning.*

**F**LORINO was young and idle ; he gave himself up to all the diversions of the town, and roved wild among the pleasures of sense ; nor did he confine himself within the limits of virtue, or withhold his heart from any forbidden joy. Often hath he been heard to ridicule marriage, and affirm that no man can mourn heartily for a dead wife ; for then he hath leave by the law to choose a new companion, to riot in all the gayer scenes of a new courtship, and perhaps to advance his fortune too.

When he heard of the death of Serena, “ Well, said he, “ I will go visit my friend Lucius, and rally him a little on this occasion.” He went the next day, in all the wantonness of his heart, to fulfil his design, inhuman and barbarous as it was, and to sport with solemn sorrow. But when Lucius appeared, the man of gaiety was strangely surprised ; he saw such a sincere and inimitable distress sitting on his countenance, and discovering itself in every air and action, that he dropt his cruel purpose, his soul began to melt, and he assumed the comforter.

Florino’s methods of consolation were all drawn from two topics : some from fate and necessity, advising an heroic indolence about unavoidable events, which are past and cannot be reversed ; and some were derived from the various amusements of life which call the soul abroad, and divide and scatter the thoughts, and suffer not the mind to attend to its inward anguish. “ Come, Lucius,” said he, “ come, smooth your brows a little, and brighten up for an hour or two. Come along with me to a concert this evening, where you shall hear some of the best pieces of music that were ever composed, and performed by some of the best hands that ever touched an instrument. To-morrow I will wait on you to the play, or if you please to the new opera, where the scenes are so surprising and gay, they would almost tempt an old hermit from his beloved cell, and call back his years to three-and-twenty. Come, my friend, what have the living to do with the dead ? Do but forget your grievances a little, and they will die too ; come, shake off the spleen, divert your heart with

the entertainments of wit and melody, and call away your fancy from these gloomy and useless contemplations." Thus he ran on in his own way of talking, and opened to his mourning friend the best springs of comfort that he was acquainted with.

Lucius endured this prattle as long as he was able to endure it, but it had no manner of influence to staunch the bleeding wound, or to abate his smarting sorrows. His pain waxed more intense by such sort of applications, and the grief soon grew too unruly to contain itself.

Lucius then asked leave to retire a little: Florino followed him softly at a distance to the door of his closet, where indeed he observed not any of the rules of civility or just decency, but placed himself near enough to listen how the passion took its vent; and there he heard the distressed Lucius mourning over Serena's death in such language as this:

What did Florino talk about? Necessity and Fate? Alas! this is my misery, that so painful an event cannot be reversed, that the divine will has made it fate, there is a necessity of my enduring it.

Plays, and music, and operas! What poor trifles are these to give ease to a wounded heart! To a heart that has lost its choicest half! A heart that lies bleeding in deep anguish under such a keen parting stroke, and the long, long absence of my Serena! She is gone.—The desire of mine eyes and the delight of my soul is gone.—The first of earthly comforts, and the best of mortal blessings.—She is gone, and she has taken with her all that was pleasant, all that could brighten the gloomy hours of life, that could soften the cares, and relieve the burdens of it.—She is gone, and the best portion and joy of my life is departed. Will she never return, never come back and bless my eyes again? No—never, never!—She will no more come back to visit this wretched world, and to dry these weeping eyes. That best portion of my life, that dearest blessing is gone, and will return no more. Sorrows in long succession await me while I live; all my future days are marked out for grief and darkness! Let the man who feels no inward pain at the loss of such a partner, dress his dwelling in black shades and dismal formalities: Let

him draw the curtains of darkness around him, and teach his chambers a fashionable mourning; but real anguish of heart needs none of these modish and dissembled sorrows. My soul is hung round with dark images in all her apartments, and every scene is sincere lamentation and death.

I thought once I had some pretences to the courage of a man: but this is a season of untried distress:—I now shudder at a thought, I start at shadows, my spirits are sunk, and horror has taken hold of me. I feel passions in me that were unknown before; love has its own proper grief and its peculiar anguish. Mourning love has those agonies and those sinkings of spirit which are known only to bereaved and virtuous lovers.

I stalk about like a ghost, in musing silence, till the gathering sorrow grows too big for the heart, and bursts out into weak and unmanly wailings. Strange and overwhelming stroke indeed! It has melted all the man within me down to softness; my nature is gone back to childhood again; I would maintain the dignity of my age and my sex, but these eyes rebel and betray me; the eyelids are full, they overflow;—the drops of love and grief trickle down my cheeks, and plough the furrows of age there before their time.

How often in a day are those sluices opened afresh! The sight of every friend that knew her calls up my weakness, and betrays my frailty. I am quite ashamed of myself. What shall I do? Is there nothing of manhood left about my heart? I will resist the passion, I will struggle with nature, I will grow indolent and forbid my tears. Alas! poor feeble wretch that I am! In vain I struggle; in vain I resist: The assumed indolence vanishes; the real passion works within; it swells and bears down all before it: the torrent rises and prevails hourly, and nature will have its way. Even the Son of God, when he became man, was found weeping at the tomb of a darling friend. Lazarus died; and Jesus wept!

O my soul, what shall I do to relieve this heart-ache! How shall I cure this painful sensibility? Is there no opiate will reach it? Whither shall I go to leave my sorrows behind me? I wander from one room to an-



other, and wherever I go I still seem to seek her, but I miss her still. My imagination flatters me with her lovely image, and tempts me to doubt, is she dead indeed? My fond imagination would fain forget her death-bed, and impose upon my hope that I shall find her somewhere. I visit her apartment, I steal into her closet: In days past (when I have missed her in the parlour, how often have I found the dear creature in that beloved corner of the house, that sweet place of divine retirement and converse with heaven! But even that closet is empty now. I go thither, and I retire in disappointment and confusion.

Methinks I should meet her in some of her walks, in some of her family cares, or her innocent amusements: I should see her face, methinks I should hear her voice, and exchange a tender word or two.—— Ah, foolish roving of a distressed or disquieted fancy! Every room is empty and silent; closet, parlours, chambers, all empty, all silent; and that very silence and emptiness proclaim my sorrows: Even emptiness and deep silence join to confess the painful loss.

Shall I try then to put her quite out of my thoughts, since she will come no more within the reach of my senses? Shall I loosen the fair picture, and drop it from my heart, since the fairer original is for ever gone? Go, then, fair picture, go from my bosom, and appear to my soul no more. Hard word! but it must be done: Go, depart thou dearest form; thou most lovely of images, go from my heart; thy presence is now too painful in that tender part of me. O unhappy word! Thy presence painful! A dismal change indeed! When thou wert wont to arise and show thyself there, graces and joys were wont to arise and show themselves; graces and joys went always with her; nor did her image ever appear without them, till that dark and bitter day that spread the vail of death over her: But her image, drest in that gloomy vail, hath lost all the attendant joys and graces. Let her picture vanish from my soul then, since it has lost those endearing attendants; let it vanish away into forgetfulness, for death has robbed it of every grace and every joy.

Yet stay a little there, tempting image, let me once more survey thee; stay a little moment, and let me

take one last glance, one solemn farewell. Is there not something in the resemblance of her too lovely still to have it quite banished from my heart? Can I set my soul at work to try to forget her? Can I deal so unkindly with one who would never have forgotten me? Can my soul live without her image on it? Is it not stamped there too deep ever to be effaced?

Methinks I feel all my heartstrings wrapt around her, and grow so fast to that dear picture in my fancy, they seem to be rooted there. To be divided from it is to die. Why should I then pursue so vain and fruitless an attempt? What! forget myself, forget my life! No; it cannot be; nor can I bear to think of such a rude and cruel treatment of an image so much deserving and so much beloved.—Neither passion nor reason permits me to forget her, nor is it within my power. She is present to almost all my thoughts; she is with me in all my motions: grief has arrows with her name upon them that stick as fast and as deep as those of love; they cleave to my vitals wheresoever I go, but with a quicker sensation and a keener pain. Alas! it is love and grief together that have shot all their arrows into my heart, and filled every vein with acute anguish and long distress.

Whither then shall I fly to find solace and ease? I cannot depart from myself; I cannot abandon these tender and smarting sensations. Shall I quit the house and all the apartments of it which renew her dear memory? Shall I rove in these open fields which lie near my dwelling, and spread wide their pleasing verdure? Shall I give my soul a loose to all nature that smiles around me, or shall I confine my daily walk to this shady and delightful garden? Oh, no: neither of these will relieve my anguish. Serena has too often blessed me with her company, both in this garden, and in these fields. Her very name seems written on every tree: I shall think of her, and fancy I see her in every step I take. Here she pressed the grass with her feet; here she gathered violets and roses and refreshing herbs, and gave the lovely collection of sweetness into my hand. But, alas! the sweetest violet and the fairest rose is fallen, is withered, and is no more. Farewell then, ye fields and gardens, with

all your varieties of green and flowery joys ! Ye are all a desert, a barren wilderness, since Serena has for ever left you, and will be seen there no more.

But can friends do nothing to comfort a mourner ? Come, my wise friends, surround me, and divert my cares with your agreeable conversation. Can books afford no relief ? Come, my books, ye volumes of knowledge, ye labours of the learned dead ; come, fill up my hours with some soothing amusement. I call my better friends about me. I fly to the heroes and the philosophers of ancient ages, to employ my soul among them. But, alas ! neither learning nor books amuse me, nor green and smiling prospects of nature delight me, nor conversation with my wisest and best friends can entertain me in these dark and melancholy hours. Solitude, solitude, in some unseen corner, some lonely grotto overgrown with shades ; this is my dearest choice ! Let me dwell in my beloved solitude, where none shall come near me ; midnight and solitude are the most pleasing things to a man who is weary of day-light, and of all the scenes of this visible and busy world. I would eat and drink and dwell alone ; though this lonesome humour soothes and gratifies the painful passion, and gives me up to the tyranny of my sharpest sorrows. Strange mixture that I am made of ! I mourn and grieve even to death, and yet I seem fond of nothing but grief and mourning.

Who is me ! Is there nothing on earth can divert, nothing relieve me ? Then let my thoughts ascend to paradise and heaven, there I shall find her better part ; and grief must not enter there. From this hour take a new turn, O my soul, and never think of Serena but as shining and rejoicing among the spirits of the blest, and in the presence of her God. Rise often in holy meditation to the celestial world, and betake thyself to more intense piety. Devotion has wings that will bear thee high above the tumults and passions of lower life : devotion will direct and speed thy flight to a country of brighter scenes.

Shake off this earthliness of mind, this dust of mortality that hangs about thee ; rise upward often in an hour, and dwell much in those regions whither thy devout partner is gone : thy better half is safely arrived

there, and that world knows nothing but joy and love.

She is gone; the prophets and the apostles and the best of departed souls have marked out her way to heaven: bear witness, ye apostles and holy prophets, ye best of departed souls, bear witness, that I am seeking to follow her in the appointed moment. Let the wheels of nature and time roll on apace in their destined way. Let suns and moons arise and set apace, and light a lonesome traveller onward to his home. Blessed Jesus, be thou my living leader: Virtue and the track of Serena's feet be my daily and delightful path. The track leads upward to the regions of love and joy. How can I dare to wander from the path of virtue, lest I lose that beloved track! Remember, O my soul, her footsteps are found in no other road!

If my love to virtue should ever fail me, the steps of my Serena would mark out my way, and help to secure me from wandering. O may the kind influences of heaven descend from above, and establish and guard my pious resolutions? May the divine powers of religion be my continual strength, and the hope of eternal things my never-failing support, till I be dismissed from this prison of the flesh, and called to ascend to the spirits of the just made perfect; till I bid adieu to all that is not immortal, and go to dwell with my God and my adored Saviour: There shall I find my lost Serena again, and share with her the unutterable joys of paradise.

Here Lucius threw himself on the couch, and lay silent in profound meditation.

When Florino had heard all this mournful rhapsody he retired and stole away in secret, for he was now utterly ashamed of his first barbarous design: he felt a sort of strange sympathy of sorrow, such as he never knew before; and with it some sparks of virtue began to kindle in his bosom. As he mused, the fire burnt within, and at last it made its way to his lips, and vented itself: "Well (said he) I have learnt two excellent lessons to-day, and I hope I shall never forget them. There must be some vast and unknown pleasure in a virtuous love, beyond all the madness of wild and transient amours; otherwise, the loss of the object could never have wrought such deep and unfeigned wo in

a soul so firm and manly as that of Lucius. I begin now to believe what Milton sung;—though I always read the lines before as mere poesy and fable.

“Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source  
Of human offspring, sole propriety  
In paradise, of all things common else :  
By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men,  
Among the bestial herds to range ; by thee,  
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,  
Relations dear, and all the charities  
Of father, son, and brother, first were known :  
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets.  
Here love his golden shafts employs, here lights  
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,  
Reigns here and revels ; not in the bought smile  
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,  
Casual amours, mixt dance, or wanton mask,  
Or midnight ball, &c.

“Blessed poet ! that could so happily unite love and virtue, and draw so beautiful a scene of real felicity, which till this day I always thought was merely romantic and visionary ! Lucius has taught me to understand these lines, for he has felt them ; and methinks while I repeat them now, I feel a strange new sensation. I am convinced the blind poet saw deeper into nature and truth than I could have imagined. There is, there is such a thing as a union of virtuous souls, where happiness is only found. I find some glimmerings of sacred light rising upon me, some unknown pantings within after such a partner and such a life.

“Nor is the other lesson which I have learnt at all inferior to this ; but in truth it is of higher and more durable importance. I confess, since I was nineteen years old, I never thought virtue and religion had been good for any thing, but to tie up children from mischief, and frighten fools : but now I find, by the conduct of my friend Lucius, that as the sweetest and sincerest joys of life are derived from virtue, so the most distressing sorrows may find a just relief in religion and sincere piety. Hear me, thou almighty Maker of my frame, pity and assist a returning wanderer : and O may thy

hand stamp these lessons upon my soul in everlasting characters!"

XI. *Thou hast received Gifts for Men.* Psa. lxxviii. 18.

**JESUS** the Mediator emptied himself for our sakes, when he descended to earth in order to die for us, and by his death to subdue our enemies. Now the Father has filled him again at his ascent into heaven with every glory and every blessing, with all authority and power to bestow blessings, graces, and glories on the sons of men. "It pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell. All power in heaven and earth was given into his hands." Col. i. 19. Matt. xxviii. 18. And when he received the power he distributed the blessings. See Acts ii. 33. Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. He hath shed abroad miracles and graces in abundance amongst the inhabitants of the lower world.

The triumphs of majesty must have some mercy in them, and ensigns of victory must be interwoven with signal displays of bounty and grace. When he led captivity captive, he received gifts for men. Our conquering Redeemer was not so elevated with the pomp of his triumphs over the angels, his captive enemies, as to forget the captives that he released among the children of Adam. He received many donatives from his Father on high, to shower down among them upon his coronation day, that illustrious day, when "He that in righteousness had made war and conquered, received on his own head many crowns." Rev. xix. 11, 12.

He that could take so much pleasure on earth in his labours of love, takes more delight in heaven in the distributions of grace. This is the sweetest part of his triumph, and the most visible among men, even the gifts of the Spirit, that he sent down after his ascension. It was necessary that his grace should have some share of the glory of that day.

What was said of the great day of deliverance, when the Jews obtained victory over their designed murderers, may be applied with honour to the day when our

Lord ascended to heaven, and celebrated his triumph over the spirits of darkness. "This was a good day for Israel, for all the saints; a day when Jesus rested from his enemies, and a month which was turned unto him from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a day of gladness. This was a day of receiving portions for his brethren, and of sending gifts to the poor." Esther ix. 22.

Jesus our King is the Prince of power, and the Prince of peace; he solemnized his victory with acts of mercy, and begun his reign with gifts of grace. He led Satan the arch traitor bound at his chariot wheels, and scattered donatives of pardon and life among the sons of Adam that had been seduced into the great rebellion.

It is another pleasant meditation on this text, "That God the Father had not given away all his gifts to men, even when he gave them his only begotten Son;" for since that time he hath given his Son more gifts to be distributed among them. Learn hence the unwearied love of God, the inexhausted stores of divine mercy. John iv. 10. Christ is called the gift of God. And 2 Cor. ix. 15. The unspeakable gift. He gave his own Son out of his bosom, and gave him up to death for us. His Son that was nearest his heart, his Son the delight of his soul and darling of his eternal enjoyment; and yet he is not weary of giving. O the immeasurable treasures of grace! O the unlimited bounties of our God! Stand amazed, O heavens, and let the earth lie low in thankfulness and wonder, and every holy soul adore this surprising love!

Our meditations may take another step, and see here the divine condescension to human weakness: how a giving God stoops to the capacity of receiving creatures, and betows the richest blessings on us in a sweet and alluring manner of conveyance. When he gave his Son to us, he first arrayed him in flesh and blood, that the glories of the Deity might not affright us, nor his terror make us afraid. When he proceeds to confer on us further gifts, he puts them into the hands of his Son, dwelling in our nature, that we might have easy access to him without fear, and receive gifts from him as a delightful medium, by whom a God of infinite purity hath a mind to confer favours on sinful man.

He has put all grace into those hands whence we ourselves would choose to fetch it. If a God of shining holiness and burning justice should appear like himself and call to us guilty wretches, and hold forth his hand, here are gifts, here are pardons, here are salvations for you, we should be ready to say with Job xiii. 21. "Withdraw thine hand far from me, and let not thy dread make me afraid." But here we sinners come to a man, to one that has worn our flesh and blood, that is our brother, and of our own composition; we come with courage to him that looks like one of us, to receive the gifts of a holy God, and the terrors of his holiness sink us not, nor doth the fire of his justice devour us. O my soul, bow down and worship that God who stoops so low to thee, and has found such a mild and gentle method of conferring his heavenly favours on thee!

## XII. *The Gift of the Spirit.*

**WHAT** is dearer to God the Father, than his only Son? And what diviner blessing has he to bestow upon men than his holy Spirit? Yet has he given his Son for us, and by the hands of his Son he confers his blessed Spirit on us. "Jesus having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, shed it forth on men." Acts ii. 33.

How the wonderful doctrine of the blessed Trinity shines through the whole of our religion, and sheds a glory upon every part of it! Here is God the Father, a king of infinite riches and glory has constituted his beloved Son the high treasurer of heaven, and the holy Spirit is the divine and inestimable treasure. What amazing doctrines of sacred love are written in our Bibles! What mysteries of mercy, what miracles of glory are these! Our boldest desires and most raised hopes, durst never aim at such blessings; there is nothing in all nature that can lead us to a thought of such grace.

The Spirit was given by the Father to the Son for men; for rebellious and sinful men, to make favourites and saints of them: this was the noble gift the Son received when he ascended on high," Psa. lxxviii. 18. And he distributed it to grace his triumph.



Was it not a divine honour which Jesus our Lord displayed on that day, when the tongues of fire sat on his twelve apostles? When he sent his ambassadors to every nation to address them in their own language, to notify his accession to the throne of heaven, and to demand subjection to his government? When he conferred power upon his envoys to reverse the laws of nature and imitate creation? To give eyes to the blind, and to raise the dead? All this was done by the Spirit which he sent down upon them in the days of Pentecost.

But is this Spirit given to none but his apostles and the prime ministers in his kingdom? Was that rich treasure exhausted in the first ages of the gospel, and none left for us? God forbid! Every one of his subjects has the same favour bestowed upon them, though not in the same degree: every humble and holy soul in our day, every true Christian is possessed of his Spirit, for "he that has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his." Rom. viii. 9. And wherever this Spirit is, it works miracles too: it changes the sinner to a saint, it opens his blind eyes; it new creates his nature; it raises the dead to a divine life, and teaches Egypt and Assyria and the British isles to speak the language of Canaan. It is this gift of the Spirit which the Son sends down to us continually from the Father, that is the original and spring of all these strange blessings.

The Father has a heart of large bounty to the poor ruined race of Adam; the Son has a hand fit to be almoner to the king of glory; and the Spirit is the rich alms. This blessed donative has enriched ten thousand souls already, and there remains enough to enrich ten thousand worlds.

The Father, what a glorious giver! the Son, what a glorious medium of communication! and the Spirit, what a glorious gift! We blush and adore while we partake of such immense favours; and gratitude is even overwhelmed with wonder.

O let our spirits rejoice in this blessed article of our religion! And may all the temptations that we meet with from men of reason, never, never baffle so sweet a faith!

XIII. *The Day of Grace.*

**I**F you ask the opinion of some divines concerning the day of grace, they will tell you, it signifies that particular season of a man's life, when the Spirit of God by convictions and good motions stirs him up to seek after salvation, and gives him sufficient grace to convert him; and all this while it was possible for him to be saved, and it was within the reach of his power to make this grace effectual: But this is determined to a certain though unknown day, which if a man passes without being converted, then his salvation becomes impossible. Now, though I would not choose to borrow all my sentiments in the chief doctrines of the gospel from the sermons of a bishop, published on the terms of salvation, yet against this scheme I may venture to use an argument taken from that book.

Let us suppose, that it was declared in the gospel, that there was a certain number of sins, or a certain period of time, beyond which God would not pardon; and not any particular number, or time, was specified to the world: yet still most men (it is too justly to be feared) would first be led to hope to commit many sins with a flattering persuasion, that they should not come to that number, or arrive at that period: and then, when the habit was become strong, they would be fixed by despair in this opinion, that being probably got past that number of sins, and that period of grace, they had even as good continue in their sins, as their inclination powerfully directs them: they would go on in great wickedness and say, there is no hope. And thus we see, that even his supposition which seems to take most care of the cause of holiness, leaves it not only in a naked and unguarded, but in a very desperate condition.

Concerning a day of grace thus much may be said, and this is all that I can understand by it, viz. That in the life of a man, there are particular seasons when he enjoys more of the outward means of grace, or advantages for the good of his soul, than at other times; that is, more constant opportunities of hearing the word, a

more useful and affecting ministry, better company, warmer admonitions, and plainer warnings by divine providence; more leisure and conveniences for reading, meditation, and prayer; or, if all this continue all his life-time, yet there are seasons when the Spirit of God, by his common operations, does more powerfully convince of sin, and stir up the conscience to duty, and impress his word with more force upon the heart: but being opposed and resisted he is grieved and departs, his workings grow daily fewer and feebler, or it may be he retires at once and leaves the soul in a stupid frame, and returns no more.

Yet we could not say heretofore that the Spirit of God, in his former operations, gave him a full and proximate sufficiency of inward converting grace before, since it proved so insufficient in the event, and ineffectual: nor can we say now that his day of grace is quite past and gone; because the Spirit of God, who is sovereign in mercy, may return again.

Yet it is a very good motive to urge upon delaying sinners, that it is a daring and dangerous piece of impiety and rebellion to quench the motions of the Holy Spirit; lest he depart grieved, and never return again; lest he never give them so fair an opportunity for conversation, never bring them so near again to the kingdom of heaven.

#### XIV. *God and Nature unsearchable.*

**H**OW poor and imperfect a creature is man! How unequal his knowledge of things! How large and almost immensely diffusive his acquaintance with some parts of nature, but how exceedingly limited and narrow in others!—The man of learning who has the highest temptations to pride, has also the most powerful motives to humility.

Man can measure the heavens, tell how many miles the planet Venus is distant from Jupiter, and how far the earth from the sun. He has found out with certainty the periods of their revolutions, and the hour of their eclipses: he can adjust the affairs of the planetary world to a moment, their vast variety of appearances, with all their prodigious circuits. But this great

artist man is puzzled at a worm or a fly, a grain of sand or a drop of water ; there is not the least atom in the whole creation, but has questions about it unsearchable to human nature ; no, nor the least part of empty space, but sets all the wisest philosophers at variance, when they attempt to tell what it is, or whether it be any thing or nothing.

This sort of talk, my neighbours will say, is a flourish of wit to teach us to undervalue our reason, a mere rant of rhetoric, an hyperbole of reproach to our understanding ; but while I leave it to astronomers to confirm what I have said concerning the vast extent of their acquaintance with the heavens, I shall make it appear even to demonstration, that our knowledge of the things on earth, is as mean as I have expressed, in the literal and proper sense.

There is not the least grain of sand on the shore, nor the least atom in the whole creation, but has questions about it unsearchable by human nature.

This atom may be divided into millions of millions of pieces, and after all this the least part of it will be infinitely divisible. The infinite divisibility of matter is so often proved and so universally granted by all modern philosophers, that I need not stand to prove it here ; yet that my unlearned readers may see and believe, I will set down a plain vulgar demonstration or two of this matter.

I. It is certain, that if matter be not infinitely divisible, then there is, or may be so small a part of matter which cannot be divided further ; now take this supposed smallest part, this fancied atom, and put it between the points of a pair of compasses, made of stiff and inflexible matter, it is evident that the legs of the compasses in less and less degrees will be divided asunder, quite to the centre ; and from the points to the centre there is room for still less and less pieces of matter to be put between the legs. Therefore that very supposed atom may be conceived to be divided still further into less parts, and consequently it was not indivisible.

II. If there be any indivisible part of matter, the shape of it must be spherical, or a perfect globe, wherein every part of the surface is equally distant from the

centre ; for if you suppose it of any other shape, then some parts of it will be farther from its centre than other parts ; and all these longer parts may be shortened or pared off till every part be equally short, or equally distant from the centre ; that is till it be reduced to a globe. Now, from the centre of this globe to the surface, the parts of it are but half so long as from any part of the surface to its opposite part ; and therefore this globe may be still divided into two hemispheres or semicircles, which are not the smallest parts of matter that can be, because they are not of a spherical figure, as in the beginning of the argument.

And then, by a repetition of the same reasoning, those little semicircles or half globes, by paring off the parts which are farthest from their centre, may be reduced to smaller globes again, and those smaller globes again divided in halves as before ; there is no end of these divisions, and therefore matter is infinitely divisible.

To carry on this argument yet further, to the surprise of my unlearned readers ; let us take notice, that all matter has three dimensions in it, namely, length, breadth, and depth ; now every part of matter, every grain of sand, is infinitely divisible as to each of these dimensions ; that is, every part which results from an infinite division of the length of it, may be yet again infinitely divided according to its breadth ; thus the division of this grain of sand becomes infinitely infinite. And yet still it may be further infinitely divided, according to the depth or thickness of it ; thus the divisibility of matter swells beyond all imagination, and is more than infinitely infinite, and that with resistless evidence and astonishment to the eye of reason.

Go, now, vain man, and find fault with any part of the creation of God, and play the foolish critic on his works of providence ; go and censure the justice of his conduct toward Adam or any of his children, or blame the wisdom of his institutions in the dispensations of his grace ; monstrous arrogance, and proud impiety ! Rather go first and learn what an atom is, or the meanest part of the dust of this vast creation which God has made. It has something of infinity in it ; it confounds thee in perplexing darkness, and reaches far beyond all the little stretch of thy boasted

powers of reasoning. Be dumb in silence, O vain creature ! at the foot of this infinite and eternal Being, nor pretend to measure his steps, to censure his motions, and direct his conduct till thou art better able to give an account of the dust which he has put under the feet of the meanest of his slaves.

### XV. *The Diamond painted.*

**H**OW wide and unhappy a mistake it is, when Christians endeavour to adorn their pure divine worship by the mixture of it with ceremonies of human invention. The symbolical ordinances of the gospel have a noble simplicity in them ; their materials are water, bread, and wine, three of the most necessary and valuable things in human life : and their mystic sense is plain, natural and easy. By water we are cleansed when we have been defiled ; so by the grace of the Holy Spirit we are purified from sin, which pollutes our souls in the sight of God. By bread we are fed when we are hungry and nourished into strength for service ; by wine we are refreshed and revived when thirsty and fainting ; so from the body of Christ, which was broken as an atoning sacrifice, and his blood which was poured out for us, we derive our spiritual life and strength. The application of these symbols is most simple and natural also ; we are commanded to wash with the water, to eat the bread, and to drink the wine ; most proper representations of our participation of these benefits.

Thus much of figures and emblems did the alwise God think proper to appoint and continue in his church, when he brake the yoke of Jewish bondage, and abolished a multitude of rites and ceremonies of his own ancient appointment. How plain, how natural, how glorious, how divine, are these two Christian institutions, baptism and the Lord's supper, if surveyed and practised in their original simplicity ! but they are debased by the addition of any fantastic ornaments.

What think ye of all the gaudy trappings and golden snery that is mingled with the Christian worship, by

the imaginations of men in the church of Rome? Are they not like so many spots and blemishes cast upon a fair jewel by some foolish painter? Let the colours be ever so sprightly and glowing, and the lustre of the paint ever so rich, yet if you place them on a diamond they are spots and blemishes still. Is not this a just emblem to represent all the gay airs, and rich, glittering accoutrements wherewith the church of Rome hath surrounded her devotion, and her public religion?

The reformers of our worship in the church of England were much of this mind, for they boldly pass this censure on many of the popish ceremonies, that they entered into the church by indiscreet devotion, and zeal without knowledge: they blinded the people and obscured the glory of God, and are worthy to be cut away and clean rejected: that they did more confound and darken than declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us, and reduced us again to a ceremonial law, like that of Moses, and to the bondage of figures and shadows: this is their sentence and judgment concerning many of the Romish rites, in the preface to the book of common prayer. Happy had it been for Great-Britain, if they had thought so concerning all of them, since they had all the same or a worse original, and they all tend to the same unhappy end! However, let others take their liberty of colouring all their jewels with what greens, and purples, and scarlets they please; but for my own part, I like a diamond best that has no paint upon it.

#### XVI. *Bills of Exchange.* 1705.

**W**HEN a rich merchant, who dwells in a foreign land afar off, commits his treasure to the hands of a banker, it is to be drawn out into smaller sums by his servants or his friends here at home, as their necessities shall require; and he furnishes them with bills of exchange drawn upon his banker or treasurer, which are paid honourably to the person who offers the bill, according

to the time when the words of the bill appoint the payment.

Is it not possible to draw a beautiful allegory hence, to represent the conduct of the blessed God, in his promises of grace, without debasing so divine a subject?

God the Father, the spring and fountain of all grace; dwells in regions of light and holiness inaccessible, too far off for us to converse with him, or receive supplies from him in an immediate way: but he has sent the Son to dwell in human nature, and constituted him treasurer of all his blessings, that we might derive perpetual supplies from his hand: he has entrusted him with all the riches of grace and glory: he has laid up infinite stores of love, wisdom, strength, pardon, peace, and consolation, in the hands of his Son for this very purpose, to be drawn out thence as fast as the necessities of his saints require. *“It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. He has received gifts for men.”* Col. i. 19. Psal. lxxviii. 18.

Now all the promises in the Bible are so many bills of exchange drawn by God the Father in heaven, upon his Son Jesus Christ, and payable to every pious bearer; that is, to every one that comes to the mercy seat, and offers the promise for acceptance; and pleads it in a way of obedient faith and prayer. Jesus, the high treasurer of heaven, knows every letter of his Father's hand writing, and can never be imposed upon by a forged note; he will ever put due honour upon his Father's bills; he accepts them all, for *“all the promises in him are yea, and in him amen. In him they are all sure, to the glory of the Father.”* 2 Cor. i. 20. It is for the Father's honour that his bills never fail of acceptance and payment.

If you apply to the blessed Jesus, and offer him a bill of the largest sum, a promise of the biggest blessings, he will never say, *“I have not so much of my Father's treasure in my hand.”* For he hath received all things. John iii. 35. *“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”* And may I not venture to say, this whole treasure is made over to the saints? *“All things are yours.”* 1 Cor. iii. 22. And they are parcelled out into bills of promise, and notes under the Father's hand. So the whole treasure of a nation



sometimes consists in credit and in promissory notes more than in present sums of gold and silver.

Some of these divine bills are payable at sight, and we receive the sum as soon as we offer the bill : (viz.) Those that must supply our present wants ; such as, “ *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me :*” Psa. l. 15. and there have been many examples of such speedy payment. Psa. cviii. 3. “ *In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*”

Some are only payable in general at a distant time, and that is left to the discretion of Christ, the treasurer, namely, “ *As the day is, so thy strength shall be.*” Deut. xxxiii. 25. And we need never fear trusting him long ; for this bank, in the hands of Christ, can never fail ; “ *for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*” Col. ii. 9. And Eph. iii. 8, we are told of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Sometimes Christ may put us off with a general kind answer, or give us a note under his hand payable at demand in several parcels, instead of a full payment all at once : thus he dealt with his dear friend and servant Paul, in 2 Cor. xii. 9. Doubtless, Paul, in his seeking the Lord thrice, for the removal of his thorn in the flesh, had pleaded several large promises of God, had offered those divine bills to Christ for acceptance and payment ; but, instead of this, our Lord gives him a note under his own hand, which ran in this language, “ *My grace is sufficient for thee.*” And if we had but the faith which that blessed apostle had, we might live upon this hope : this would be as good as present payment ; for, if he delay to give the full sum, it is only because he sees we have not need of it at present : he knows our necessities better than we do ourselves ; he will not trust us with too much at once in our own hands ; but he pays us those bills when he sees the fittest, and we have often found it so, and confessed his faithfulness.

At other times he pays us, but not in the same kind of mercy which is mentioned in the promise, yet in something more useful and valuable. If the promise mention a temporal blessing, he may give us a spiritual one : if it express ease, he may give us patience : and thus his Father's bills are always honoured, and we

have no reason to complain. So the banker may discharge a bill of an hundred pounds, not with money, but with such goods and merchandise as may yield us two hundred, and we gladly confess the bill is well paid.

Some of these promises, these bills of heavenly treasure, are not made payable till the hour of our death; as, "*Blessed are those servants whom when the Lord comes he shall find watching, &c.*" Luke xii. 37. "*He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved.*" Matt. xxiv. 13. "*Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" Rev. ii. 10.

Others are not due till the day of resurrection, as, "*Them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*" 1 Thess. iv. 14. "*I will redeem them from death.*" Hos. xiii. 14. Col. iii. 4. "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*" Phil. iii. 21. "*He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.*" 1 Pet. v. 4. "*And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*"

Now, when the great day shall come, in which our Lord Jesus Christ shall give up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, and render an account of all his stewardship, how fair will his books appear! how just a balance will stand at the foot of all his accounts! Then shall he show in what manner he has fulfilled the promises to the saints, and present to the Father all the bills that he has received and discharged; while all the saints shall with one voice attest it, to the honour of the high Treasurer of heaven, that he has not failed in payment, even to the smallest farthing.

#### XVII. *The Saints unknown in this World.*

**OUT** of the millions of mankind that spread over the earth in every age, the great God has been pleased to take some into his own family, has given them a heavenly and divine nature, and made them his sons and his daughters. But he has set no outward mark of glory upon them; there is nothing in their figure or in

their countenance to distinguish them from the rabble of mankind. And it is fit that they should be in some measure unknown among their fellow mortals: their character and dignity is too sacred and sublime to be made public here on earth, where the circumstances that attend them are generally so mean and despicable. Divine wisdom has appointed the other world for the place of their discovery; there they shall appear like themselves, in state, equipage, and array, becoming the children of God, and heirs of heaven.

Their blessed Lord himself, who is God's first born Son, was a mere stranger, and unknown among men; he laid aside the rays of divinity and the form of a God when he came down to dwell with men, and he took upon him the form of a servant. He wore no divine majesty on his face; no sparks of Godhead beaming from his eyes; no glaring evidence of his high dignity in all his outward appearance. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. But he shall be known and adored when he comes in the glory of his Father, with legions of angels; and we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him. The life of the saints is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they also shall appear with him in glory. 1 John iii. 1, 2; Col. iii. 3, 4. In that day they shall stand forth before the whole creation in fair evidence; they shall shine in distinguished light, and appear vested in their own undoubted honours. But here it seems proper there should be something of a cloud upon them, both upon the account of the men of this world, and upon their own account too, as well as in conformity to Christ Jesus their Lord.

First, upon their own account, because the present state of a Christian is a state of trial. We are not to walk by sight, as the saints above and angels do; they know they are possessed of life and blessedness, for they see God himself near them, Christ in the midst of them, and glory all around them. Our work is to live by faith; and therefore God has not made either his love to us or his grace in us so obvious and apparent to ourselves as that every Christian, even the weak and the unwatchful, should be fully assured of this salvation. He has not appointed the principle of life within us to

sparkle in so divine a manner as to be always self-evident to the best of Christians; much less to the lukewarm and the backslider. It is fit that it should not be too sensibly manifest, because it is so sensibly imperfect, that we might examine ourselves whether we are in the faith, and prove ourselves whether Christ, as a principle of life, dwell in us or no. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.—While so many snares, and sins, and dangers, attend us, and mingle with our spiritual life, there will be something of darkness ready to rise and obscure it, that so we may maintain a holy jealousy and solicitude about our own state, that we may search with diligence to find whether we have a divine life or no, and be called and urged often to look inwards.

This degree of remaining darkness and the doubtful state of a slothful Christian, is sometimes of great use to spur him onward in his race of holiness, and quicken him to aspire after the highest measures of the spiritual life; that when its acts are more vigorous it may shine with the brightest evidence, and give the soul of the believer full satisfaction and joy. It serves also to awaken the drowsy Christian to keep a holy watch over his heart and practice, lest sin and temptation make a foul inroad upon his divine life, spread still a thicker cloud over his best hopes, and break the peace of his conscience. Though the principle of grace be not always self-evident, yet we are required to give diligence to make and to keep it sure. 2 Pet. i. 10. And as it was proper that every little seed of grace should not shine with self-sufficient and constant evidence, on the account of the Christian himself; so, secondly, it was fit that their state and dignity should not be too obvious to the men of the world, that they might neither adore nor destroy the saints. A principle of superstition might tempt some weaker souls to pay extravagant honours to the Christian, if he carried heaven in his face, and it were visible in his countenance that he was a son of God. On the other hand the malicious and perverse part of mankind might imitate the rage of Satan, and attempt the sooner to destroy the saint.

This was the case of the blessed Paul. When he had wrought a miracle at Lystra, and appeared with something divine about him, when he had healed the

cripple by a mere word of command, the people cried out with exalted voices, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men:" immediately they made a Mercury of St. Paul, they turned Barnabas into Jupiter, and the priests brought oxen and garlands to the gates to have done sacrifice to them: this was the humour of the superstitious Gentiles. But in several of the Jews, their malice and envy wrought a very different effect; for they persuaded the people into fury, so that they stoned the blessed apostle, and drew him out of the city for dead. Acts xiv.

Thus it fared with our Lord Jesus Christ himself in the days of his flesh: for the most part he lived unknown among men; he did not cry nor make his voice to be heard in the streets; but when he discovered himself to them on any special occasion, the people ran into different extremes. Once, when the characters of the Messiah appeared with evidence upon him, they would have raised him to a throne, and made an earthly king of him. John vi. 15. At another time, when his holy conduct did not suit their humour, they were "*filled with wrath, and led him to the brow of a hill to cast him down headlong.*" Luke iv. 29. Therefore our blessed Lord did not walk through the streets and tell the world he was the Messiah; but by degrees he let the characters of his mission appear upon him, and discovered himself in wisdom, as his disciples and the world could bear it, and as his Father had appointed.

Let us imitate our blessed Lord, and copy after so divine a pattern; let our works bear a bright and growing witness to our inward and real christianity. This is such a gentle sort of evidence, that, though it may work conviction in the hearts of spectators, yet it does not strike the sense with so glaring a light as to dazzle the weaker sort who behold it into superstitious folly: nor does it give such provocation to the envy of the malicious, as if the saints had borne the sign of their high dignity in some more surprising manner in their figure or countenance.

I might add also, there is something in this sort of evidence of their saintship that carries more true honour in it, than if some heavenly name had been written

in their forehead, or their skin had shone like the face of Moses, when he came down from the mount. It is a more sublime glory for a prince to be found among the vulgar in undistinguished raiment, and by his superior conduct and shining virtues to force the world to confess that he is the son of a king, than to walk through the rabble with ensigns of royalty, and demand honour from them by the mere blaze of his ornaments.

XVIII. *Praise waiteth for Thee, O God in Zion.*  
Psalm lxxv. 1.

**AND** does praise wait for God in the congregation of his saints! Surely it doth not use to be so. Mercy uses to be beforehand with us, and the Lord waiteth to be gracious. Mercy is wont to be ready in the hands of God before praise is ready on the tongues of men; and we are sure he waited on us to show his grace long before we had any songs ready for him, or any thought of praising him.

Yet sometimes it is so in this lower world; holy souls may be waiting at the throne of grace with their praises ready to ascend as soon as mercy appears: mercy may be silent for a season, and then praise for a season is silent too. This is the original language of the psalm, and this the state of things when the psalmist wrote; "*Praise is silent for thee in Zion.*" When the church of God under trouble has been long seeking any particular blessing or deliverance, and God's appointed hour of salvation is not yet come, then the songs of the church are silent; yet she stands watching and waiting for the desired moment, that she may meet the salvation with praise.

But why should God suffer praise to be silent at all in Zion? Is not the church the habitation of his praises? Yes; but it is the house of prayer too: prayer and patience must have their proper exercise. If praise were never silent on earth, where would there

be any room for prayer to speak? when would there be any season for the grace of patience to show itself? God loves prayer as well as praise: his sovereignty is honoured by humble waiting, as well as his goodness by holy gratitude and joy. If praise be silent, then let prayer be more fervent. The absent Saviour loves to hear the voice of his beloved; the lips of the church must never be quite silent, though they are not always employed in hallelujahs.

¶ Praise is the sweetest part of divine worship; it is a short heaven here on earth. God lets our praises be silent sometimes, to teach us that this is not a state of complete blessedness. After the great day of decision, praise shall be continual and unceasing, when there shall be no more sighing for the saints, no more death, no more pain. Then churches shall want ordinances no more; nor saints abstain from the bread of life. Jesus, their everlasting pastor, shall feed them in pastures ever green, and from the tree of life, and lead them to the fountains of joy, and the streams where eternal pleasures run. O may our souls wait with joyful hope for that day, and our praises shall not be silent.

◁ Yet it is not with the church as it is with the world, when praise is silent in both. It is ever silent among the wicked; because they are forgetful of God, their maker: it is only silent among the saints for a season, when their God seems to frown and hide himself, and as it were to forget his people.

Besides, let us consider that all praise is not silent there. Daily incense arises before God in his temple, though particular thank offerings wait till particular mercies are received. Praise for all the greatest mercies, namely, for redeeming grace, for electing love, for the sanctifying spirit, is never silent in Zion. Psalm lxxxiv. 4. "*Blessed are they that dwell in thine house; they will be still praising thee.*" But praise for some special favours may be silent for a season, as well as that large revenue of praise that shall grow due at the accomplishment of all the promises and the consummation of blessedness.

Again, the praises of God are silent in the world without any design of breaking forth ; but the silence of the church longs to be lost in joyful songs of thanksgiving. It is like an engine charged with praise, that wants only the warm touch of mercy to make it shine with the glories of heavenly worship, and sound aloud the name of the God of heaven.

Sometimes God is as well pleased that praise should wait with humble silence, as that it should speak. It shows a well disposed frame and temper of soul that longs to honour God. The hearts of his saints are instruments of music to the Lord ; he has formed their souls for his glory, and turned their heartstrings to his own praise. Now he loves to see them keep still in tune, though he does not always play his own praises upon them ; he neither wants our services nor our songs, for his own perfections are an everlasting harmony to himself, without the slender notes that we can sound.

We may make this sweet remark at last, that Zion on earth shall be joined to Jerusalem above ; the family below shall be joined to the upper house, for they have learned the work of heaven ; their hearts are tuned to praise : they want only such harps as angels have to bring glory down, and make a heaven on this earth. In 1 Chron. xi. 4, we are told that David took Zion from the Jebusites, and built it round about, and added it to Jerusalem. So shall Jesus, the true David, the king of saints, take this earthly Zion from the powers of this wicked world, and shall build and adorn it around with glory and strength, with perfect beauty and complete grace, and add it to the Jerusalem which is above. Look upward, O souls, who are full of praises, and are even impatient to speak the glories of your God ! look to Jerusalem above, where praise is constant and never ceasing, and rejoice to think that you shall be made inhabitants of that city, and united to the glorious church. It is your chief pleasure here to be praising your God ; and it is the chief pleasure of your fellow saints on high, where happiness is perfect, praise is perfect too, and never silent.



It is the chief delight of happy souls there to run over the glories of their God, and tell one another joyfully, and humbly tell their God, what a wise, what a holy, what an almighty and all-gracious God he is. Every breath of praise is a new gale of pleasure there; it is sweet breathing, in air perfumed with praises; and this climate is most agreeable to your new nature and your constitution, you that are members and parts of Zion; and you shall be translated thither to your kindred souls. In heaven the river of pleasure springs from God's right hand, because Jesus, the Saviour, sits there. It is a river that makes glad the city of God; and every stream, as it flows along the golden streets, murmurs sweet praises to the fountain.

But heaven and the state of glory are not yet complete: the church waits above for many promises that are not yet fulfilled, and future blessings that are yet unknown. The work of grace is not finished till the great resurrection-day; and heaven itself, in all the blissful regions of it, waits for such praises as the ear of men or angels has never yet heard.

While the whole church of God on earth is in a state of imperfection and trial, a state of sins and sorrows, praise waits in all the sanctuaries below, and in Zion above too. The souls in glory wait for complete salvation, and the redemption of their bodies from the grave. On the harps of angels praise sits waiting; and it waits also on the tongue of Jesus, the intercessor. His prayers shall one day change all at once into praises, and lift the praises of angels, and of embodied saints, to higher notes than ever yet they knew. O the voices and the songs, the joys, the raptures of that moment, of that day, of that eternity, when such a multitude of praises shall burst out at once, that have been waiting long in that Zion, and shall become an everlasting praise! when Jesus, the Son of God, the Mediator, shall lead the worship, and the praises that have been growing these seventeen hundred years on his tongue shall break forth and spread themselves abroad, and all the creation shall hear, and all echo to his song, Glory to God in the highest! This is what we wait and hope for, and long to bear a part in those pleasures and those praises.

XIX. Job xxiii. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him.*

**AMONG** all the various kinds and orders of God's intellectual creation, there is not one that uses this language besides a mourning saint in this lower world. As for all other spirits, whether dwelling in flesh or not, their wishes are expressed in a very different manner, nor do they seek and long to find an absent God.

If we ascend up to heaven, and inquire there what are the wishes of those blessed spirits, we shall find that their enjoyments are so glorious, and their satisfactions rise so high in the immediate presence of God among them, that they have nothing of this nature left to wish for: they know that their God is with them; and all their wish is, what they are assured to enjoy, that this God will be with them for ever.

If we descend to the regions of hell, where God reigns in vengeance, we shall hear those unhappy spirits groaning out many a fruitless wish. "O that I knew where I might avoid him, that I might get out of his sight, out of his notice and reach for ever! I feel his dreadful presence; and O that it were possible for me to be utterly absent from him, and to find a place where God is not!"

If we take the wings of the morning, and fly to the utmost part of the eastern or the western world, we shall find the language of those ignorant heathens, "O that I knew where I might find food, and plenty, and all sensual delights!" but they send not a wish after the great God, though he has been so many ages absent from them and their fathers. He is unknown to them, and they have no desires working in them after an unknown God.

If we tarry at home and survey the bulk of mankind around us, the voice of their wishes sounds much the same as that of the heathen world, "O that I knew where I might find trade and merchandize, riches and honours, corn, wine, and oil, the necessaries or the superfluous luxuries of life!" but God is not in all their

thoughts. If they frequent the temples, and attend the seasons of worship : they are well enough satisfied with outward forms, without the sight of God in them. There is no natural man that with a sincere longing of soul cries out, " O that I knew where to find him !"

As for the children of God, that live in the light of their Father's countenance, they walk with him daily and hourly ; they behold him near them by the eye of faith, and they feel the sweet influences of his gracious presence ; their highest ambition and their dearest wishes are, " O, that he might abide for ever with me, and keep me for ever near to himself !"

The words of this scripture, therefore, can only be the language of a saint on earth in distress and darkness, when God, who was wont to visit him with divine communications, and to meet him in his addresses to the throne of grace, has withdrawn himself for a season, and left the soul to grapple with many difficulties alone.

This was the case of that holy man whose sorrows and complaints have furnished out almost a whole book of scripture, and supplied the saints in all succeeding ages with the forms and speeches of pious mourning. It is the voice of a sacred impatience that Job here utters, " O that I knew where I might find him !" and by a plain paraphrase we may learn both the meaning and the reason of such language, and be taught, by his example, to lament after an absent God.

Let us suppose the saint, therefore, pouring out his soul in such sort of expressions as these ; in which I shall not entirely confine myself to the darkness of the patriarchal dispensation under which Job lived, but indulge the language of the New Testament, and personate a mourning Christian.

Time was when I had a God near me, and upon every new distress and difficulty I made him my present refuge ; I was wont to call upon him in an hour of darkness, and he shone upon my path with divine light. He has often taught me to read my duty in his providences, or in his word, or by some secret hints of his own Spirit, even while I have been kneeling at the throne of grace ; but now I find not my usual signs

and tokens. My Guide and my Counsellor is withdrawn; "O that I knew where I might find him!"

He was once my kind assistant in every duty, and my support under every burden: I have found the grace of my Lord sufficient for me in my sharpest conflicts; his strength has appeared in my weakness. When my spiritual enemies have beset me round, he has scattered them before me, or subdued them under me; and being held up by his everlasting arms, I have stood my ground, and borne up my head under the weight of heavy sorrows: but am now attacked on all sides; my soul wrestles hard with sins and temptations, and I find no assistance, no victory; I sink under my present sorrows; for my God, my strength, and my comforter, is absent and afar off; "O that I knew where I might find him!"

My God was wont to deal with me as a compassionate friend; when Satan has accused, he has justified. He has shown me the all-sufficient sacrifice of his Son; and that spotless righteousness of his, which has answered all the demands of his own holy law, and cancelled all the charges of guilt that the devil or my own conscience could bring against me. He has taught me by faith to put my soul under the sprinklings of this sacred blood, and to wrap around me the robe of this divine righteousness; he himself has arrayed me in garments of salvation. But now the army of my sins rises up before me, and overwhelms my spirit with many terrors; Satan, the accuser, urges on the charge, and my Saviour and his righteousness are, as it were, hidden from me. "O that I knew where I might find him!"

Many a censure have I borne from men, and had my reputation assaulted and my good name blackened with many a scandal. But when man reproached me, God has undertaken my cause, and made my righteousness shine as the light, and my innocence as the noon day; I could then pour out my soul before him, tell him all my sorrows in flowing language, and feel sweet relief; but, now, *alás!* troubles and reproaches are multiplied upon me, and he does not seem to take my part; my spirit is bound and shut up, and I am cut off from

that free converse, that humble, holy intimacy, which I once enjoyed with my God; I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. Will he not help me to pray? will he not hear my groans and requests? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Yet I would seek his face still, and "O that I knew where I might find him!"

Often have I seen him in his own ordinances, in the place of public worship; I have seen his power and his glory in the sanctuary: I have found him in secret corners, and my meditation of him has been exceeding sweet. In dark retirements he has smiled on my soul, and has often given me reviving light. I have found him in his works, and I have had a fairer sight of him in his word; I can name the places, the pleasant lines in my Bible, and say, "I have seen the face of my God here:" But now the Bible itself is like a sealed book, or like a strange language which I cannot understand; I hear not the voice of my God speaking to me there; I go forward to his promises, and read what he will do for his people, but I perceive him not; backward, to his past providences, or to my own experiences, and review what he has done, but there is a darkness there too: I turn to my left hand, among his works of nature, but I do not see him; I seek him on my right hand, among his works of grace, but still he hides himself that I cannot behold him: v. 8, 9. "I wander in the night and inquire after him; I watch for him more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning; "O that I knew where I might find him!"

And it is no wonder that I am so impatient under the painful sense of his present distance from me, and so importunate for his return; for I have known the dreadful case of utter distance from him in a state of nature and sin, and I have tasted something of the pleasure of being brought nigh by grace, and now I dread every thing that looks like that old distance, that estrangement; I would fain renew those divine pleasures of a returning and a reconciled God: "O that I knew where I might find him!"

Besides, I bethink myself and say, "What shall I do without my God!" for I find all creatures utterly insufficient to relieve and help me; and I have known something of God's all-sufficiency; he hath been my helper in six troubles, and in seven, he is my only hope: when creatures stand aloof from me, and each of them say "There is no help in me," whither should I go then but to my God? "O that I knew where I might find him!"

I have been so much used to live upon him, and found his divine aids and influences so necessary to my life and my peace, that I sink and die at his absence. I feel within myself a sort of heavenly instinct that I want his presence, and cannot live without him. I know he stands in no need of me, for he gives to all his creatures life, and breath, and being; but I need his counsels and his comforts, his strength and his love: my soul is touched with such a divine influence, that it cannot rest while God withdraws, as the needle trembles and hunts after the hidden loadstone. If my God retire and hide himself, he will forgive a creature that loves him so well as to follow hard after him without ceasing, and is impatient and restless till he search him out; "O that I knew where I might find him!"

Though God is pleased to depart from me for a season, yet I cannot let go all my hope; he hides himself from my soul, yet I dare not think him an enemy, but only a concealed friend: if I could get near him, even to his seat, I know I should find it a mercy-seat, though perhaps judgment may sit there too. It is a throne of grace, says a Christian, because Jesus is there with the blood of atonement; and having such an high priest over the house of God, and such a new and living way of access by the blood of Christ, I will seek after him and address myself to him: I will confess mine iniquities before him, and be sorry for my sins, which may have beclouded or eclipsed my heavenly sun, and hid his face from me; I fear I have grieved his blessed Spirit, and provoked him to withdraw his kind influences of light, strength, and comfort; nor will I cease grieving for his absence till he return again.

Come, O eternal Spirit, come and visit my poor dark and disconsolate soul; come and awaken all my powers to follow hard after my Father and my God. Come, invigorate my faith, and lead me to the Mediator, the blessed Jesus; come, open to me the promises, and let me into the covenant of his unchangeable love, ratified and sealed with blood. If ever I find my God again, it is there I know I must find him; Christ is the only way to the Father. It is by the interest of his Son I shall get near to him, even to his seat; then will I pour out all my woes and my wants in his sight; I will order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he will put strength in me, and assist and suffer me to prevail with him.

Then, when I have found him whom my soul loveth, I will hold him fast, and not let him go: I will charge all the powers and passions of my nature not to yield to one sinful practice, nor provoke him to depart; for he is my everlasting and my almighty Friend.

Then, though I should have a thousand enemies set themselves against me, I would not be afraid; yea, thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for I have found my God, and my God is with me.

XX. *The Figure of a Cherub.*

**A CHERUB** is a name used in scripture to denote some angelic power or powers under the figure of some strange animal: the plural number in the Hebrew is cherubim, which signifies cherubs, and I know not how our translators of the bible came so often to speak of cherubims, adding an s to the Hebrew plural number instead of the English plural, namely, cherubs. Perhaps some writers learned using the word cherubim in Latin instead of cherubi, might lead them into this grammatical irregularity.

The Jews themselves greatly differ about the form or figure of a cherub. Josephus in his *Antiquities*, book iii. chap. 6. tells us, That cherubs are flying animals, like to none that were ever seen by man, and whose form no man knoweth. Abenezra, a learned Jew, supposes it to be a general name extending itself to all forms or figures, though in the writings of Moses he supposes it to come nearer the figure of a young man or boy.

Some have imagined that the mere face of a boy with wings is sufficient to describe a cherub, and accordingly such figures are wrought into the ornaments of buildings and curtains, &c. but I know no just ground for this imagination, except it be that those on the ark were beaten out of the same mass of gold which made the mercy-seat: and it must be confessed this sort of figure is more easy to be thus formed than any tall shape with a body and feet. *Exod. xxv. 10. and xxxvii. 7.*

It is generally represented in scripture like some strange living creature with one or more faces, having both wings and feet: when it has four faces, they are borrowed from a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle: the wings are described as very large, and the feet, when they are particularly described, are like those of an ox or calf: but whether the whole figure be more like that of an ox, or of a man, the learned are not agreed. This is



certain, that the several scriptures wherein cherubs are mentioned, can hardly be reconciled without supposing them represented in different forms, sometimes nearer to one of those forms, and sometimes to the other. If therefore, after all our searches, we cannot come to a full determination, we must be content to acknowledge our ignorance, though, perhaps, by diligent inquiry, we may come pretty near to the truth.

If we consult the derivation of the word, it seems to come from *charab*, which, in the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic languages, signifies to "plough," which is the known work of oxen. This favours the sentiment of those who describe it as a flying ox.

They tell us that *cherub* in Arabic, is "a ship that carries merchandise," and that a cherub is a chariot of God, appointed to carry the Shecinah, or bright glory, which is the symbol of God's presence; and therefore God is said to ride upon a cherub. Ps. xviii. 11, *jirchab al cherub*, he rode on a cherub: and Psalm civ. 3. it is said he maketh the clouds his chariot, *rechub*; so that by the transposition of a letter, which is frequent with the Hebrews, it seems to signify a chariot: and in 1 Chron. xxviii. 18, the cherubs upon the ark are called "the chariots of the cherubims," and the whole figure in Ezekiel's vision had wheels all about it as a chariot, and yet it is sometimes called the cherub in the singular, and sometimes cherubim or cherubs.

All this is true; but in a chariot there are generally some animals represented as moving, drawing, or carrying it. And though in Ezekiel's vision it is a living or animated chariot, with living wheels which had the spirit of the animals in them, Ezek. i. 20, yet there are winged animals to move it, or to move with it. The whole is composed of four living creatures which had faces, and wings, and feet, and hands, joined together in a living machine with wheels, and the God of glory rode upon it. But let us proceed and consider several scriptures more particularly, and in order.

The first place where we find the name mentioned, is Gen. iii. ult. "God placed cherubs and a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life." This does not seem to mean a chariot or chariots, but living creatures: if

they were in the shape of men, then a flaming sword is waving in their hands. If in the form of flying oxen, then with flames about them, flashing out like a sword from their eyes, nostrils, or mouth. Perhaps the brazen-footed bulls, breathing out flames, which guarded the golden fleece in Cholchis, may be derived hence by the fabulous Greeks :

“——Adamanteis Vulcanum naribus efflant *Æripedes*  
“ *Tauri.*” *Ovid.*

Or, as the Greeks were wont to compound and divide stories at pleasure, these bulls might keep the gardens of the Hesperides, where golden apples grew, that is, by the fabling interpretation, the fruit of the tree of life ; though generally, I confess, a dragon is made the guardian of them, which wild fable might arise from the serpent being there, Gen. iii 1 ; for stories taken from the Bible are variously mangled and confounded by the Heathens.

Some have supposed indeed these cherubs and flaming sword are only a flaming division visible, made of burning pitch and such materials, and that this was kindled in the borders of that ground to guard it from men, and that it is attributed to angels after the Jewish manner : others think it the divine Shecinah itself, guarding the passage to the tree of life, and cherubs are added by Moses, to represent God's being attended with invisible angels. But neither of these two last suppositions carry probability with them, because the word cherub is never used in narratives for mere invisible powers, nor for visible inanimate beings ; but it always signifies some visible figure of one animated being or more joined together, though it is designed to denote these invisible angelic powers.

The next scripture where it is mentioned is Exod. xxv. 18. Among the orders given to Moses for making the ark and the mercy-seat, with the two cherubs to cover it with their wings, one at one end and the other

at the other end: ver. 19, 20.\* And whatsoever figure belonged to these cherubs which is so much unknown to us, it was certainly a common idea and well known figure to the Jews in that day; for Moses doth not concern himself to give any particular description of them, as he does almost of every thing else, and yet the Jewish artificers made them right.

Some think that these two cherubs on the ark were in the shape of flying oxen, or something near to that figure, and that for these reasons:

1. Because both their faces looked towards one another, and yet both faces downward towards the mercy-seat, Exod. xxv. 20. and xxxvii. 9; which posture and description is well suited to an ox, but not so happily adapted to the figure and aspect of the face of a man.

2. Because the same face which is called the face of an ox, Ezek. i. 10. is called the face of a cherub, Ezek. x. 14; and thus a cherub's face is actually and expressly distinguished from that of a man, and determined to be the face of an ox.

3. Because God is said to ride upon a cherub, Psalm xviii. 10. Though this be a metaphorical expression to describe the grandeur and majesty of God, yet the metaphor must be derived from some correspondent sensible figure: now the figure of a winged ox, or, at least, of a chariot carried or drawn by winged oxen, is a much fitter vehicle to ride upon in glory, and in majesty and terror, than the figure of a man.

4. Aaron's calf is reasonably supposed to be a cherub, for neither he nor his abettors can well be imagined so foolish as to make the figure of a mere calf, as some would have it, or of the Egyptian god Apis, who was worshipped under the form of an ox, when it was made.

\* The cherubs in Solomon's temple stand in another situation, 1 Kings vi. 23, for they are placed side by side, so that their four wings reached the whole length of the most holy place. But these seem to be made as some further attendants on the Shecinah or divine glory, besides the two cherubs which were on the mercy-seat; for it was the very same ark which Moses made that was introduced into Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 6; and the cherubs on it were beaten out of the same mass of gold which made the mercy-seat or covering of the ark, Exod. xxxvii. 7, 8; so that it is most likely those ancient cherubs continued there still, and Solomon's were additional attendants in the most holy place, of a much larger size and overshadowing those on the mercy-seat.

an idol for the Israelites to adore, since the Egyptian gods, as well as men, partook of the vengeance of the God of Israel for the oppression of his people. Numb. xxxiii. 4.

It is therefore much more credible that Aaron's calf was designed as a visible symbol of the presence of the God of Israel, even that very God who released them from their Egyptian masters. The proclamation made before this image was this, "*These are thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*" Exod. xxxii. 4. It would be contrary to all reason to represent the Egyptian gods as bringing Israel from Egypt, for then they would have been kinder to the Israelites, who were strangers, than they were to their own worshippers, the Egyptians. Besides, it was a feast to Jehovah, the God of Israel, which they celebrated. Exodus xxxii. 5. and therefore it is more likely that Aaron's calf was some symbol of the presence of the God of Israel; and that it might be the figure of a cherub, on or over which they would suppose the divine Shecinah or glory of God to sit; for so it appeared on the ark when it was made, and so it appeared in Ezekiel's visions, Ezek. i. 26—28. and x. 18, 19. So David describes it, Psalm xviii. 10, when the God of Israel rode on a cherub.

Shall it be said, that Aaron had not yet received the order for making the cherubs on the ark, and therefore could not know the figures? But I answer, that cherubs were well known to the Jews of that age, as I hinted before, since Moses gives no description of them to instruct the artificers: they were known of old probably to the patriarchs and to mankind, as emblems of divine majesty and terror, guarding the way to the tree of life, Gen. iii. 24; and some have supposed that Aaron with his sons and seventy elders saw God in the mount, Exod. xxiv. 10, riding on a cherub, as in Ezek. i. since the other part of that description of God in Exodus is much like that in Ezekiel i. 26, and x. 1. But I proceed to another argument to prove cherubs to be flying oxen.

5. Another reason why a cherub is supposed to be a winged ox, is this: Jeroboam, the king of Israel, is most reasonably supposed to imitate the worship of Jerusalem, when he set up golden calves at Dan and

Bethel, and thus to represent God dwelling between the cherubs on the mercy-seat, that the other tribes of Israel might have the same worship as the Jews at Jerusalem, and that the ten tribes might not be inclined to go up to Jerusalem to worship, and be in danger of returning to their king Rehoboam again: for it is hardly to be supposed, that Jeroboam should so soon persuade all the ten tribes into such gross idolatry as to worship mere calves, though the scriptures calls them so, as usually it does all idols by some word of contempt.

This idolatry, or worshipping a mere calf, would have been too plain and too gross to be imposed upon the people at first, and that so soon after their separation from Judah and Jerusalem, this being so expressly contrary to the second command: "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven, or earth, or the water, &c." Now if we suppose a cherub to be the figure of a winged ox, or any other winged figure, with the face and feet of an ox superadded, it will not be the likeness or image of any thing in heaven, earth, or water, and consequently Jeroboam might persuade the people that this was not plainly forbidden; nay, more, that it was ordered by Moses in the tabernacle, and such figures were in the temple.

Let it be further added, that when the worship of Baal was introduced into Israel by Ahab, it seems to be a different idol from the calves at Dan and Bethel, and yet it was something akin to it. The image of Baal was the image of a heifer, as we are told in the first chapter of Tobit, ver. 5. and it is evident that Baal is sometimes used in the masculine, and sometimes in the feminine. See 1 Kings xvi. 31. in the septuagint; 1 Kings xix. 18. and the citation of the text in Rom. xi. 4. But if Baal was a common heifer, it is probable these calves of Jeroboam were something different; for it is plain from many scriptures, that Baal was an idol of the Canaanites, which Ahab worshipped when both king and people had grown bold in their idolatry: but the calves were designed by Jeroboam, for symbols of the presence of Jehovah the God of Israel, and therefore probably they were not common calves, but cherubs, or wing-

ed oxen, or a figure near akin to those in the temple of Jerusalem.

6. It is further added, as another reason, that though the tribe of Judah imitated Israel in all their other shapes of idolatry, yet they never imitated Jeroboam's calves: now what reason can be given for this, unless it be because the Jews are supposed to have had the very originals at Jerusalem, that is, the cherubs upon the mercy-seat in the form of flying calves or oxen.

These arguments seem to carry great weight with them, yet others have supposed the cherub to be a winged man, because it is described often with one face at least as a man, and also with hands in scripture. Some of the Jews say, it is a young man in beauty and vigour, because it has been generally taken for granted that the cherubs represent angels, which are God's attendants, whose vigour and beauty are ever fresh and immortal, and angels, they say, always appear under the figure of men: and they suppose that in this form multitudes of them were wrought in the curtains and vail and all the parts of the tabernacle and temple, as imitating the presence of angels where God dwells.

It is granted that cherubs represent angelic powers, attending on the great God, but whether the form of a winged man were wrought on the curtains or vail is yet in doubt: and whether this argument be sufficient to outweigh all that is said in favour of the shape of winged oxen, let the reader judge.

This I think is remarkable, that though angels are always introduced speaking as men with a voice, and seraphs also speak, as Isa. vi. 3, 6, 7, yet I do not find that cherubs ever spoke; and when Ezekiel tells us in so distinguishing a manner, they had the hands of a man under their wings, Ezek. i. 8, it looks as if all the rest of their parts were not exactly those of a man, but of a creature which is not so much designed to perform rational or human offices, since it appears there, and in other places, as some kind of living vehicle or divine equipage, rather than as a rational attendant on the majesty of God, exercising its intellectual powers.

Perhaps we have not any place of scripture from

which we can derive the complete figure of a cherub better than the first, and tenth, and forty-first chapters of Ezekiel; for all the four animals in Ezekiel's vision, which are mentioned, Ezek. i. 5, and x. 14, are several times called cherubs.

If we inquire what their body or general figure was, the prophet says, it was the figure or likeness of a man, Ezek. i. 5. But each of them had four faces, and each had four wings, ver. 6. Their legs were straight, probably like the four legs of a calf or ox, or like that of a man; and their feet were cloven as an ox's foot, ver. 7. Under their wings they had the hands of a man on their four sides, ver. 8.

Each of them had the face of a man before, and this stood in the middle between the face of a lion on the right side, and the face of an ox or a calf on the left side; and the face of an eagle perhaps was placed in the middle above them or behind, though it is not expressly said it was behind, or above; but it is probable the four faces looked four different ways.

But here it must be observed, that what is called the face of an ox, Ezek. i. 10. is called the face of a cherub, supposing them the same. Ezek. x. 14. A cherub, has also the feet of a calf or ox, as before mentioned. So that a cherub appears, upon the whole, to be nearer to the figures of a winged ox and a man with wings, than to any other creature, for it has the hands, body, and face of a man; and it has also the face and feet of an ox: it has nothing of a lion but the face, and that is not always mentioned: it has indeed the wings of an eagle always, but an eagle's face is mentioned as one part of a cherub no where else but in this vision.

Note.—This vision does not describe whether each of those animals had four feet or two; but it is probable they had but two feet, because it is said, they had the likeness of a man, that is, the figure of his body.

It is plain they had four wings, ver. 6, two of their wings were stretched upward as for flight, and two covered their bodies, that is, the lower part of their body, for which decency requires a covering. It is very ridiculous, therefore, to describe them, as some

painters do like naked boys with little wings on their shoulders only.

In these four various faces, the various properties of angels seem to be represented, namely, The understanding and beauty of a man, the obedience and labour, or diligence of an ox, the courage and strength of a lion, together with the sharp sight and swiftness of an eagle in fulfilling the commands of God, and in administering his providence.

It may not be improper also to take notice here, that these four creatures, namely, a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, are unanimously reported by the Jews, though not with sufficient proof, to have been wrought upon the standards of the four leading tribes of the camp of Israel, as they are ranged Numb. ii. namely, a lion the standard of Judah, a man the standard of Reuben, an ox the standard of Ephraim, and an eagle the standard of Dan. And these also were the figures of the four living creatures, in Greek which ought not to be translated beasts, Rev. iv. 6, which are before the throne of God, who had each of them six wings, and were full of eyes, and are ever engaged in divine worship. These figures in these several places may denote, that wherever God is, the creatures that attend him, whether they be men or angels, should be furnished with these qualifications, namely, understanding, obedience, courage, and swiftness.

But let us proceed to search out, what is said yet further concerning a cherub in scripture.

In Ezek. xli. 19, 25. The inner part of Ezekiel's temple was adorned with intermingled cherubs and palm-trees, carved on the walls and doors. Here every cherub had two faces, namely, that of a man and that of a lion; but as they are called cherubs, we may still conclude their feet were the feet of a calf or ox. And why may not Solomon's temple be adorned with the same sort of cherubs and palm-trees, 1 Kings vi. 29, that is, with the faces of a man and a lion, and the feet of an ox, though their faces are not expressly mentioned in that place.

Solomon's ten lavers for the temple had their several bases adorned in the border between the ledges, with



lions, oxen, and cherubs, 1 Kings vii. 29 ; so that here a cherub seems to be mentioned instead of the face of a man, and to be distinguished from an ox, though in Ezekiel's vision, chap. i. and x. the face of a cherub is plainly the same with the face of an ox. Yet on the plates of the ledges were cherubims, lions, and palm-trees, 1 Kings vii. 36, where neither the face of an ox nor man is mentioned.

Perhaps these differences may in some measure be reconciled, if we observe that these cherubs which adorned the walls of Ezekiel's visionary temple, and of Solomon's real temple, and the borders of the brazen lavers, are only graven or carved upon the flat or plane, or at least, with some little protuberance above the flat, which the Italians call *Basso Relievo* : and then that figure which would have had all four faces visible if it had stood forth by itself as a real animal, or a statute, namely, that of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, can have but two faces visible, or three at the most, when figured upon a plane or flat surface ; the other one or two being hid behind : and thus the cherubs may be in all these places the same four-faced animals, and yet only two or three of their faces appear, according to their designed situation and the art of perspective. And perhaps Solomon might diversify these figures for the sake of variety in different parts of the sacred works.\*

Upon the whole, what if we should conclude a cherub to be most usually figured with a body like a man with four wings, two whereof are stretched for flight, and two covering the lower parts ; with the feet of an ox or calf ; with the head of a man or an ox, whatever other faces were joined to it, whether lions or eagles, or whether it had any other face or no. It is more likely

\* It is the opinion of some learned men that Ezekiel's temple was but a kind of repetition of the pattern of the same temple which God gave to David, and by which Solomon built his temple. And that this pattern was given to Ezekiel that he might show it to the Jews, if they were pious and obedient, to animate them to hope for another temple in their own land, and to instruct them in the building of it when they should be released from Babylon, Ezek. xl. 4, and xliii. 10, 11 ; since it was supposed none remained who could remember so much of their old temple as to give particular directions for the building of it.

there was but one sort of face belonging to each of the two cherubs on the mercy-seat, because it is said, their faces look towards one another; but whether this was the face of an ox or a man is not yet absolutely determined.

I think we may allow Jeroboam to be supposed to imitate these cherubs which were on the mercy-seat, in his idolatrous worship; and though they had not the perfect shape of a calf, yet they might be called calves in scripture language, by way of reproach and contempt, because they had the feet of a calf if not the head also.

It is evident that Aaron's idol, which was called the golden calf, had more of the resemblance of an ox or calf than of a man, because the Israelites are said to change their glory, that is, their God, into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass, Psalm cvi. 19, 20, which would hardly have been thus expressed if the idol had nothing of a calf but its feet.

If any will imagine that in Psalm xviii. where God is said to ride upon a cherub, the grandeur and terror of the appearance may require the whole figure of a flying ox, rather than of a flying man, or rather of a flying animal with all these four faces, I will not oppose it, since it is plain from this whole account, that a cherub is described sometimes more like a winged ox, and sometimes more like a winged man with feet like oxen or calves. But where it is represented complete in all its various forms united, as in the first and tenth chapters of Ezekiel, it seems to be the body of a winged man with calves' feet, and with four faces, namely, that of a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle; and thus it is always designed to represent the various properties of angels, which are attendants on the blessed God, more perfectly than any one of these creatures could do alone.

Perhaps when the Jewish nation shall be converted and become believers in Christ, there may be such a new effusion of the Spirit on men, or such a happy discovery some way made of the darker parts of the Mosaic œconomy, and the writings of the prophets, as may show us more of the resemblance which God designed between the types of the law in the temple and priesthood, and their antitypes in the gospel, than has ever

yet appeared ; and among other things the form of a cherub, as an attendance of angelic beings. on the majesty of God in the holy of holies, may appear more conspicuously in its original truth and glory.

**XXI.** *The Author's solemn Address to the great and ever blessed God, on a Review of what he had written in the Trinitarian Controversy, prefixed by him to some Pieces on that Subject, which it was not judged necessary to publish.*

**RIGHTEOUS** art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee ; yet I may talk with thee concerning thy judgments. Permit me, O my God and Father, to plead with thee concerning the revelations of thy nature and thy grace, which are made in thy gospel ; and let me do it with all that humble reverence, and that holy awe of thy Majesty, which becomes a creature in the presence of his God.

Hast thou not, O Lord God Almighty ! hast thou not transacted thy divine and important affairs among men by thy Son, Jesus Christ, and by thy Holy Spirit ? And hast thou not ordained that men should transact their highest and most momentous concerns with thee by thy Son and by thy Spirit ? Hast thou not by the mouth of thy Son, Jesus, required all that profess his religion, to be washed with water, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the holy Ghost ? Is it not my duty, then, to inquire, who or what are these sacred names, and what they signify ? Must I not know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, thy Son, whom thou hast sent, that I may fulfil all my respective duties toward thyself and thy Son, in hope of eternal life ? Hath not thy Son himself appealed to thee in his last prayer, that eternal life depends upon this knowledge ? And since thou hast made so much use of thy Holy Spirit in our religion, must I not have some knowledge of this thy Spirit also, that I may pay thee

all these honours thou requirest from this divine revelation?

Hast thou not ascribed divine names, and titles, and characters to thy Son and thy Holy Spirit, in thy word, as well as assumed them to thyself? And hast thou not appointed to them such glorious offices as cannot be executed without something of divinity or true godhead in them? And yet art not thou, and thou alone, the true God? How shall a poor weak creature be able to adjust and reconcile these clashing ideas, and to understand this mystery? Or must I believe and act blindfold, without understanding?

Holy Father, thou knowest how firmly I believe, with all my soul, whatsoever thou hast plainly written and revealed in thy word. I believe thee to be the only true God, the supreme of beings, self-sufficient for thine own existence, and for all thy infinite affairs and transactions among creatures. I believe thy Son, Jesus Christ, to be all-sufficient for the glorious work of mediation between God and man, to which thou hast appointed him. I believe he is a man in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. I believe he is one with God; he is God manifested in the flesh; and that the man Jesus is so closely and inseparably united with the true and eternal Godhead as to become one person, even as the human soul and body makes one man. I believe that this illustrious person is hereby possessed of divine dignity, sufficient to make full atonement for the sins of men, by his sufferings and death, even though sin be accounted an infinite evil; and that he hath all-sufficient power to raise himself from the dead, to ascend to heaven, and fulfil the blessed works for which thou hast exalted him, and to govern and judge the world in thine appointed time.

I believe also thy blessed Spirit hath almighty power and influence to do all thy will; to instruct men effectually in divine truths; to change the hearts of fallen mankind from sin to holiness; to carry on thy work of illumination, sanctification, and consolation, on all the souls of all thy children, and to bring them safe to the heavenly world. I yield myself up joyfully and thankfully to this method of thy salvation, as it is revealed

in thy gospel. But I acknowledge my darkness still. I want to have this wonderful doctrine, of the all-sufficiency of thy Son and thy Spirit for these divine works, made a little plainer. May not thy humble creature be permitted to know what share they can have in thy deity? Is it vain and sinful curiosity, to desire to have this article set in such a light as may not diminish the eternal glory of the unity of the true God, nor of the supremacy of thee, the Father of all?

Hadst thou informed me, gracious Father, in any place of thy word, that this divine doctrine is not to be understood by men, and yet they were required to believe it, I would have subdued all my curiosity to faith, and submitted my wandering and doubtful imaginations as far as it was possible, to the holy and wise determinations of thy word. But I cannot find thou hast any where forbid me to understand it, or to make these inquiries. My conscience is the best natural light thou hast put within me; and since thou hast given me the scriptures, my own conscience bids me search the scriptures, to find out truth and eternal life: it bids me try all things, and hold fast that which is good. And thy own word, by the same expressions, encourages this holy practice. I have, therefore, been long searching into this divine doctrine, that I may pay thee due honour with understanding. Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship, whether he be one pure and simple being, or whether thou art a threefold Deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Dear and blessed God, hadst thou been pleased, in any one plain scripture, to have informed me which of the different opinions about the holy Trinity, among the contending parties of Christians, had been true, thou knowest with how much zeal, satisfaction, and joy, my unbiassed heart would have opened itself to receive and embrace the divine discovery. Hadst thou told me plainly, in any single text, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three real, distinct persons in thy divine nature, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts, nor embarrassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inven-

tions of men, instead of divine doctrine ; but I should have humbly and immediately accepted thy word, so far as it was possible for me to understand it, as the only rule of my faith ; or, hadst thou been pleased so to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease find out, and with certainty infer this doctrine, I should have joyfully employed all my reasoning powers, with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference, and ingrafted it into my soul.

Thou hast taught me, holy Father, by the prophets, that the way of holiness, in the times of the gospel, or under the kingdom of the Messiah, shall be a highway, a plain and easy path ; so that the wayfaring man or the stranger, though a fool, shall not err therein. And thou hast called the poor and the ignorant, the mean and foolish things of this world, to the knowledge of thyself and thy Son, and taught them to receive and partake of the salvation which thou hast provided. But how can such weak creatures ever take in so strange, so difficult, and so abstruse a doctrine as this ; in the explication and defence whereof multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtilities of dispute and endless mazes of darkness ? And can this strange and perplexing notion, of three real and distinct persons going to make up one true God, be so necessary and so important a part of that Christian doctrine which, in the Old Testament and the New, is represented as so plain and so easy, even to the meanest understandings ?

O thou searcher of hearts, who knowest all things, I appeal to thee concerning the sincerity of my inquiries into these discoveries of thy word. Thou knowest me, thou hast seen me, and hast tried my heart towards thee : if there be any lurking hypocrisy in my heart, and secret bias towards any thing but truth, uncover it, O Father of lights, and banish it from my soul for ever. If thine eye discover the least spark of criminal prejudice in any corner of my soul, extinguish it utterly, that I may not be led astray from the truth, in matters

of such importance, by the least glance of error or mistake.

Thou art witness, O my God, with what diligence, with what constancy and care, I have read and searched thy holy word; how early and late, by night and by day, I have been making these inquiries. How fervently have I been seeking thee on my bended knees, and directing my humble addresses to thee to enlighten my darkness, and to show me the meaning of thy word, that I may learn what I must believe, and what I must practise with regard to this doctrine, in order to please thee and obtain eternal life!

Great God, who seest all things, thou hast beheld what busy temptations have been often fluttering about my heart to call it off from these laborious and difficult inquiries, and to give up thy word and thy gospel as an unintelligible book, and betake myself to the light of nature and reason: but thou hast been pleased, by thy divine power, to scatter these temptations, and fix my heart and my hope again upon that Saviour and that eternal life which thou hast revealed in thy word, and proposed therein to our knowledge and our acceptance. Blessed be the name of my God, who has not suffered me to abandon the gospel of his Son, Jesus! and blessed be that holy Spirit that has kept me attentive to the truth delivered in thy gospel, and inclined me to wait longer in my search of these divine truths, under the hope of thy gracious illumination.

I humbly call thee to witness, O my God, what a holy jealousy, I ever wear about my heart, lest I should do the slightest dishonour to thy supreme Majesty, in any of my inquiries or determinations. Thou seest what a religious fear, and what a tender solicitude I maintain on my soul, lest I should think or speak any thing to diminish the grandeurs and honours of thy Son Jesus, my dear Mediator, to whom I owe my everlasting hopes. Thou knowest how much afraid I am of speaking one word which may be construed into a neglect of thy blessed Spirit, from whom I hope I am daily receiving happy influences of light and strength.

Guard all the motions of my mind, O Almighty God, against every thing that borders upon these dangers. Forbid my thoughts to indulge, and forbid my pen to write, one word that should sink those grand ideas which belong to thyself, or thy Son, or thy holy Spirit. Forbid it, O my God, that ever I should be so unhappy as to unglorify my Father, my Saviour, or my Sanctifier, in any of my sentiments or expressions, concerning them.

Blessed and faithful God, hast thou not promised, that the meek thou wilt guide in judgment, the meek thou wilt teach thy way? Hast thou not told us, by Isaiah, thy prophet, that thou wilt bring the blind by a way which they knew not, and wilt lead them in paths which they have not known? Hast thou not informed us, by the prophet Hosea, that if we follow on to know the Lord, then we shall know him? Hath not thy Son, our Saviour, assured us, that our Heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him? And is he not appointed to guide us into all truth? Have I not sought the gracious guidance of thy good Spirit continually? Am I not truly sensible of my own darkness and weakness, my dangerous prejudices on every side, and my utter insufficiency for my own conduct? Wilt thou leave such a poor creature, bewildered among a thousand perplexities which are raised by the various opinions and contrivances of men to explain thy divine truth?

Help me, Heavenly Father, for I am quite tired and weary of these human explainings, so various and uncertain. When wilt thou explain it to me thyself, O my God, by the secret and certain dictates of thy Spirit, according to the intimations of thy word? nor let any pride of reason, nor any affectation of novelty, nor any criminal bias whatsoever, turn my heart aside from hearkening to these divine dictates of thy word and thy Spirit. Suffer not any of my native corruptions, nor the vanity of my imagination, to cast a mist over my eyes, while I am searching after the knowledge of thy mind and will, for my eternal salvation!

I intreat, O most merciful Father, that thou wilt not suffer the remnant of my short life to be wasted in

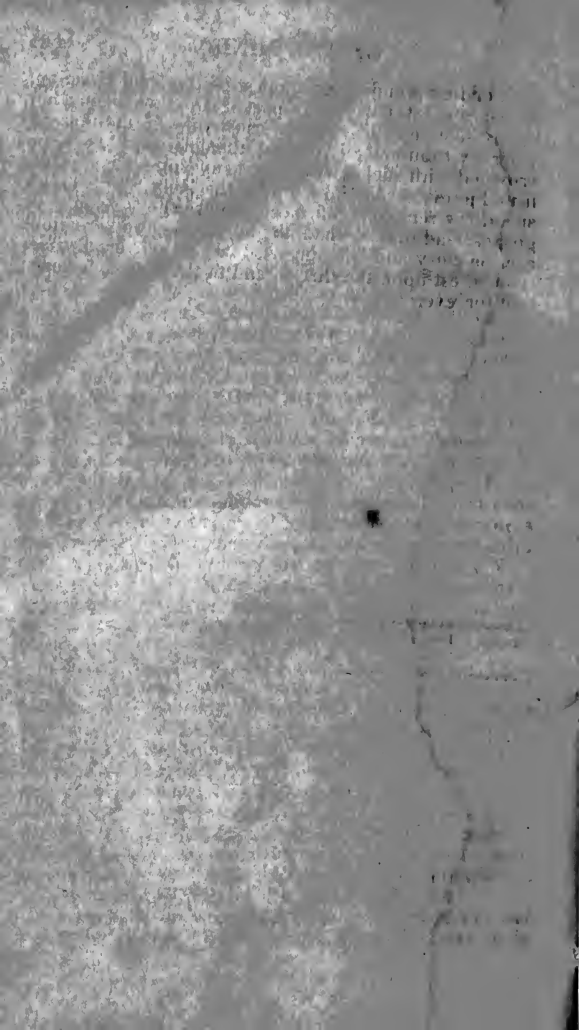


such endless wanderings in quest of thee and thy Son, Jesus, as great part of my past days have been; but let my sincere endeavours to know thee, in all the ways whereby thou hast discovered thyself in thy word, be crowned with such success, that my soul, being established in every needful truth by the Holy Spirit, I may spend my remaining life according to the rules of thy gospel; and may, with all the holy and happy creation, ascribe glory and honour, wisdom and power, to thee, who sittest upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and for ever.

THE END.

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James & John Harper, Printers,  
138 Fulton-Street.  
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COMPTON

TABLE

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the County of Compton, since the year 1800, to the present time. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and the year of their appointment is given in parentheses.

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 G. H. (1804)  
 I. J. (1805)  
 K. L. (1806)  
 M. N. (1807)  
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